A multidisciplinary exploration of the language of school exclusion

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Abstract

Existing research demonstrates that young people who are excluded from school are frequently positioned in disempowered situations by discriminatory social practices. The results can be catastrophic for excluded young people in social, economic, and educational domains. Research also notes how young people's voices can be significantly curtailed in the process of school exclusion, thereby contributing to these catastrophic consequences. Thus, excluded young people are burdened and isolated by discriminatory social contexts, and further isolated and burdened by being unheard by adults. This thesis takes a unique approach – combining Critical Discourse Studies and Youth Participatory Research – to explore the macro level discourses leading to discriminatory social practices, and how excluded young people navigate and resist these at the micro level of interaction.

Data was generated via qualitative, creative, ethnographic and participatory methods with excluded young people, their parents, Pupil Referral Unit staff, and mainstream school staff. Through this approach, the thesis identifies how macro level social discourses of youth, risk, deviance, class, gender, ethnicity, and criminalisation, work intersectionally to reproduce discrimination in youth-adult relationships. The excluded young people in this project illustrate the existence of these discourses via their narration of the impact it had on their lives, and ultimately their exclusion from mainstream education. The young people further demonstrate the lived expertise they draw upon to navigate the resulting disempowerment.

The multidisciplinary focus on language, both in generating and framing the results, differentiates this research from previous research on school exclusion. The thesis contributes to understandings of school exclusion through focussing on the relationship between micro and macro level discourses via centring youth voice in the process. Additionally, it contributes to Critical Discourse Studies and Youth Participatory Research through the Power and Participation model, created specifically for this project to guide a discourse-informed analysis of youth participation. Finally, the thesis draws on the young people's voices to inform language-based recommendations for policy and practitioners in education.

Contents

Key terms and abbreviations

ACEs	Adverse Childhood Experiences
AP	Alternative Provision
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CDS	Critical Discourse Studies
DfE	Department for Education
Ebacc	English Baccalaureate (qualification that can be sat by young people aged 15-16)
EBD	Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education (exams sat by young people aged 15-16).
KS4	Key Stage 4. The grouping for young people aged 14-16 in secondary school when examinations are sat.
NICE	National Institute of Clinical Excellence
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education (the regulatory body for education providers)
MMCDA	Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis
P and P	The Power and Participation model developed for this research
PABR	Participatory Arts Based Research
PR	Participatory Research
Primary school	Schools for young people aged 4-11.
PRU	Pupil Referral Unit
SATs	Scholastic Assessment Tests (taken by young people aged 11)
SEBD	Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties
Secondary School	Schools for young people aged 11-16.
SEMH	Social, Emotional and Mental Health
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Intersectional discrimination and cycles of punishment

School exclusion, officially[1] the disciplinary practice of children being removed from mainstream education to Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) or another form of Alternative Provision (AP) in England, is on the rise, with over 250,000 young people excluded in Autumn 2023 (DfE and National Statistics, 2023:online). It is conceptualised as an urgent issue of social justice (Children's Commissioner, 2012; Paget et al., 2017; Perraudin, 2018:online; DfE, 2019b; No More Exclusions, 2023:online), and at odds with children's rights (Tillson and Oxley, 2020).

These arguments are based on historic and current statistics suggesting that young people who already experience social disadvantage and discrimination are more likely to be excluded (DfE, 2019b). Young people who are in secondary school, male, working-class, from racially minoritised communities, (un)diagnosed with a disability, justice-involved, and in local authority care, are over-represented in the excluded population (Gill et al., 2017; DfE, 2019b; Martin-Denham, 2020). The Children's Commissioner for England (2012:9) underscored how these identities and experiences are intersectionally reproductive of exclusion: 'in 2009-10, if you were a Black African-Caribbean boy with special needs and eligible for free school meals[2] you were 168 times more likely to be permanently excluded from a state-funded school than a White girl without special needs from a middle-class family.'

Research investigating the ways in which social discrimination can result in the exclusion of certain groups of (often disadvantaged) young people, indicates that schools can reproduce discriminatory attitudes via punitive regulatory measures and the segregation of young people (Coard, 1971; Youdell, 2006; Gillies, 2016; Akala, 2017; DfE, 2019b; Perera 2020). Furthermore, young people experiencing discrimination and deprivation are more likely to have adverse experiences in childhood, which can manifest in agitated, defensive and

[1] There are numerous unofficial or 'hidden' forms of exclusion such as isolation, managed moves, and off-rolling that are lesser-documented and are argued to affect significant numbers of young people in mainstream school, particularly those who are officially excluded prior to their entry to Alternative Provision (Gill et al., 2017; Perraudin, 2018; O'Brien, 2022). These forms of exclusion are described in section 1.6.3.

[2] A frequently used policy-marker of disadvantage (see DfE, 2019a).

disengaged behaviours (Fellitti et al., 1999; van der Kolk, 2015; McGarvey, 2017; Gray et al., 2021). Such behaviours are reflected in the list of behaviours the DfE (DfE and National Statistics, 2022b) recommend should be regulated and punished in schools. These behaviours include: physical assault or verbal abuse against students and adults, bullying, racist abuse, sexual misconduct, drug and alcohol related behaviour, damage, theft, and (more generally) 'persistent disruptive behaviour' (DfE and National Statistics, 2022b:online). Schools' behaviour policies determine these behaviours as disruptive and requiring punitive action There are numerous examples of young people challenging the enactment of discriminatory behaviour policies via the very behaviours these policies police, and of being cyclically punished for doing so (Gillies and Robinson, 2012; Gillies, 2016; Drummond, 2018).

1.2 A catalyst for lifelong polytrauma

Exclusion from school compounds pre-existing traumatic life circumstances. Both prior, during, and long after the event of exclusion, excluded young people are likely to experience polytrauma, i.e., multiple adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) such as parental separation, violence, psychological abuse, or childhood neglect (Contractor, Brown and Weiss, 2018). Prior to the exclusion, the intersectional disadvantage and discrimination excluded young people face heightens their likelihood of having traumatic experiences associated with poverty, crime, violence, isolation and problematic substance use (Fellitti et al., 1999; van der Kolk, 2015). In the event of exclusion, research indicates that excluded young people and their families may have felt, for many years prior, that their experiences and perspectives which arose from contexts of disadvantage and discrimination were not recognised, valued, or were outright rejected by schools (Gooding, 2014; Hodge and Wolstonholme, 2016; Lamrhari et al., 2021). The aforementioned research emphasises the demands the exclusion process places on families – emotionally, legally, financially, and physically to assert their rights and communicate with official bodies effectively, partly due to the disadvantaged circumstances they face (Kulz, 2015). The Child Safeguarding Review Practice Panel (2020:8) identifies exclusion 'as a trigger point for risk of serious harm' and risk of involvement in criminal, violent, or harmful circumstances. In the long term, excluded young people have a higher likelihood of experiencing poor mental and physical health, problematic substance use, involvement in crime, incarceration, unemployment, and homelessness in their adult

life (Paget et al., 2017), a repetition of their childhood circumstances. Thus, school exclusion is a catalyst for adverse childhood-to-adulthood experiences and is arguably an adverse childhood experience in itself.

There have been several recent high-profile cases in the media of violence against children that encapsulate the devastation of life-long polytrauma, arising from intersectional discrimination, and catalysed by school exclusion (Dodd, 2019; Taylor, 2019; Oppenheim, 2020). Jaden Moodie, Ayoub Majdouline, and Osime Brown were excluded from school. Jaden's father was deported to Jamaica in 2005 for selling drugs to financially support his family after being made unemployed (because he had no national insurance number). The family struggled emotionally and financially. Jaden became involved in the 'Let's Get Rich' gang, was 'badly bullied', 'experienced racist abuse at school', and was 'excluded when he defended himself against the attacks' (Taylor, 2019:online). The exclusion led Jaden to spend more time on the streets, and to county lines exploitation[3]. Jaden was murdered by members of a rival gang at age 14. Ayoub Majdouline, a member of the rival gang, also suffered traumatic life circumstances of abuse and exploitation, underpinned by discrimination and inequality. The court defined him as a modern slave having been groomed into gang membership at such a young age (Dodd, 2019). He had also lost his father. Ayoub described the bereavement, coupled with his exclusion from school, as pivotal in the 'downhill' turn his life took at age 14:

> 'I just had bad influences from my exclusion unit that I got sent to after I got excluded from school when my dad died, and I don't think I was thinking properly.' (Dodd, 2019:online).

In an unconnected case from Jaden and Ayoub, Osime Brown is autistic, with an estimated mental capacity of a six-year-old, and relies on his mother as a carer. 'At school, he was described as disruptive and rude' because of 'his autistic meltdowns' being misinterpreted

[3] Gangs target young people who are out of school or in Alternative Provision, and thus exclusion is argued to be a catalyst for young people's involvement in crime (Wall, 2023). County lines is a UK specific term for 'where illegal drugs are transported from one area to another, often across police and local authority boundaries (although not exclusively), usually by children or vulnerable people who are coerced into it by gangs. The 'County Line' is the mobile phone line used to take the orders of drugs. Importing areas (areas where the drugs are taken to) are reporting increased levels of violence and weapons-related crimes as a result of this trend.' (National Crime Agency, 2024:online)

as poor behaviour (Oppenheim, 2020:online). He was excluded at age 16, and only received a diagnosis after his exclusion. After being taken into care he was accused of being involved in a phone theft via joint enterprise and was sentenced to five years in a young offender institution, despite being innocent (Oppenheim, 2020). As Osime was born in Jamaica, he was threatened with deportation on his release.

Collectively, these boys are representative of what prior research identifies as presenting an increased risk of exclusion (DfE, 2019b). Their circumstances are obviously not representative of the entire excluded population, but they do help to demonstrate the culmination of intersectional discrimination and trauma experienced by many excluded children (Gillies, 2016). School exclusion is pivotal across all three stories, where traumatic life circumstances led to defensive, disruptive behaviours which the schools, based on behaviour policies, responded to punitively.

1.3 Behaviour as communication: the language aspect of school exclusion

The circumstances of the three boys described above, demonstrates that at the micro level of interaction, exclusion can be a result of misunderstanding or miscommunication of the circumstances behind disruptive behaviour (Gillies, 2016; Dray, 2017; Drummond, 2018; Martin-Denham, 2020), as if these circumstances were heard and understood, the young people may not have been so readily blamed or punished for circumstances beyond their control. Research into post-traumatic stress notes how it is commonly communicated by distancing behaviours (fight, flight or freeze), rather than in words alone, because 'all trauma is preverbal. […] Trauma by nature drives us to the edge of comprehension, cutting us off from language based on common experience or an imaginable past' (van der Kolk, 2015:43). The punitive response of exclusion, which education policy encourages schools to utilise on behavioural grounds (DfE, 2019a), works to further silence young people and their families communicating such issues via their removal from school, with sometimes catastrophic results (Gillies, 2016; Hodge and Wolstonholme, 2016; Lamrhari et al., 2021). The higher likelihood of excluded young lives having adverse childhood experiences means that they are cut off from commonly shared experiences, and subject to circumstances that are challenging to comprehend and communicate. The distancing and disruptive behaviours

work to further push others away, and the resulting exclusion is the physical result, where young people are removed from mainstream education contexts. Equally, education policy works to remove time for adults to listen to and understand the behavioural communications of students, encouraging an individualising view that the distancing behaviours are by the student's 'choice,' due to a 'lack of boundaries' or 'unmet needs' (DfE, 2019a:7).

As such, school exclusion is a language and communication issue because the circumstances behind young people's disruptive behaviour are unheard by adults. Macro level discourses inciting discrimination can manifest at the micro level of interaction as behaviour cast as disruptive, disengaged, or dangerous (Youdell, 2006). Gillies (2016) argues that as the effects of discrimination are unfair, the behaviour of excluded young people is sometimes demonstrable as resistance to this unfairness. Simultaneously, these macro level discourses may be played out in schools in subtle, invisible forms to discreetly perpetuate discrimination and exclusion of certain groups (DfE, 2019b). The result of this discrimination works to disempower young people and curtail meaningful participation in their education, because their relationships with adults break down. In my prior career as a teacher in Alternative Provision, I saw the effects of school exclusion and the contexts of social discrimination upon the young people I worked with. I also experienced how the pressures of the education system worked to cause friction and hostility between adults and young people by placing their priorities at odds. I experienced the emotional intensity of working in such environments, where often, young people felt disempowered because they were not heard, and adults felt disempowered because they did not have the resources to help them. If we had an improved and comprehensive understanding of the ways in which macro level social disadvantage reproduces itself at the micro level of fractious relationships between adults and young people, communication practices and relationships could be improved. These improved relationships could be the key to reducing exclusion, and the beginnings of young people and adults working together to develop educational paradigms that centre youth voice and participation (Malcolm, 2021).

A comprehensive understanding of the language of school exclusion, needs a comprehensive approach to the relationship between macro and micro levels of discourse. As school exclusion is partly an issue of young people being silenced, to counteract the effects of

macro level discriminatory discourse, there also needs to be an approach that centres youth voice, experiences, expertise, and forms of resistance. This practice will provide a comprehensive insight into the linguistic mechanisms driving exclusion, and centre youth voice in in understanding their effects, and how they are resisted.

1.4 Project aims and research questions

The research carried out for this thesis/project was done in partnership with a Pupil Referral Unit - with excluded young people, parents, PRU staff, and mainstream staff throughout 2020-21, across different areas of Greater Manchester. It draws on a range of qualitative, creative, and participatory methods via a unique interdisciplinary approach combining Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) and Participatory Research (PR). Via this approach, the thesis identifies how macro level social discourses of youth, risk, deviance, class, gender, ethnicity, and criminalisation work intersectionally to reproduce contexts of discrimination at the micro level of interaction between young people and adults. The excluded young people participating in this project articulate the existence of these discourses via their narration of the catastrophic impact they had on their lives, and ultimately their exclusion. They also demonstrate the resources and expertise they draw upon to navigate the contexts of disempowerment in which they are placed. These results, and the interdisciplinary, comprehensive view of language, differentiates this research from other discursive, ethnographic, or participatory research on school exclusion. Its contribution to current understandings of school exclusion is partly through the relationship it begins to clarify between micro and macro level discourses, and crucially, in the centring of youth voice in the process.

Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) is concerned with how the taken-for-granted nature of discourse can reproduce unequal power relations, and how alternative discourses can reveal, clarify, and challenge established discourses (Fairclough, 2001; Wodak and Meyer, 2016). CDS is interested in how discourse works to position people in particular ways in various social settings, and how they can be critiqued by questioning those discourses which are mostly embedded, invisible, and taken-for-granted in society (Wodak and Meyer, 2016).

In CDS, discourse is multimodal[4], and multimodal CDA seeks to capture the nuanced meaning of multimodal discourse in analysis (Jancsary et al., 2016). CDS frames the thesis to explore macro level discourses in school exclusion, how excluded young people resist these discourses at the micro level of interaction, and the results of this in school settings.

Participatory research is an orientation to research that seeks for research to be *with*, not *on*, participants (Chevalier and Buckles, 2019). Ozer (2016:189) defines Youth Participatory Action Research as 'an approach to scientific inquiry and social change grounded in principles of equity that engages young people in identifying problems relevant to their own lives, conducting research to understand the problems, and advocating for changes based on research evidence.' The nuances of different forms of relevant strands of Participatory Research are explained in Chapter 3. Youth Participatory Research (YPR) underpins the approach taken with the excluded young people in this project. It responds to youth disempowerment in excluded contexts, and enables an understanding of the resources young people use to challenge macro level discourses.

The aims of this research are:

1. To develop an understanding of the discourses affecting young people's realities of school exclusion via an interdisciplinary approach to the language.
2. To share this understanding with practitioners for the benefit of those involved.

In working towards these aims, the thesis will address the following questions:

1. Via a combination of CDS and YPR approaches,
   a) What macro level discursive power relations may be influencing young people's realities of exclusion?
   b) How do young people resist these discourses at the micro level of interactions with adults in education settings?
   c) How can an understanding of the impact of language be best shared with those involved in exclusion?
2. What are the interdisciplinary possibilities of CDS and YPR approaches to advance methodological practice in both fields?

Chapter 1 details the policy and practice of school exclusion in England and how it is defined and enacted, and the extent of exclusions. This is followed by a brief review of current

[4] Encompassing words, images, sounds, writing, body language etc.

literature investigating the genesis of exclusion policies and their impact on young people. This is contextualised by an overview of mainstream education exclusion policies compared with those in Alternative Provision/ PRUs. This review draws on literature in the field of Education, where a significant proportion of exclusion research is situated (Lanas and Brunila, 2019). As this thesis draws on the context, but not the discipline, of education, this literature is provided as a contextual introduction. The chapter illustrates how this context aligns with the discursive, ethnographic, participatory approaches of the thesis, as described in Chapter 2.

Chapter 2 takes a CDS approach to frame literature exploring the ways in which young people are positioned by macro level discourses in school exclusion, and how they resist these discourses at the micro level of interaction. It begins by presenting the theoretical underpinning of critical realism to define what is meant by 'realities' of school exclusion. CDS is then presented as an approach to interrogate discourse in school exclusions. While CDS is a methodological approach, it is included in the literature review to frame the notions of macro level discourses of youth risk, deficiency, and the ideal learner, and how these situate excluded young people in disempowered spaces. Via an intersectional lens (Collins and Bilge, 2016), this chapter draws on academic literature to argue that deficiency discourses operate in education via discourses of class, gender, race, and medicalisation to cast particular groups of young people as disruptive to established educational paradigms, and to place them in lived contexts of risk. Finally, a CDS lens helps establish what excluded young people offer as alternative discourses of critique, and how these alternative discourses work to resist the power of hegemonic discriminatory discourses.

Chapter 3 outlines CDS and Youth Participatory Research approaches applicable to this research, and presents a new model of participation developed specifically for this project, and with the potential for wider application: the Power and Participation (P and P) model. P and P is a CDS-informed model for assessing youth participation, based on Cahill and Dadvand's (2018) thinking-tool. It directs attention to the macro level social discourses operating in the contexts of youth participation, and the ways in which young people resist discriminatory discourses (Lohmeyer, 2020). As such, this model makes a unique contribution to the fields of PR and CDS. To the former it offers a way to ascertain linguistic manifestations of power in youth participatory spaces, and to the latter, it demonstrates

how CDS research can practically re-focus attention on alternative discourses as well as the macro-level discourses inciting power imbalances – a noted critique of CDS (Breeze, 2012; Nartley, 2022). Finally, the chapter describes and critiques the different stages of the methodology produced in collaboration with participants. It engages with the context of the PRU, researcher positionality, ethnographic research, semi-structured interviews, thematic analysis, co-analysis, and multimodal arts-based methods.

Chapter 4 presents the analyses of the data generated. It begins with a CDS-informed thematic analysis of the ethnographic fieldnotes and semi-structured interviews. This analysis responds to research question 1. It explores where participants (adults and young people) identified hegemonic discourses and their impact, and the ways in which young people complied, resisted and/or struggled against them. Drawing together the major discourses of class, academic pressure, gender, ethnicity and criminalisation, the results demonstrate how discriminatory discourses justify the labelling of young people as a risky/at-risk group in need of control, surveillance, and regulation, and the silencing effects of this in the exclusion process. Further, the analysis highlights the deployment of alternative discourses by both young people and adults using the affective registers of anger and humour. An explanation of how the P and P framework was applied in undertaking an interdisciplinary analysis of the young people's participation, specifically via the ethnographic fieldnotes of their creation and co-analysis of artworks based on their experiences of exclusion. This chapter demonstrates how the P and P model supports understanding of discursive power relations in the participatory process, namely, that young people identify these discourses and challenge them. Finally, each discrete artwork is analysed via different analytical approaches within Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MMCDA), which enables a nuanced, micro level analysis of creative discursive practices. The artwork demonstrates the power of arts-based methods to articulate alternative, multimodal discourses of school exclusion. It demonstrates that 'performing social change begins with artful ways of seeing and knowing ourselves and the world in which we live' in the context of education (Finley, 2005:692). The chapter further demonstrates, in relation to data generated at all stages, how discursive discrimination precludes young people from participating in alternative ways to compliance resistance or struggle, creating a cycle of discipline and exclusion.

Chapter five summarises the main findings of the thesis, its contributions to the fields of school exclusion research and methodological advances in CDS, and PR, and discusses the imitations of the study. It provides recommendations for language-based policy interventions to reduce school exclusion based on the young people's perspectives, experiences, and ideals for education. Finally, the thesis ends in arguing for the urgency of centring youth voice in education contexts, both inside and outside of research.

1.5 Education policy and its impact on school exclusion

The purpose of this section is to provide an insight into some of the experiences of young people and adults in the events leading up to school exclusion, the journey to Alternative Provision, and the policy and societal mechanisms that influence these events. In doing so, it also contextualises this study via engaging with the literature in the field of Education with respect to school exclusion.

1.5.1 Young people's Educational Ideals

Before providing an overview of how mainstream education works in England, this section starts with a reflection on what (excluded) young people say they need from education. This provides a base from which to assess how far the structures and policies in mainstream education are enabling schools to provide what children need. Research suggests that some of the most important foundations of education for (excluded) young people are relationships, belonging, tailored support, a voice, a choice, and a relevant curriculum reflective of their identities, cultures, and interests (Malcolm, 2021; IntegratED, 2023)

Malcolm's (2021) literature review on relationships in Alternative Provision emphasises the power of genuine, caring, knowledgeable, and unforced relationships between adults and young people. The literature states that such relationships are lacking in mainstream schools, and that young people note their power to influence their emotional and academic trajectories, both positively and negatively. Similarly, Martin-Denham's (2020:27) report into enablers and barriers to mainstream education draws on literature emphasising the positive effects of belonging in school, namely 'children need to feel related to the school environment and to have positive attitudes towards classwork, teachers and their peers'. Feeling unconnected to these aspects of the school environment is associated with

disruptive behaviours, low engagement, and low academic achievement (Martin-Denham, 2020).

Malcolm (2021) notes the potential of positive relationships with adults to positively influence young people's feelings towards their school environment and their engagement within it. Malcolm (2021) also notes the significance of feeling heard and represented in school in initiating a sense of belonging and positive relationships with those in school. Akala (2017) and Cushing (2020) argue for the need to centre the diverse knowledges of young people, particularly those experiencing intersectional marginalisation or discrimination, and by doing so, supporting young people to be genuinely included in school curricula and cultures. This can also work against the pervasive, silent discriminatory attitudes school cultures can reproduce (DfE, 2019b), and thus facilitate space for young people's identities to be expressed and understood.

More broadly, young people in AP note the positives of a more varied curriculum with reduced exam pressure (Education Select Committee, 2018; Malcolm, 2021). Curricula that involved more vocational opportunities and flexible time to spend getting to know staff provided time to facilitate belonging, and engagement with activities the young people saw as useful and interesting (Malcolm, 2021). This perspective is reiterated by young people globally, along with the emphasis on belonging and being heard as 'whole people' in schools (McCormick, 2019:online). The importance of relationships and being heard is crucial in education for young people, as without these concepts young people's participation in education is curtailed, with them becoming consequential stakeholders in education because it does not work for their purposes (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2015). Being placed in such a position reduces belonging and engagement and elicits frustration from young people and tensions between them and adults.

The above priorities work to facilitate other practical aspects that render the school environment safe, enjoyable, interesting, and useful for young people. Young people reiterate the importance of calm environments with a lack of stressful noises (Martin-Denham, 2020), timely access to support services for disability, mental health, and learning needs (Martin-Denham, 2020), and financial support (McCormick, 2019). Malcolm's (2021) review also notes the potential of AP staff to connect with multiple relevant agencies to support young people with the above.

1.5.2 Mainstream education in England: policy and pressures on schools

Sir Ken Robinson, an international advisor on education in the arts to government and other organisations, argued that globally education systems, are 'predicated on the idea of academic ability' because 'around the world, there were no public systems of education, really, before the 19th century. They all came into being to meet the needs of industrialism' (2006:online). Robinson (2006:online) outlines the impact of this on the theory behind education policies and practice as being

> rooted on two ideas. Number one, that the most useful subjects for work are at the top. So you were probably steered benignly away from things at school when you were a kid, things you liked, on the grounds that you would never get a job doing that. […] Don't do music, you're not going to be a musician; don't do art, you won't be an artist […]
>
> And the second is academic ability, which has really come to dominate our view of intelligence, […] and the consequence is that many highly-talented, brilliant, creative people think they're not, because the thing they were good at school wasn't valued, or was actually stigmatized.

Robinson's focus is on the exclusion of children's capabilities via narrowed curricula. Ashurst and Venn (2014) also argue that industrialism's impact on schools' curricula is exclusive, and works to categorise poor children as simultaneously criminal, dangerous, and in need of taking up 'useful' labour to exclude them. Ashurst and Venn (2014) lay out the impact of these historic policy discourses. Drawing on Foucault's governmentality approach (see section 2.1), they argue:

> Exclusion in one form or another, from transportation, 'export' and transplantation to the colonies to specialised institutions such as Industrial and Reformatory Schools and Young Offender Institutions has been the preferred strategy of containment generated by the priorities of biopolitical power. […] [R]adical discourse developed alongside, guiding the establishment of alternative approaches and institutions that, whilst belonging to a history of 'progressive' education, have made little inroads into exclusionary practices. […] Our argument is that the institutionalisation of exclusion as a strategy for dealing with the category of children targeted in previous policies is rearticulated today in the fact that those who now tend to be subject to school exclusionary procedures have profiles that match those affected in the past. (Ashurst and Venn, 2014:155-156)

Their views are echoed in other works taking Foucauldian-informed approaches to the education system and school exclusion (Slee, 2011; Chadderton, 2014; Perera, 2020). Research focusing on the drivers of school exclusion indicates how these ideas operate within the education policy-scape to determine structures of mainstream education that work against teachers and students attaining or sustaining the ideals outlined in the previous section (Middleton and Kay, 2019).

Systematic cuts to schools and wider public services over the past decade has left them financially ill-equipped to provide support for young people, with the lack of support most keenly affecting those students already experiencing social disadvantage and discrimination (Martin-Denham, 2020). Combined with entrenched policies of standardised testing in 'academic' subjects as a means of proving school efficacy and performance (Education Select Committee, 2018), and the ruthlessness through which these policy priorities can be enforced upon teachers (Perryman et al., 2023), the ideals of education outlined by young people above are increasingly challenging for schools to meet, as they are frequently not incentivised to do so. This section explains why, and how these ideologies and their effects manifest in mainstream educational structures. Finally, it describes how these structures influence particular groups of young people to be viewed as disruptive leading to 'zero-tolerance' disciplinary environments, and more disruptive behaviour from students as a consequence.[5]

League tables

Young people in primary and secondary school are assessed through standardised tests. These tests are used to compare the quality of UK schools with other countries in league tables, such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) – which assesses the competencies of 15–16-year-olds in reading, mathematics and science (Male, 2022). The national assessment of young people's progress in school – Progress 8 - aims to capture the progress pupils make from the end of primary school to when they leave secondary school.

[5] This section mainly focuses on recent education policy to provide a snapshot of current experiences of excluded young people and those in schools. For an overview of historic policies and discourses see Ashurst and Venn (2014), Middleton and Kay (2019) and Perera (2020).

It is a type of value-added measure, which means that pupils' results are compared to others' nationally (The Good Schools Guide, 2024).

Attainment 8 measures student ability in eight qualifications. Although 'every increase in grade a pupil achieves in their Attainment 8 subjects counts towards a school's Progress 8 score', (DfE, 2022a:14) in Attainment 8 (the KS4 assessment in Progress 8), there is an emphasis on Maths and English:

- maths (double weighted) and English (double weighted, if both English language and English literature are sat)
- 3 qualifications that count in the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) measures […]
- 3 further qualifications that can be GCSE qualifications (including EBacc subjects) or technical awards from the DfE approved list (DfE, 2022a:14)

Considering that Ebacc requires one Maths, two English, three Sciences, one language and one humanities subject, five out of the eight subjects which count towards Attainment 8 must be Maths, English, and other writing-based subjects. A student could not, in this framework, have an Attainment 8 score where over half of the subjects they study are Arts, or technical awards such as Cookery, Child Development and Care, Construction, or Engineering. Thus, schools are encouraged to view and prioritise 'academic' ability (Robinson, 2006).

Although some schools have more freedom in their choice of curriculum, schools nationally are judged on their quality via student attainment in standardised tests, particularly English, Maths, and Science. Therefore, timetables are likely to be weighted more towards these valued subjects, narrowing the curriculum, and placing greater emphasis on student attainment in these subjects. This emphasis is the antithesis of the varied, vocational, tailored curriculum young people desire, and works to remove time for relationship building with staff. A narrow curriculum works to prioritise young people who are adept at the preferred, higher value subjects that enable the school to compete (Robinson, 2006), and works to exclude those with capabilities outside of these subjects – both pedagogically in classroom learning practices, and literally in the event of exclusion (Education Select Committee, 2018). The Education Select Committee expressed this concern, highlighting that students who are less likely to perform 'well' in exams are those young people who already experience the effects of social discrimination, and that this is interconnected with

disruptive behaviour and exclusion (2018:online). Furthermore, the stakes for school performance are so high that young people who are disruptive risk underperformance in exams and are thus a risk to schools' Ofsted ratings.

Ofsted

Schools are assessed by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) inspectors in the following areas: (1) quality of education, (2) behaviour and attitudes, (3) personal development, and (4) leadership and management. The grading they can achieve spans Outstanding, Good, Requires Improvement, and Inadequate across these areas, but schools are given one overall grading (Ofsted, 2022:online). The pressure on schools to demonstrate pupil progression in Maths, English, and other writing-based subjects is heightened in Ofsted inspections.

The importance of academic attainment is emphasised in the criteria for schools with 'outstanding' quality of education: 'Pupils consistently achieve highly, particularly the most disadvantaged. Pupils with SEND achieve exceptionally well.' (Ofsted, 2022:online). The guidance also stipulates that the curriculum should not be 'narrow,' but 'ambitious and designed to give all pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND, the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life.' However, considering the pressures placed on schools via league tables and academisation (see below), schools are arguably disincentivised from offering broader curricula that would negatively impact their Attainment 8 score.

How behaviours and attitudes are assessed is interwoven with notions of academic progression. For example, schools are told they should aim for 'a calm and orderly environment in the school and the classroom, as this is essential for pupils to be able to learn' (Ofsted, 2022:online). In addition, 'a strong focus on attendance and punctuality' is desirable 'so that disruption is minimised,' and that 'developing pupils' motivation and positive attitudes to learning […] are important predictors of attainment' (Ofsted, 2022:online). A school with outstanding behaviour and attitudes is defined as one in which students demonstrate consistently high levels of respect for others, along with self-regulatory attitudes towards their education and the school environment (Ofsted, 2022:online). A school attains an inadequate rating in behaviour and attitudes if inspectors

view young people's 'lack of engagement and persistent low-level and/or high-level wilful disruption' and this contributes to 'reduced learning and/or disorderly classrooms.' (Ofsted, 2022:online). Thus, learning, academic progression and behaving acceptably are conflated. Behaviour *for learning* is crucial for schools to demonstrate if they are to avoid poor Ofsted ratings and their consequences. Schools are provided with recommendations of how they can develop environments which foster behaviour for learning, and these are variably inclusive or disciplinary.

Although there is a focus on young people's personal development in Ofsted inspection criteria, defined (broadly) as engagement with personal, social, health and economic education, relationships and sex education […] democracy, [and] a set of positive personal traits, dispositions and virtues […] so that they reflect wisely, learn eagerly, behave with integrity and cooperate consistently well with others' (Ofsted, 2022:online). NICE[6] (2022:42) also advocate training for teachers to ensure

> all teachers can recognise children and young people's pastoral needs, and that they understand the wider context of the pupils' lived experiences and how they interact with their environment.

However, there is less incentive for schools to focus on such pastoral needs than on students' academic progression. This bias towards academic progression is evident in how schools are compared nationally via exam results and on post-16 destinations, rather than via a framework which assesses young people's personal development. Throughout Ofsted assessment areas, there is a varying focus on pupil well-being, either via the need for schools to support the mental health of young people, to prevent bullying, or in relationships with adults and students. However, there is also no framework used in the UK with which to assess pupil well-being. For instance, UNESCO's Happy Schools framework (Bin Mahfooz and Norrmén-Smith, 2022). When compared with PISA and league tables, there is less incentive for schools to focus on pupil well-being. The impact of this focus is felt

[6] The National Institute of Clinical Excellence responded to Public Health England's call for guidelines for schools that included an agenda for health and tackling inequalities. They argued that in 'implementing the guideline, schools and wider system partners would need to pay particular attention to marginalised or excluded groups, both in terms of their involvement and in terms of tailoring the recommendations to meet the needs of those groups. The committee made special consideration of the needs of children and young people with learning difficulties and special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).' (NICE, 2022:online)

keenly by young people. Recent research by The Children's Society (2022:28) found that overall happiness with school and schoolwork declines significantly with age (when the importance of exam success is impressed with most urgency on children), particularly amongst children living in deprived communities, and that of '24 European countries included in the analysis, children aged 15 in the UK had the greatest fear of failure and the lowest life satisfaction.' The Education Select Committee's (2018:online) report reiterated how 'exam stress and subject choice, along with negative impacts of social media, all impacted on [young people's] mental health and well-being,' along with factors in their lives outside school that worked to impact their behaviour and 'ability to cope' in school. These were compounded by schools and wider support services struggling via financial deficit and competitive pressures related to academic performance to support them.

The negative impact on adults from the intense pressure placed on schools is also well-documented. Perryman et al. (2023) label Ofsted inspections as a toxic regime:

> [Teachers] labour under the shadow of looming snapshot inspections, all too often by inspectors not fully trained or experienced in the types of schools they are judging, and the results can be devastating. Pupils are harmed by a system under which schools are forced to make decisions about teaching and learning for the wrong, accountability-driven reasons. Our high-stakes system is neither supportive nor effective and displays a lack of trust in education professionals. (Perryman et al., 2023:8)

Drawing on national survey results from professionals in schools, the authors argue that policies imposed on schools via Ofsted are antithetical to the motives of teachers entering the profession to such an extreme extent that it has led to high numbers of teachers leaving the profession, variably due to anxiety, depression and even suicide (Perryman et al., 2023). The consistently high demands, pressure, stress, and resulting intense mental health challenges in the teaching profession demonstrates that the way in which policy expectations are placed on schools can be particularly ruthless, and that this should be reviewed as an educational and public heath priority (Waters and McKee, 2023).

Achieving good Ofsted gradings is more challenging for schools serving deprived areas: "the more deprived the pupil intake the more negative the Ofsted judgement" (Bousted, 2022:37). This additional challenge is due to the intersectional disadvantage often faced by their student population, and the comparable deficit of time and resources available for

schools to address it. Crucially, the onus on exam performance means there is little time for teachers and students to develop knowledgeable, trusting relationships, particularly in secondary schools (Martin-Denham, 2020). The States of Mind project (2022:online) surveyed students' and teachers' perceptions and behaviours during Ofsted inspections, and concluded that Ofsted exacerbates 'teaching to the test and leads to a culture of memorisation', and encourages the development of an 'education system that values results above human flourishing, stifles creativity, identity, personal development and often negatively impacts the mental health of young people'.

Academisation and financial pressure

The combination of the academisation process (described below) and financial pressures on schools exacerbate schools' preoccupations with academic performance, and thus the exclusion of young people who are not achieving the grades expected of them.

Aside from private schools (non-government funded and fee paying), the types of primary and secondary schools funded by government (state schools) are:

- community schools, which are sometimes called local authority maintained schools - they are not influenced by business or religious groups and follow the national curriculum.
- foundation schools and voluntary schools, which are funded by the local authority but have more freedom to change the way they do things […]
- academies and free schools, which are run by not-for-profit academy trusts, are independent from the local authority - they have more freedom to change how they run things and can follow a different curriculum.
- grammar schools, which can be run by the local authority, a foundation body or an academy trust - they select their pupils based on academic ability and there is an entrance test (Gov.uk, 2023:online).

Male's (2022) calculations indicate that over half the schools in the UK are now run by academy trusts rather than by local authorities, with 80% of secondary schools now having academy status. The academisation process is argued as being representative of government initiatives since the 1990s to improve exam performance, and thus school performance. In 2010, The Academies Act allowed for the Secretary of State to require the academisation of any school that was underperforming, and subsequently these schools were forced to become academies (Male, 2022).

Perera (2020) argues that discourses of academic proficiency, 'basic standards' in education, and the 'deserving', 'gifted and talented' students have been drawn upon to justify policies that have marketitised and academised mainstream education, echoing Robinson (2006) and Ashurst and Venn (2014). The 1988 Education reform act laid the groundwork for the academisation agenda, where schools were governed by principles of open enrolment and local management. This placed schools in a marketised environment, as parents were allowed to choose from several schools (subject to geographical limits), and the school then received funding for that child. Wilby (2013:online) argues that this has resulted in schools competing for 'customers', and that 'their business expands according to their perceived success, determined mainly by test and exam results published centrally. As in any market, customers look for trusted brands and 'increasingly, private companies own and run chains of a dozen schools or more' (Wilby, 2013:online). Perera (2020) argues that the pervasiveness of public-private partnerships in the education system are justified in policy by the need to improve schools failing to meet national grade averages, and relatedly, by the argument that education and cultural engagement is a route to social mobility for deprived communities. The coalition government's Big Society agenda in 2010 demonstrated these principles, firstly by inviting the private and voluntary sector to take part in the education system (academisation), and secondly in their funding of Teach First, a graduate training scheme for teachers who completed their degrees at top universities to undertake their training in schools situated in deprived areas (Perera, 2020).

In terms of exclusion, academisation is viewed as a key factor for incentivising competition between schools, and subsequently, the exclusion of students who are underperforming academically. Male (2022:237) critiques the emphasis placed on exam results by the education system as working in tandem with the academisation process to exclude students who are less likely to perform well in exams: 'to sustain high proportions of success it is possible [for schools] to remove the scores of lower-performing students from their overall average scores through relocation to other types of provision. New types of schools, created by the Academies Act, 2011, is one such way of shifting the accountability focus'. Therefore, academisation is argued to have fuelled the existence of AP, and of the exclusion of those who were not demonstrably ideal learners by their academic performance or their behaviour. Analysis by *The Observer* supports this argument, indicating that academies with

strict, zero-tolerance behaviour policies exclude 30 times more pupils than the national average (Fazackerley and Savage, 2023).

The Education Select Committee's (2018) report emphasised that mainstream schools are under financial pressure, and that this pressure was connected to exclusion, because providing support for students' well-being, those with SEND, and those who could be classed as difficult and disruptive, is expensive. This financial pressure results in schools' lack of financial resources to afford teaching assistants or pastoral support for students, which 'would often help keep pupils in mainstream schools' and enable schools to 'identify and support problems and provide the early intervention that is necessary' (2018:online), and the time and cost of providing assessments for SEND:

> The National Education Union told us that excluding pupils can save schools thousands of pounds, while the Association of Youth Offending Team Managers suggested that schools could be deliberately not identifying pupils as having SEND, as it is more difficult to permanently exclude a pupil with SEND. (The Education Select Committee, 2018:online)

Exclusion can therefore be the result of financial pressures on schools and the priority of demonstrating academic progression of students. Ultimately, the price, that the schools have neither the time nor the resources to pay, is paid by the young people, as their quality of education provision decreases.

Headteachers contributing to the Educational Select Committee (2018) report comment that schools, 'who retain children with challenging behaviour risk disruption, poor outcomes (significant impact on Progress 8, EBacc etc), low attendance, low staff morale, increased intervention costs […], complaints from parents, high exclusions costs and ultimately, critical and high stakes Ofsted gradings.' This report again reinforces the challenges for mainstream schools to be inclusive, but having little capacity, resources or incentive to do so.

The House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts (2022) emphasised that mainstream schools in England are at a financial disadvantage to support children at-risk of exclusion, and the frameworks through which schools are judged do not incentivise them to do so. These issues are compounded by the needs of children outside of school which have grown

in intensity due to a decade of austerity and cuts to public services that support children and families in deprived communities (Martin-Denham, 2020).

1.6 The journey to Alternative Provision

This section describes the different stages of schooling, their structures, and how they influence the exclusion of young people.

1.6.1 Mainstream school

Primary school

Exclusion rates in primary schools are significantly lower than secondary (DfE, 2019a), and the structures and expectations placed on primary schools provide an insight as to why.

It is common for one class to have 1-2 teachers for every subject for the whole academic year, they tend to be supported by teaching assistants and other support staff. This structure also means that children are taught in the same peer groups, in familiar areas of the school building throughout the academic year. Therefore, children spend concentrated amounts of time with other children and a small number of adults they get to know well. Children may be split up into smaller groups based on ability or SEND for certain subjects but stay with the same core of 30 (approx.) peers and teacher(s) throughout the academic year. The student population overall is smaller than secondary schools, so there are generally less students and teachers to engage with day-to-day.

Primary schools are arguably more feminised environments than secondary schools, and as Chadderton (2014) notes, have received critique for being so because of the perceived deficiency of female-teacher disciplinary role models for young boys. High numbers of female staff in primary schools aside, the structures of primary school are considered feminised because of the onus on stable relationship development between adults and children. Martin-Denham (2020:27) notes that children are more likely to have 'a sense of belonging […] in primary school' than 'for some children in secondary education, who [feel] a lack of connectedness, due to feelings of inadequacy and academic failure'. This contrast may be due to the less pressurised nature of testing in primary (at least in younger years) in comparison to the end of secondary school and correlates with Robinson's (2006) assertion

that children are gradually steered away from subjects not considered 'academic' more so as they age.

Children take Scholastic Assessment Tests (SATs) at the end of primary school, in English (Grammar, Punctuation, Spelling and Reading) and Maths. Other subjects (such as History, Art, PE, Geography) have not historically been assessed in the form of standardised testing (Roberts, 2022). All tests are writing-based. The year 6 tests are more important, as these determine children's predicted grades (and therefore subject settings) in secondary school. The results of these tests also contribute to assessments of the school's effectiveness via Ofsted. However, their usefulness in assessing academic capability is critiqued by secondary school staff due to their relationship with primary school performance measures (Martin, 2022).

Excluded young people generally identify experiences in primary as more positive than secondary, pointing to better relationships with staff and peers through a closer, calmer, more stable learning environment (Gooding, 2014).

However, since the COVID-19 pandemic, exclusions in primary are rising. Anne Longfield, the former Children's Commissioner (Fazackerley, 2023a:online), argued that this is connected to the lack of support available to families during the pandemic, to years of cuts to public services, and the resulting intensity of children's needs being unmet, and disruptive behaviour correspondingly rising:

> "We've been told that many children starting school have speech and language delays because they have had dummies in their mouths for so long over the pandemic […] These are children with very high needs and real difficulties dealing with social situations in school, who aren't able to cope with change and can be very physically disruptive and dangerous to themselves and others."

Secondary school

School exclusion peaks in secondary school, where the student population increases as multiple primary schools' final year cohorts merge into a secondary school with established year groups aged 11-16. Young people are often taught in classes of 30 students (approx.) depending on the student population, categorised by academic year and subject capability, although the latter can also be drawn upon to organise students within classes. Each subject

is taught by a subject specialist, so students will be taught by numerous adults, and move between several classrooms throughout the school day. Considering the increase in student and staff population, secondary school students experience more movement, noise, people, and change in comparison to primary school students.

Exam pressures also increase in secondary school. Students are assessed via a General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) in their allocated subjects. Compulsory GCSEs are Maths, English (Language/ Literature) and Sciences. Other subjects available include Design and Technology (for example, Graphic Design, Food Technology), Foreign Languages, Art, Drama, History, Geography, Politics, Physical Education, Religious Studies, ICT, and Citizenship. Young people usually take nine GCSEs between year 10 and 11, with final exams in year 11. Most GCSEs are assessed through writing.

The transition from primary school to secondary is a notable area of challenge for young people, and in the research into the drivers of exclusion (Gill et al., 2017; DfE, 2019a; Martin-Denham, 2020). Topping's (2011) review of transition notes the stressful nature of peer networks and the disruption of self-image due to the change in size of school, an increase in bullying at the start of secondary school, reduced time to develop relationships with teachers, and falling motivation levels due to loss of self-esteem in a more competitive learning environment. The latter is argued to be exacerbated by primary schools feeling pressured to drill children for SATs due to the pressure of school performance measures (Martin, 2022), meaning that when young people reach secondary their grades drop.

Excluded young people note these stressors during transition (Gooding, 2014). These stressors are also more keenly felt by young people at risk of exclusion because of the intersectional discrimination and trauma they are likely to face because of their social ascribed identities and contexts of disadvantage. For example, young people who are (un)diagnosed with SEND may find strict repetitive curricula based in written forms of learning more challenging and tiring than those without SEND. Similarly, children from Black, minority ethnic, or Traveller communities, who are justice-involved, or in local authority care may find schools' curricula and demands less focused on their needs and interests compared with children with who experience less disruption, challenge or discrimination in their home lives (see section 2.2).

Thus, the impact of exam-driven cultures in schools, teaching to the test, narrowed curricula and expectations of behaviour for learning, create environments of increased stress and challenging relationships between teachers and young people who deviate from these high-stakes pressures. These environments limit and undermine adult capacity to develop relationships with young people, particularly those who already experience intersectional disadvantage, discrimination and trauma outside of school. These environments can lead teachers to become hyper-vigilant to behaviour that disrupts learning, particularly written forms of education. The impact on young people is what Groundwater-Smith et al. (2015) describe as young people becoming consequential stakeholders in education, and furthermore that young people can become hyper-regulated to meet the academic and behavioural requirements set by school performance frameworks. These environments drive frustration and vigilance from staff and students because they do not serve young peoples' (or likely staff's) purposes, and thus incite viewably disruptive behaviour.

The pressures placed on staff and students in secondary schools via education policies catalyse the identification of disruptive behaviour, disruptive behaviour itself, and hyper-regulated environments. In 2019, the Schools' Standards Minister reiterated the academic progression discourse as the rationale for 'robustly' implemented behaviour policies:

> Calm and safe schools benefit all students, allowing them to concentrate fully on their studies. Just one instance of bad behaviour in a classroom can derail an entire lesson and hold back every other pupil in the room. […] With £10million of funding, the support provided to schools will allow teachers to get on with what they do best – teaching – and empower school leaders to implement their behaviour policies correctly and robustly. (DfE, 2019c:online)

It is these behaviour policies that serve to define which behaviours are disruptive.

1.6.2 Disruptive behaviour

Disruptive behaviour is defined as: physical assault or verbal abuse against students and adults, bullying, racist abuse, sexual misconduct, drug and alcohol related behaviour, damage, theft, and 'persistent disruptive behaviour' (DfE and National Statistics, 2022b:online). Persistent disruptive behaviour is the most frequent reason provided for exclusion (ibid) and is critiqued for its vague definition and subjective appropriation in schools. Trauma informed research notes the connection between behaviours such as these

and adverse childhood experiences (van der Kolk, 2015). Thus, the behaviour young people are excluded for, particularly when considering the demographics of those excluded (DfE, 2019b) is arguably a communication of stress, trauma, and challenging life circumstances related to poverty, violence, crime, and discrimination. Children categorised by these identities are more likely to experience trauma, behave disruptively, and are more likely to be discriminated against and *viewed as* disruptive, because of these very identities.

The behaviours connected to discrimination and trauma are the antithesis of the desired 'calm and safe' behaviour believed to conducive for learning. Schools appear to be increasingly sensitive to these 'disruptive' behaviours in recent years, with continuing calls over the past decade for increased disciplinary measures in schools to 'tackle poor behaviour' (DfE, 2019c:online) and in the rise of 'zero-tolerance' behaviour policies. Perera (2020) details the continuing focus on young people's disruptive behaviour (both in and outside of school) in the UK from the 1980s, and argues that it is grounded in New Right and neo-liberal perspectives seeking to variably ensure that young people know their place, that teachers should discipline students who do not (disruptive students), and that young people who have been excluded should remain outside of the mainstream system. Perera (2020) therefore argues that there is an entrenched political incentive, materialised in policy, that encourages particular groups of young people (distinctly for Perera, Black, working-class youth) to be designated as disruptive in school, and for them to be punished.

The pandemic is indicated to have exacerbated traumatic, challenging life circumstances for young people and their families, and thus disruptive behaviour and school exclusion (Weale, 2023). Anne Longfield recently commented that post-pandemic, both primary and secondary schools are,

> buckling under the pressure of children with increasingly complex needs and being almost the only ones left in the system to deal with them. […] These schools don't want to exclude vulnerable children, but the kind of serious incidents they might have seen every month or two they are now seeing frequently, and they are getting more extreme. [and] when schools look around for support or referrals, too often there is no one there. (Fazackerley, 2023b:online)

1.6.3 Official and hidden exclusion

Official school exclusion can only be enacted by the Headteacher and must only be used 'where nothing else will do' in response to young people's (persistent) breaches of their school's behaviour policy (DfE, 2019a:3).

Every child's journey to AP is different, but in general terms, official exclusion roughly follows this sequence of events:

- A student breaks the behaviour policy (see DfE and National Statistics, 2022a).
- Interventions are attempted, and could encompass restorative conversations with staff, moving young people to a specialist support group for SEND/ behaviour, isolation, parent-teacher meetings, or managed moves (more below).
- The interventions do not have the desired effect, and the student continues to breach the behaviour policy.
- Exclusion is enacted by the Headteacher on the advice of staff. Young people can be excluded temporarily or permanently. The latter can take a long time to implement because of the evidence required to exclude. Parents can also appeal the decision to exclude at this stage, where meetings are arranged between legal representatives, the school, the parent and the local council. These meetings can be distressing and disruptive for both students and parents to navigate emotionally and financially (Kulz, 2015; Middleton and Kay, 2019).
- The young person is legally required to begin their education at another education placement (AP) within 5 days of being excluded (DfE, 2017). If the appeal fails, the young person is then moved to AP. Middleton and Kay (2019:50) note the range of emotions impacting excluded young people and their families from the ordeal of exclusion as encompassing 'intense feelings of anger, distress, devastation and anxiety about parental and carer reactions to the news of exclusion […] feeling rejected, annoyed, that they have been treated unfairly, feared and branded as menaces', and unfairness 'owing to the perception that there was a lack of consistency between teachers' application of the sanctions for rule breaking'.

However, on the last point, the availability of AP places often determines when young people are excluded. For example, young people may have persistently or severely breached the schools' behaviour policy, but due to the high demand for AP there is nowhere for them to go immediately. The school therefore must wait until a place becomes available, which can lead to schools finding less consequential breaches of the behaviour policy in order to exclude a young person for a more serious breach that happened some time ago. The rise in exclusions has created a higher demand for AP places (Fazackerley, 2023b:online), and means that mainstream schools are more likely to find themselves needing to find

alternatives to official exclusion until there is a place available in AP, or to wait and exclude for minor indiscretions of the behaviour policy.

Gill et al. (2017) observed the following unofficial forms of exclusion:

- managed moves – where an agreement is made between two mainstream schools for a child to be educated temporarily at a different mainstream school.
- off-site 'inclusion' units/ in-school behaviour units – different areas of the mainstream school separate from the rest of the student population where students are taught in small groups.
- illegal exclusion/ 'off-rolling' – where schools encourage parents to enter an agreement to remove their child from mainstream to home educate them, or enrol them in another school, 'as though they have moved house or made an independent decision to change local school.' (Gill et al., 2017:11). Bei, Knowler and Butt (2021:online) note that 'there is a good deal of confusion about what constitutes off-rolling, which in turn makes it hard to record' but draw on an Education Policy Institute report into 'unexplained exits' from school to underscore its prevalence. In 2021, 1/12 students in year 11 'disappeared' from school rolls with no explanation (theorised as schools 'gaming' the grades for their performance outcomes by removing underachieving students), 1/10 of all secondary school students experienced an unexplained exit, and the majority of those were pupils experiencing disadvantage.

Gill et al. (2017:13-14) term these forms of exclusion 'hidden exclusions' and calculate that young people who are officially and unofficially excluded amounted to 48,000, 'equivalent to one in every 200 pupils in this country'. However, when considering the numbers of young people who truant, and young people placed in isolation, the frequency and number of young people being excluded from school is potentially much higher than one in 200.

Isolation (or 'seclusion') is the practice of young people being removed from class to complete their education, silently and solitarily, in 'isolation booths' for hours, days, weeks, and sometimes months on end (Perraudin, 2018:online; Martin-Denham, 2020). Recently, the DfE (2022:12) revised their guidance on behaviour and exclusions, calling for schools to 'routinely collect data on removal [isolation] and regularly monitor this to identify patterns of use and evaluate its effectiveness.' There are no official statistics on the use of isolation as of yet, but a preliminary exploration by O'Brien (2022:online), indicates that young people being placed in isolation at least once in the school year ranges from 8%-62%, with a substantial proportion (25%-65%) of those young people being classed as neurodivergent.

Recent legal action taken by parents over one academy trust's behaviour policy for young people in isolation reflects the zero-tolerance punitive disciplinary approach taken in isolation. The behaviour policy at the school stated that young people in isolation were not allowed to 'tap, chew, swing on their chairs, shout out, sigh, or any other unacceptable or disruptive behaviour'; additionally, young people 'cannot sleep or put their heads on the desk. They must sit up and face forward', and 'communication of any kind with any other student is not allowed … You will be escorted to get your lunch, but you must stay silent' (Perraudin, 2018:online). Young people describe it as akin to being in prison (Harris, 2021). Young people in Martin-Denham's (2020:51) research said that in isolation they were ignored by staff, 'not taught, just worksheets; just had to figure that shit out for myself, but that's life isn't it', and that they felt physically sick, sad, lonely, depressed, agitated and trapped; although some in this research also said they broke minor rules (such as wearing the wrong uniform) to get sent to isolation in order to escape their wider school environment.

Martin-Denham (2020:31) notes Barker et al.'s (2010) suggestion that what is now known as isolation was a response to pressures on schools to raise academic and behavioural standards, reduce exclusions and 'to remove 'undesirable' children from public spaces during school hours. Furthermore, Martin-Denham (2020:32) argues that 'the option to isolate children has led to schools having less inclusive approaches to behaviour management. With local authorities having increasing numbers of academies beyond their control, they are powerless to intervene', and furthermore that,

> The attitude of the Department of Education is in stark contrast to the guidelines issued by the Department of Health (2014) regarding the use of restrictive practices: restrictive practices should never be used as punishment. The Mental Health Code of Practice states unequivocally that 'seclusion can be a traumatic experience for any individual but can have particularly adverse implications on the emotional development of a child or young person' (Centre for the Advancement of Positive Behaviour Support (CAPBS, 2015).

Tillson and Oxley (2020) and Martin-Denham (2020) note how isolation is in stark contrast to the upholding of children's Human Rights.

Considering the unknown frequency of unofficial forms of exclusion, and that schools are advised to permanently exclude young people only as 'a last resort, used only where

nothing else will do' (DfE, 2019a:3), we can assume that there is a significant potential for permanently excluded young people to have been excluded in these unofficial ways, multiple times, before their removal to AP. In other words, exclusion can happen repeatedly to young people in undocumented ways, and crucially, it not just young people who are officially excluded to PRUs and APs - it is likely to be happening to a significant proportion of non-excluded students too (Power and Taylor, 2018). This aspect of exclusion makes the issue pertinent for the entire under-16 student population, their families, and education professionals in every school nationally.

The cumulative impact of excluded young people's frequently challenging life circumstances, along with highly competitive, pressurised, and disciplinary school environments with narrowed, inflexible, ill-suited curricula, produce disruptive behaviour, conflict, and miscommunication between adults and young people in mainstream education, and ultimately lead to exclusion. Official exclusion to AP is the breaking point of these circumstances. The PRUs and APs young people are sent to are often left to work out the reality of these circumstances, along with how to best respond to meet the needs of the young people moving to their care.

1.6.4 Alternative Provision and Pupil Referral Units

Alternative Provision (and PRUs as a type of AP) is challenging to describe because it takes such variable forms. However, there is a tendency for AP to have smaller class/school sizes than mainstream schools, and to offer a more flexible and varied curriculum, which in turn can enable an alternative approach to pedagogical, relational and disciplinary approaches to young people (Malcolm, 2021; Martin-Denham, 2020). APs in both primary and secondary exist, but due to the peak of exclusion rates in secondary, there is more demand for places for excluded young people post age 12. Young people are placed in AP temporarily or permanently, and often in education policy the aim of AP is conceptualised as an intervention to enable young people to return to mainstream (DfE, 2019a). However, secondary schools can be reticent to re-admit excluded young people due to the education time they frequently miss during the exclusion process and the consequential negative effect the students' re-entry could have on exam/school performance (Gill et al., 2017). As such, APs can find themselves inadvertently misleading excluded young people, where the

reward of returning to mainstream for good behaviour eventually is taken away. The consequences of young people feeling misled can be seriously damaging for APs and young people. Young people are de-incentivised to behave or learn in their AP placement, but APs are still obliged to house them until they leave at 16.

Young people's experiences of AP vary. Those describing it positively praise the flexible curriculum with a wider range of vocational options, and the caring, relational approach of staff in supporting them, both educationally and pastorally (Malcolm, 2021). However, when young people first enter AP, their lack of trust of adults in official capacities and in schools can make developing relationships with staff in AP slow and difficult, a reticence that is not surprising considering how their relationships with staff in mainstream might have played out prior to entering AP. AP staff comment on the time and care required to build complex relationships to begin repairing years of unmet needs and discrimination sustained by excluded young people (Malcolm, 2021). The lack of trust in adults can manifest in the same fight, flight or freeze behaviours van der Kolk (2015) outlines as common to those with ACEs, rendering the relational needs complex for staff to meet. Staff must navigate the need to foster mutual respect and trust, 'the tension between authority and discipline, knowing how far to push each student, managing behaviour, and remaining calm in the face of conflict, including the use of humour' (Malcolm, 2021:37).

Some young people may have negative experiences due to their perceived lack of 'academic' focus and to the detriment of their GCSE grades. Malcolm's (2021:39) review of AP literature notes that APs are challenged in providing 'quality' provision for young people due to being 'under-resourced and undervalued since the early 2000s' with challenges in attracting and retaining experienced staff, partly due to 'a lack of professional respect towards AP staff with views of them either not being qualified or not being good enough to work in mainstream schooling'.

Finally, young people may have negative experiences of AP because of being placed in an environment with other excluded young people. Ayoub Majdouline, the excluded teenage boy part of the rival gang who murdered Jaden Moodie, referred to the 'bad influences from my exclusion unit' (Dodd, 2019:online) (see section 1.1). Considering the intersectional backgrounds of disadvantage and discrimination excluded young people often face, in AP

young people are more likely to interact with peers who are involved in crime, exploited or have high levels of need arising from SEND or neurodivergence, and are from deprived, minority communities.

There are less students in AP than in mainstream, and young people feel the need to form peer networks, and the peer networks available to them in AP can exacerbate their current circumstances. APs can work with multi-agency teams to support the multiple needs of young people, along with experienced staff to manage timetables and individual placements within local authorities so young people are not put in harm's way, for example by placing young people outside of their local area. However, there is also criticism of the variable quality of APs. Tashaûn Aird, was fatally stabbed due to a series of failings by public services, including his education providers (Spencer, 2020). A report into the circumstances leading up to his death cites his 'chaotic' AP was 'in a state of disrepair' and contributed to failures in safeguarding that led to his death (Spencer, 2020:9). The report notes,

> the exceptional challenges that PRUs and APs often experience when educating, keeping safe and meeting the needs of a range of children with complex behaviours. Such challenges are often compounded by the fact that pupils reside in different postcode areas, amidst local gang tensions and postcode rivalries. [which] can contribute to (but not justify) the chaotic environment described by the family and a professional.

These issues contribute to stereotypes of AP as comparable to prisons (see 'the PRU-to prison-pipeline' discourse) and used by mainstream schools to justify the threat of exclusion. The comparison with prisons is startling when exploring the demographics of the prison population and excluded young people. The current UK prison population is predominantly male, neurodivergent, with those from minority ethnic backgrounds over-represented, particularly amongst younger prisoners, with 42% of adult prisoners reporting to have been permanently excluded from school (Coates, 2016; Prison Reform Trust, 2023). However, considering the forms of discipline many excluded young people are likely to have experienced in mainstream school, excluded young people sometimes comment that mainstream school is more akin to prison than their AP (Gooding, 2014; Harris, 2021:online).

At a national level, IntegratED (2023) found that there are over 1,400 APs at least operating across England educating over 50,000 young people. In January 2023, unregistered

alternative providers were the most common destinations for excluded young people (over 9000 young people referred), and Pupil Referral Units the second, (over 7000 young people referred) (IntegratEd, 2023). This report highlights concerns over the lack of state-maintained AP, indicating less regulation and unpredictable provision for students.[7]

1.7 Research response: a new perspective on the language of school exclusion

Considering the litany of historic and current criticisms of school exclusion, from its lack of rehabilitation effects on young people's behaviour, to the abject opposition it poses to children's rights, to an educational environment free of discrimination and isolation, along with the polytrauma it incites for generations of families, it is surprising calls for No More Exclusions (2024) remain unheard. Foucauldian and/Freirean informed research suggests exclusion continues to be used to simultaneously criminalise and control socially marginalised young people, placing them in further contexts of disadvantage, isolation, and risk (Ashurst and Venn, 2014; Perera, 2020). The demographics above add credence to these arguments. As such, research and pressure groups have called for nothing short of radical reform of the education system (Slee, 2001; No More Exclusions, 2023), and this thesis joins such calls.

The research described in this introductory chapter strongly foregrounds the issues of power imbalances as by-products of social inequalities. Research involving excluded young people, their parents, and school staff demonstrates the effects of these social inequalities (Malcolm, 2021; Martin-Denham, 2020). However, where this thesis contributes to and develops these arguments is by drawing on specific critical approaches to hidden power in language and discourse from the field of linguistics. This approach brings together the macro level structures influencing power imbalances and exclusion and focuses on how these factors are navigated at the micro level of interaction between adults and young

[7] By way of context, in 2021, Manchester had 2 sites for primary and 17 Sites for secondary AP, 6 within the PRU and 11 other APs (City of Manchester Learning Partnership, 2021). However, this may not reflect the numbers of unregistered AP's currently operating across Greater Manchester. The number of places in the PRU was also being reduced at this time, and with numbers of excluded young people rising again after the pandemic, this led those within PRU settings to voice concern over 'unsustainable pressure on Alternative Provision' and the quality of provision (City of Manchester Learning Partnership, 2021:online).

people. As such, by employing a CDS approach the research aims to crystalise the relationship between the macro and micro levels often identified separately, or with varying levels of distinctness, in education research. It also contributes a different disciplinary perspective on school exclusion and disruptive behaviour, compared with the substantial body of work in this area that is situated in the field of (inclusive) education (Lanas and Brunila, 2019).

Via a CDS perspective, this thesis develops a position that explains school exclusion as an issue of language, discourse, and power, with excluded young people being silenced due to social structures and discriminatory discourses. As such, to explore these issues, there needs to be a dual critique of powerful social discourses working to position young people, and the centring of excluded youth voice to understand the effects of these discourses, and to challenge the accepted labels of excluded youth. CDS enables us to understand that discourse is multimodal and embedded within lived social realities and experiences. It also enables us to identify alternative discourses and knowledges situated in the voices of those with expertise by experience (Fairclough, 2001). Youth participatory arts-based research is drawn upon to methodologically centre youth voice in the language of school exclusion. This offers a unique perspective. Many studies centre youth, parent, and practitioner voice through interviews or ethnographic methods, however few use participatory arts-based approaches. Furthermore, previous studies have taken a broadly critical approach to language and discourse in exclusion (Youdell, 2006; Drummond, 2018; Lanas and Brunila, 2019), but these do not bring in PR approaches to centre youth voice. This study combines the approaches of CDS and Youth Participatory Research within a new model, the Power and Participation P and P model, see chapter 3) – a unique contribution which focuses on micro level manifestations of macro level discourses. The interdisciplinary approach also makes contributions to the fields of CDS and PR. Within CDS, the introduction of PR approaches supports a methodological approach that centres alternative discourses and situates them in the wider context of macro level discourses that impact on power imbalances. The latter is where much CDS research is focused (Nartley, 2022). For PR, multimodal CDA and CDS approaches to macro level discourses add weight to the analysis processes of creative data.

The thesis contextualises the experiences of young people at the social discourse level, and explores the ways in which discriminatory discourses operate in taken-for-granted ways to position young people and adults in education. It further demonstrates youth resistance and navigation of these discourses, and provides alternative perspectives on how education could be reformed for young people in England. These understandings can inform and bolster critical policy recommendations; from small step changes to radical education reform, while reducing the negative impact of exclusion and of the current structures in education that harm children and adults affected by it. Through an exploration of why youth are silenced through the language of school exclusion, these issues can begin to be addressed so their voices are heard, their rights upheld, and their needs better understood.

Chapter 2: Literature review

This chapter begins with an overview of Critical Realism, which is the theoretical underpinning to the understanding of what constitutes the realities of school exclusion. An overview of Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) – the 'theories, methods, analyses, applications and other practices of discourse analysts (van Dijk, 2013:online) – is then provided. Although CDS is a methodological approach taken in the thesis, an overview of the fundamental theoretical understandings of power, language and discourse as a social practice are placed here rather than solely in Chapter 3 (Methodology), because Fairclough's critical realist (2001) approach in CDS informs how the literature constituting this review was selected, framed and organised. It draws on Fairclough's acknowledgement of hegemonic discourses being challenged by alternative discourses of critique that render discourse a site of power struggle (2001), and on his three-dimensional approach to discourse to explain how power struggles in discourse are mutually (re)produced at the micro-level of human interaction and at the macro-level of society (2001).

This understanding informs the way in which sections 2.2 and 2.3 are organised, which is conceptualised in Figure.1. Section 2.3 discusses hegemonic discourses referenced (with varying levels of distinction) by scholars working in the field of school exclusion. It starts with frameworks of discourse, of risk, deficiency, and the ideal learner. These hegemonic

frameworks of discourse interrelate and frame the next stage of discourses that are pervasive throughout social contexts concerning excluded young people - class, gender, ethnicity, and medicalisation. These broad social discourses also intersect and interrelate with each other *within* the frameworks of risk, deficiency, and the ideal learner in education contexts to reproduce the exclusion of groups of young people. Taking a CDS-informed approach to the literature in this way elucidates the ways in which these discourses create tense, fractious relationships between young people and adults, leading to the preclusion of youth voice (see the Venn diagram in the centre of figure 1, where the experiences of those involved are both intersecting and distinct. These are framed by and embedded within the meso and macro level discourses, as conceptualised by the bi-directional arrow across micro, meso, and macro levels of discourse.) This is discussed in the final stage of the review, where literature exploring the impact of these discourses at the micro level of interaction are drawn together to show their intersectional operation in school contexts, and how young people and adults resist hegemonic discourse.

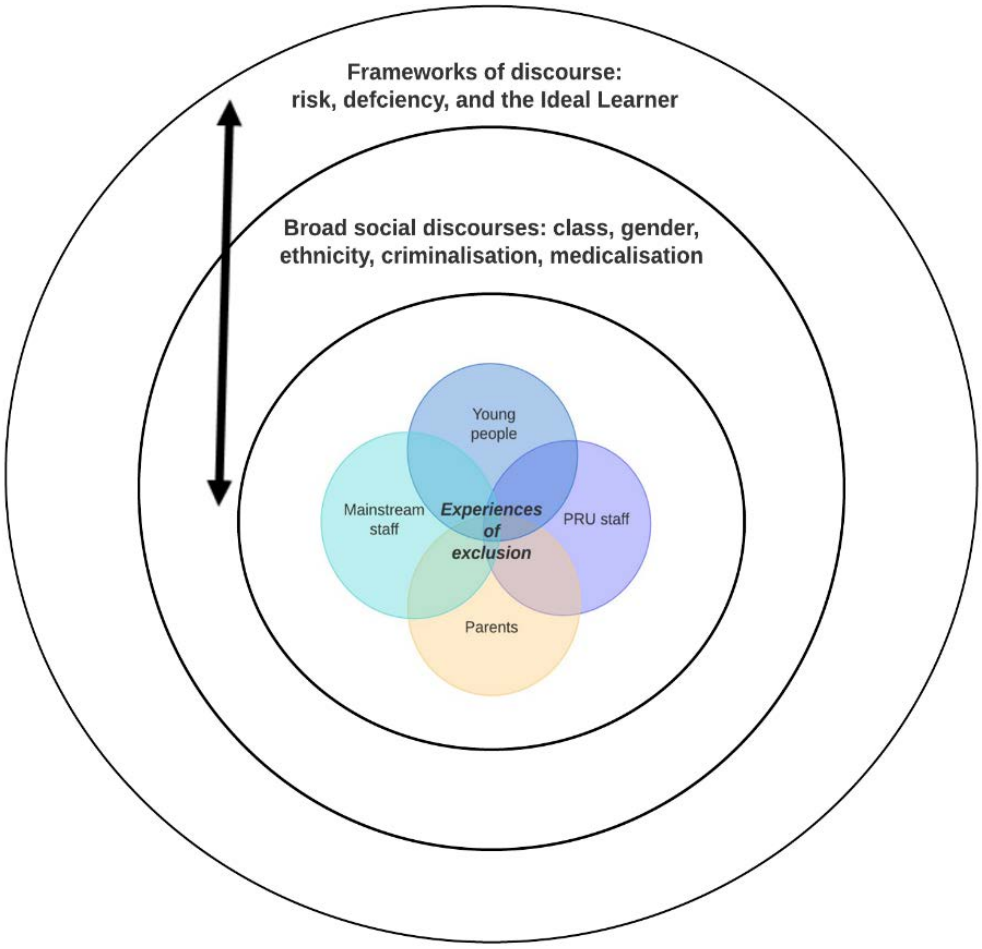

Figure 1. Frameworks of discourse

The literature selected variably takes a critical approach to language study in education contexts, a long-term ethnographic approach with excluded young people, and aims to centre youth voice in school exclusion. Therefore, some recent literature on school exclusion from the field of Education is not included as extensively as the aforementioned studies, as the latter are aligned more closely with this research, and thus inform the intervention the study makes.

2.1 Theoretical underpinning: Critical Realism

Critical realists (Bhaskar, 1989; Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1989) focus on the relationship between human beings and the social systems they act within to identify the mechanisms that generate events (Danermark et al., 2002). They argue that when these events are experienced by individuals, the event becomes empirical knowledge. Understanding the events that inform knowledge allows us an insight into people's motives and intents when they act, and therefore, a more detailed understanding of reality as they see it. This means that 'knowledge is local and contextual' because it is situated in the individual's experience of events (Danermark et al. 2002:8).

Existing social structures and the relationships within them motivate human action in a hermeneutical loop, as actions are taken in response to both the individual's interpretations of reality, and to the interpretations of others. Therefore, to understand the mechanisms that cause events, it is necessary to understand the impact of relationships and social structures upon each other. For this research, this is conceptualized in figure.1., where the frameworks of discourse are the social structures and practices framing the experiences of those involved in exclusion. As Danermark et al. (2002) explain, human agents constantly take action to alter events, and this makes the systems in which we live open and changeable.

Overall, critical realists understand reality to exist outside of the human mind, but this reality is only knowable from individual perceptions. Through examining the relationship between individual experiences, perceptions of social events, and the systems they occur within, the

mechanisms that generate events can be critiqued. Critical realism is apt to explore the context of school exclusion and the aims of this research, for the following reasons:

i) By seeing experienced events as legitimate ways of explaining empirical reality, it gives equal consideration to the perceived realities of all groups involved in exclusion, placing the experiences of excluded youth on a level with adults.

ii) Understanding individual perspectives to be consciously enacted within social structures makes those with powerful perspectives in education more accountable for their decisions.

iii) With its focus on events, critical realism seeks to make visible the obscured, taken-for-granted mechanisms that generate social structures. This view enables a critique of the beliefs that underpin social structures in education, and the hierarchies they reinforce.

Critical realism informs the perspective taken towards realities in this thesis. It frames individual realities and the experiences contained within them as true and knowable to individuals and takes a critical stance towards social structures that can reproduce different experiences of reality. CDS offers a way of conceptualising and analysing the language-based ways individuals operate within powerful social structures, to variably comply, critique and resist them. CDS approaches also seek to critique hegemonic social structures via discourse to make them and their effects more visible. While not all CDS scholars ascribe to critical realism, CDS is considered a metatheory of critical realism. Fairclough, along with Lillian Chouliaraki, Bob Jessop, and Andrew Sayer, is a main proponent (Newman, 2020), and his approach underpins this thesis.

2.2 Critical Discourse Studies

This section does not attempt to detail all the approaches in CDS (Weniger, 2012), but describes common theoretical views that broadly unite them. Van Dijk (2013:online) defines the unity of CDS approaches (here using 'CDA'[8]) as fundamentally being located within a,

[8] CDA was the term used up until 2013 to describe the group of differing, but overlapping, language-oriented approaches to exploring complex social phenomena (Wodak and Meyer, 2016; Flowerdew and Richardson, 2018). However, based on van Dijk's (2013:online) observation, a number of CDA's proponents note that the word 'analysis' creates confusion, because it implies that there is only one prevailing method or distinct

> rebellious attitude of dissent against the symbolic power elites that dominate public discourse, especially in politics, the media and education. In other words, CDA is (any) [discourse analysis] of critical scholars, and hence CDA is rather a social or political movement than a method.

The attitude van Dijk (2013) outlines informs the approach taken throughout this research and guides the selection of literature for this review. Namely, literature taking a critical attitude towards discursively reproduced power relations in education, and literature noting where these relations are being critiqued or resisted by young people and adults.

2.2.1 Discourse as a site of power struggle

To CDS scholars, discourse is a social practice between individuals and groups of people, that shapes and is shaped by, social structures and events. Thus, discourse is interwoven with notions of ideology and power because it is embedded within social relations and structures.

Fairclough et al. (2011) locate the origins of CDS definitions of ideology and power in Marxism, the work of Gramsci (1971), the Frankfurt School, and Althusser (1970). These definitions inform the attitude of dissent (van Dijk, 2013), as it is not a particular group or ideology that interests CDS, but 'the more hidden and latent inherent everyday beliefs' that accrue power and hegemonic status through their broad acceptance in society (Wodak and Meyer, 2016:8). Via Gramsci's (1971) work, CDS scholars view how the most accepted ideologies in social life become hegemonies that coerce individuals' behaviour, beliefs, and social practices through their taken-for-granted nature. CDS approaches also draw on Foucault (1977) to note how hegemonic discourses gather and maintain power through the unquestioning consent of individuals, and on the Althusserian (2014) idea of how hegemonic discourse works to subjugate individuals in social contexts.

Thus, much CDS research is focused on areas of social life where the effects of unseen power are impacting certain groups differently to others. Here, power is viewed through 'the way

approach of CDA, when in fact there are many. van Dijk advocates instead for the use of the term CDS for the 'theories, methods, analyses, applications and other practices of critical discourse analysts' (ibid). CDS is preferred by Wodak and Meyer (2016) and Flowerdew and Richardson (2018), because 'studies' reflects the plurality of approaches, and does not imply one method that is being 'applied'.

discourse (re)produces social domination, that is mainly understood as power abuse of one group over others, and how dominated groups might discursively resist such abuse' (Wodak and Meyer, 2016:9). Wodak and Meyer (2016:10) also draw on Weber's definition of power as a 'common denominator' in CDS as: 'the ability of an individual or group to achieve their own goals or aims when others are trying to prevent them from realising them'. Fairclough et al. (2011:4) also note the influence of Bakhtin, firstly with the idea 'that linguistic signs are the material of ideology, and that all language use is ideological', and secondly in formulating the notion of intertextuality to elucidate the ways that texts speak, shape, influence, and overlap contextually with each other. This is why, to CDS researchers, power relations are discursive because they are realised via struggles embedded within multimodal language and other social practices.

The socially situated, struggling view of power in CDS is derived from Foucauldian notions. Schirato et al., (2021:49-65) identify three of these notions: firstly in the idea that 'forms of knowledge, categories and discourses aren't natural – they are part of the 'effects of power''; secondly in the pervasiveness and mobility of power across 'apparatuses, discourses, knowledge and sites' that span physical bodies, perspectives, materials, and social structures; and thirdly in 'how the perception that a position, value, idea or narrative is true' facilitates and naturalises systems of power and ideologies. Bourdieu's (1982) notions of habitus and cultural capital also inform CDS outlooks on how hegemonic discourse can be hidden when alternative life experiences and habitus do not challenge status-quo discourses.

The kaleidoscopic view of ideology and power taken in CDS is informed by the above theories and contributes to the perspective of power as mobile and interwoven with discourse. To unveil hidden power, CDS approaches analyse linguistic manifestations to clarify how power is interwoven with discourse, and to explain 'the dynamics and specifics of control (of action) in modern societies' that may work unseen (Wodak and Meyer, 2016:8). Although this may imply a bleak perspective of power bound up with domination and oppression, CDS also recognises the power of diverse realities to resist or challenge status-quo discourses (Fairclough, 2001; Wodak and Meyer, 2016). These diverse realities, like the more dominant and accepted realities, exercise and accrue their power through

discourse. It is this resistance from alternative or marginalised realities that makes discourse a site of power struggle.

CDS approaches work from the premise that language is situated within social life and is thus a form of social practice (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997). This basis constitutes language as 'discourse', which can broadly be defined as language-in-use in social contexts. Fairclough and Wodak (1997:258) describe the mutual influence of social contexts and discourse upon each other as an implied 'dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s) and social structure(s), which frame it: the discursive event is shaped by them, but it also shapes them'. This means that discourse is 'socially constitutive as well as socially conditioned - it constitutes situations, objects of knowledge and the social identities of and relationships between people' (ibid). The social embeddedness of discourse is what makes texts work in ideological ways; because texts are intertwined with social realities and the attitudes and perspectives they influence.

Considering that the event of school exclusion is the result of tensions and relationship breakdown between young people and adults, and that excluded young people are frequently positioned in marginalised social realities, a CDS lens has the potential to reveal exclusion as a struggle between hegemonic discourses and the alternative, marginalised knowledges and discourses of excluded young people. The perspective of discourse as socially constitutive and conditioned identifies the ways in which hegemonic discourses position excluded youth in marginalised realities, and how their alternative discourses have the power to negotiate this.

2.2.2 Fairclough's 3-dimensional approach

In order to conceptualise the social practice of discourse across micro and macro levels of social life, Fairclough (2001:21) organised the social contexts of discourse as situated within and across three 'levels of social organization': micro, meso, and macro, which are 'the level of the social situation, or the immediate environment in which the discourse occurs; the level of the social institution […]; and the level of society as a whole'. This structure demonstrates the intertextual/ historical nature of discourse because each level of discourse cannot exist or operate without the other levels, as they are all situated within and

interwoven with each other. As discourse is at all levels of social life, the analyst needs to understand the 'immediate conditions of the social context and the more remote conditions of institutional and social structures', and significantly, their relationship to each other (Fairclough, 2001:21). This model informs the organisation of this chapter exemplified in Figure.1. As discourse is produced and shaped at all three levels of social life, the influence of micro, meso and macro contexts of discourse work fluidly upon each other to define and redefine situations, identities, and relationships. In this sense, discourse (and social practice generally) is viewed as creative, because discourse draws upon and remixes a range of other types of discourse to suit the social situation (Fairclough, 2001).

Fairclough (2001:33) argues for the necessity of criticality towards hidden, hegemonic discourses:

> [the] opacity of discourse (and practice in general) indicates why it is of so much more social importance than it may on the face of it seem to be: because in discourse people can be legitimizing (or delegitimizing) particular power relations without being conscious of doing so. It also indicates both the basis for critical analysis in the nature of discourse and practice – there are things that people are doing that they are unaware of – and the potential social impact of critical analysis as a means of raising people's self-consciousness.

Fundamentally, Fairclough (2011:193) argues that consciousness-raising via critical language study can be 'the first step towards emancipation' from domination that is reasoned, justified through, and enacted via hegemonic discourse. When consciousness of discourse, power relations and structures are raised, individuals can consent or reject them, rather than be coerced subjects.

The criticality of CDS aims to raise consciousness of where power operates in social life. For Fairclough, (2001:194), discursive struggle 'and raising of consciousness are dialectically related: struggle opens people to the raising of consciousness, which empowers them to engage with struggle', and thus brings the common-sense, unquestioned, hegemonic aspects of discourse to the fore. Fairclough (2001:194) also determines that the raising of consciousness is based on people recognising oppression 'through their *own experience* of it, and their *own activity struggling against it*.' (2001:194, my emphasis). Therefore, the vocalisation of marginalised discourses holds power when it arises from those who have lived experiences of their effects.

2.2.3 A CDS approach to discourse in school exclusion

The notion of power being revealed through struggle in discourse is productive for the context of school exclusion in a number of ways.

Firstly, CDS views on discourse and identities articulate the embeddedness of identity and discourse(s) in behaviour and how it is interpreted. For example, Fairclough (2001:31) says that people 'are what they do' in relation to their assigned identities. This perspective illuminates the argument that young people can be excluded based on social identities interpreted from their behaviour (DfE, 2019b). Therefore, school exclusion and the language used in the context, can be considered through a CDS perspective - as a site of power struggle - because power is unequally distributed through the hierarchy constructed via the identities of those involved. This struggle is evident in the miscommunication, tension, and relationship breakdown between students, their families, and school staff.

Secondly, a CDS approach considers the potential of alternative discourses of critique to facilitate emancipation from hegemonic discourses (Fairclough, 2001). This perspective also notes that these alternative discourses frequently arise from communities who burden the inequalities reproduced by taken-for-granted hegemonic discourse These aspects of a CDS approach are productive for this research context as they work to underscore the importance of excluded youth voice in understanding exclusion. A CDS perspective can position young people as experts by experience, and as alternative, creative knowers of critical discourses that can resist established power. This perspective recognises young people as informed decision-makers – through their experiences of marginalising discourses - in their social contexts, and thus challenges deficit discourses of youth. Here is where PR approaches can support CDS aims, as CDS is critiqued for being weighted towards the critique of hegemonic discourse and neglectful of alternative discourses (Nartley, 2022). More detail will be provided in Chapter 3. Similarly, the view that those who do not take critical attitudes towards hegemonic discourses can lead to people 'legitimizing (or delegitimizing) particular power relations without being conscious of doing so' (Fairclough, 2001:33), is indicated in the practices of some adults or institutions involved in exclusive school practices, and are argued to require greater criticality in the context because of the

harm they can inflict upon young people (Read, 2008; Akala, 2017; DfE, 2019b; Cushing and Snell, 2020).

Thirdly, CDS understands power to be revealed via discursive struggle, or as Fairclough (2001:88) describes at the micro level of interaction as, 'instances of communication breakdown and miscommunication', or, 'when things go wrong in discourse', that cause 'the common-sense elements of discourse [to be] brought out into the open'. This perspective allows for a dual focus on hegemonic discourses, and the alternative or marginalised discourses challenging them. This observation of the operation of discourse also maps onto the experiences of those involved in exclusion, where relationships and communication between young people and adults have broken down. This demonstrates another correlated perspective from CDS:

> Discursive practices may have major ideological effects […] through the ways in which they represent things and position people. (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997:258)

School exclusion is a literal example of people being positioned by discourse as young people are socially and physically re-positioned outside of mainstream school. This literature review identifies the workings of these discourses , specifically as repositioning the young people ascribed to them as outside of mainstream social structures (DfE, 2019b; Lanas and Brunila, 2019). This review also notes the ways in which young people resist the effects of discriminatory hegemonic discourses.

The discourses identified as operational in school exclusion, those of risk, deficit, the ideal learner, and the hegemonic social discourses of class, gender, ethnicity, medicalisation, and criminalisation, are detailed throughout the literature in the following section (2.3). The ideological effects of these discourses (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997) upon excluded young people are intersectionally evident in Michael Gove's (2011:online) speech as Education Secretary. Excluded young people are positioned by Gove as a risky, disruptive, truanting 'underclass' embedded in 'gang culture or criminality', who, 'whatever the material circumstances which surround them, grow up in the direst poverty - with a poverty of ambition, a poverty of discipline, a poverty of soul', facilitated by 'the culture of low expectations' from adults in schools and policy (2011:online). Gove (2011:online) continues that 'there is an ironclad link between illiteracy, disruption, truancy, exclusion and crime',

and casts Black Caribbean and white working-class boys as the risky, deficient, soul-impoverished, criminal population of excluded youth by casting these groups as illiterate.

There are few recent speeches by leading politicians that exemplify the intersection of hegemonic, discriminatory discourses positioning excluded young people so plainly. Section 2.3 strongly indicates that these discourses and their effects are still pervasive for excluded young people, and takes a Faircloughian-informed approach to elucidating where they are evident, how they operate at the macro-micro level of interaction, and how excluded youth mobilise alternative knowledges to resist these discourses.

2.3 Frameworks of discourse in exclusion: risk, deficiency and the ideal learner

2.3.1 Discourses of risk

There are a number of conceptualisations of risk, but for the purposes of this research, the definition is founded in the critical realist (Danermark et al., 2002) and CDS (Fairclough, 2001) approaches: that risk - the possibility of undesirable consequences – is located in the real experiences of individuals, and that these experiences dually produce and are reproduced by, a discourse of risk. The definition is most akin to Risk Society and Governmentality approaches outlined below because of their Foucauldian and post - structuralist informed perspectives.

Researchers across Sociology, Criminology and Education argue that risk discourse and its effects are pervasive across social structures. Austen (2009:454) claims that 'the terminology is now applied to most fears in everyday life'. Heyman et al. (2010, in Kearney and Donovan, 2013:2) argue that risk discourse is impactful to the extent that it 'changes the phenomena under consideration', has the potential to 'create new risks' through its continued use, and, dangerously 'often designate[s] whole classes of people as potentially risky, by constructing risky identities'. Subsequently, risk discourse is argued to have wide ranging implications for the ways those in power interpret the world and make interventions in it (Heyman et al., 2010 in Kearney and Donovan, 2013). These ramifications – in how social situations are interpreted, how identities are positioned and assigned, their influence upon the actions and decisions of those in power, and in lived experiences of individuals in risky contexts – are of

particular concern in relation to traditionally marginalised groups. Research concerning these groups often draws on Beck's (1999) notion that risks accumulate for those in under-resourced communities, and dissipate as social, economic, and participatory capital[9] increases. For youth, as a group who can experience the effects of marginalisation keenly (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2015), risk discourse is consistently reiterated as influential, to the extent that a number of researchers argue that the terms 'risk' and 'youth' have become effectively synonymous in research, policy and social practices (Lupton, 1999; Mitchell et al., 2001; Kemshall, 2008; Merchant, 2013; May et al., 2021). 'Risk' as applied to youth is dually deployed as young people positioned as 'at-risk' from unstable social contexts, and posing a risk to accepted social order (Kemshall, 2008; Turnbull, 2016).

In current education policy, the risky/at-risk discourse is reflected in *The Timpson Review* (2019a:7), where young people are framed as risky, in demonstrating 'challenging behaviour' because of their 'choice[s]', and/or at-risk because of their 'lack of boundaries' and 'unmet needs'. It is also evident in Education policy discourse of behaviour management, behaviour for learning, and zero-tolerance behaviour policies (Chadderton, 2014; Perera, 2020). Researchers argue that risk discourse around young people in the press and in such political discussion works to incite moral panics relating to young people's conduct and identities (Merchant, 2013; Perera, 2020). Moral panic over behaviour, academic failure, and the loss of adult control over 'risky' excluded youth, is strongly evident in Gove's (2011) speech about excluded young people.

Before looking into the current understanding of how risk discourse affects (excluded) young people, this section will outline the ways in which risk is conceptualised across a realist-structuralist continuum. These conceptualisations are drawn upon in research concerning excluded young people, and provide an insight into the roots of how young people are positioned as risky/at-risk in school contexts and subsequently excluded.

Lupton (1999) presents four theoretical conceptualisations of risk: realist, Risk Society (Giddens, 1998; Beck, 1999), governmentality, and cultural (Douglas, 1996). Research into

[9]Participatory capital is related to Bourdieu's concept of social/cultural capital, and is a term to define the numerous means young people have access to in order to participate in contexts affecting them (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2015)

school exclusion primarily draws on the first three to argue for certain realities of risk/riskiness of young people, and for the ways in which risk discourse individualises social challenges with which they contend.

The realist position assumes that risk exists and can be assessed, calculated, measured, and predicted with a degree of accuracy (see, for example, Farrington and West's (1990) risk factor analysis framework). This position is apparent in some school exclusion research (Trotman et al., 2015; Jalali and Morgan 2018), more commonly so in certain areas of education research, for example, 'Inclusive' education, or research in the field of 'Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties', but is mostly a position that is critiqued in the latter three conceptualisations.

Risk Society, and particularly individualisation as a process within it, has the most noteworthy influence throughout Youth Studies (Kearney and Donovan, 2013), and some school exclusion research. To Beck (1999) and Giddens (1998), risk is understood hermeneutically. Firstly, as material, real experiences of individuals which are embedded within contexts of environmental disintegration, economic instability, and social fragmentation. Beck emphasises that these experiences are 'manufactured by experts and industries worldwide' (1999:4), to reproduce the second conception of risk: as an approach to predict and control human action and its consequences (Beck, 1993). Giddens (1998) furthers this notion, describing risk society as preoccupied with the uncertainty of the future, and, in attempting to safeguard against it works to generate the notion of risk. This idea overlaps with the governmentality approach (Kearney and Donovan, 2013), where the residual assumption that the future will cause harm justifies the safeguarding of imagined risks to individuals.

In Risk Society, realist and structuralist understandings reinforce the existence of each other, as the social structures which elicit precarious, risky situations lead individuals to react in precarious, lesser-informed/ lesser-resourced ways. This is compounded by the increased pace of change in what Beck terms late modernity, where the proliferation of information makes it challenging for individuals to remain informed, and to locate reliable information. The combination of the above serves to justify the labelling of individuals as risky/at-risk, and thus of being recipients of intervention or control.

For Beck (1995) this cycle is embedded within structures of inequality, as risk, whether environmental, social, or economic, is not equally experienced, and follows those who lack the appropriate resources in the face of precarious situations. Thus, the susceptibility and exposure to real risk is unequally distributed. Relatedly, most individuals have limited control over the broader social structures that elicit risky social contexts. The riskier their situation, the riskier the decisions individuals have to make become, and the more this serves to justify the regulation of individuals in risky contexts, rather than the systems 'manufactured by experts and industries' (Beck, 1999:4). This heightened focus on the individual that works to justify their regulation is an example of individualisation.

Beck (1999) argues that the preoccupation with controlling human actions and their consequences renders 'risk' as inextricably connected to 'responsibility', because individuals are responsible for managing risks, and they are penalised for the consequences of not doing so. This exemplifies individualisation: Beck and Beck Gernsheim's (2001) concept that the broad social structures of Western Capitalism consistently initiate processes that position people as culpable decision makers across numerous areas of their lives, that they were not necessarily responsible for a generation ago.

By responsibilising individuals, individualisation gives rise to what Beck and Beck Gernshiem (2001) term, the 'do-it-yourself biography'. As Bauman (2001:4) puts it,

> in a nutshell, 'individualization' consists in transforming human 'identity' from a 'given' into a 'task' – and charging the actors with the responsibility for performing that task and for the consequences (also the side-effects) of their performance […] Modernity replaces determination of social standing with compulsive and obligatory self-determination.

The compulsive self-determination, combined with the quickening pace of social change and information distribution, renders the do-it-yourself biography inextricable from the 'breakdown biography', where the solitude of decision-making overwhelms the individual, and they are viewed as the culprits of their (in)action by themselves and others (Bauman, 2001; Beck and Beck Gernsheim, 2001). This concept is applied in research on children's 'Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties', where young people are said to internalise social labels and attribute blame to themselves for their contexts (Caslin, 2019). In Risk Society, the breakdown biography is also connected to the futility of the individual's decisions, as they

have little influence over constraints placed upon them by hegemonic social structures. As such, individual autonomy is diluted.

All the above - the responsibilisation of individuals, the reduction of community ties, the increased distance between dominant institutions and social groups, and the increased pace and complexity of social life, arguably makes life more precarious for young people today than it was for previous generations (Beck, 1999; Standing, 2016), creating circumstances that breed uncertainty and risk. Processes of individualisation therefore contribute to creating a risk society, because the precarious situations of individuals justify the rhetoric of risk-management – i.e., the need to control imagined risky futures of individuals. Risk Society in turn produces individualising tendencies because it starts from the premise that risk exists because of the failures of individuals to self-regulate or manage their choices. The focus is thus removed from social structures, and placed on individuals, the consequences of which are most significant for those with the least resources, who 'are particularly adversely affected by the structural erosion of society, and, simultaneously, have most demanded of them in terms of active management of institutional individualization.' (Kallin and Häikiö, 2020:111).

The governmentality perspective is influenced by the work of Beck (1999) and Giddens (1998) in the generation of risk obsession, and in the negative conception of the future being used to justify en-masse population management to prevent against imagined risk. Drawing on Foucauldian (1979) notions of governmentality, this position is relativist - nothing is inherently risky, people decide what is/is not a risk depending upon how danger is assessed. To justify the management of social groups, individuals are defined and labelled against a norm in which they have little to no say. These labels construe them as risky/at-risk.

Commentators taking up the governmentality position draw upon the 'risk industry' that has developed to support government management of young people, such as the Criminal Records Bureau/ Disclosure and Barring Service checks for adults working with young people, and the attempted introduction of ID cards in the UK (Bowler, 2013). In school exclusion research, the governmentality position offers a lens through which education policy, influenced by discourses of risk, justifies and promotes student regulation (Kallinen and Häikiö, 2021). These discourses are significant in school policies promoting youth

surveillance (Thompson and Pennachia, 2016), youth criminalisation (Perera, 2020), and youth regulation in school (Chadderton, 2014; Cushing and Snell, 2020).

The second and third conceptualisations (Risk Society and governmentality) of risk enable varying degrees of critique regarding their implications for excluded young people, specifically in how risk discourse positions their identities (by themselves and others) as deficient in school contexts. The uptake of these frameworks in a vast body of youth-related literature (Heyman et al., 2010; Kearney, 2013; Merchant, 2013; Rogers, 2016; Turnbull, 2016; Gunter, 2017; May et al., 2021) indicate a broad consensus that discourses of youth risk individualise and responsibilise life contexts to young people, and that they potentially frame, 'every behaviour, every practice, and every group of young people [to] be constructed in terms of risk' (Kelly, 2001:23).

Risk Society and individualisation are frameworks with a broad appeal, they highlight several things: the ways in which manufactured social inequality produces precarious life situations for young people, and how these validate perceptions of them as risky/at-risk (Kelly, 2001); the processes and effects of individualisation on young people's relationships with adults (Kearney, 2013); and the ways risk can disproportionately affect socially marginalised groups (Kallin and Häikiö, 2020). Considering that research concerning excluded young people notes the correlation between exclusion and life circumstances described as precarious, stressful, and traumatic to varying degrees (DfE, 2019b), and that young people consistently say they were blamed and responsibilised for their exclusion (Gooding, 2014; Lamrhari et al., 2020) alongside the fragmentation of their relationships with adults in and out of school (Hodge and Wolstonholme, 2016; Tarabini et al., 2018; Caslin, 2019; DfE, 2019a; Lamrhari et al., 2020), Risk Society and individualisation offer conceptual resources for analysing the contexts and processes that affecting exclusion. In school exclusion research, individualisation, whether in direct reference to Beck or not, is drawn upon to underline how young people, who are positioned as economically and educationally under-resourced, are responsibilised for their 'failure' in school, and construed as deficient, risky, or at-risk as a result (Vasudevan and Campano, 2009; Gilles, 2011; Orasti et al. 2013; Gillies, 2016; McGregor, 2017; Lanas and Brunila, 2019).

Kearney and Donovan (2013:8) draw on individualization and governmentality to critique realist positions of risk, arguing that realist positions have facilitated an increased number of 'experts' and corresponding risk assessment frameworks, which has 'led to the individualisation of risks'. 'Experts' are often adults rather than young people. If there is less space for an explanation of the contexts affecting the potentially risky nature of young lives, a realist perspective could drive individualisation due to a lack of inclusion of youth perspectives. As a result, the realist position can elicit responsibilisation and culpability of individuals for situations that are not wholly in their control, by displacing responsibility from structures and institutions and onto individuals. This is evident in Jalali and Morgan's (2018:61-4) research, where young people's exclusion is connected to their 'lack of responsibility [and] empathy' and 'maladaptive coping strategies', rather than education contexts. However, a partial realist position is necessary when assessing the lived realities of risk for excluded young people, specifically in PR approaches, where young people themselves define what risk is and how it affects them. Centring youth voice within a realist position enables the validation of excluded youth experiences and knowledge, youth analysis of risk in contexts they intimately know, and by extension an avoidance of individualization (Austen, 2009; Gilles, 2011; Rogers, 2016a)

Together these frameworks of risk allow researchers to analyse the various ways in which young people are positioned as risky/at-risk in school environments, and the consequences of such positioning. However, in exclusion research these frameworks are applied inconsistently, and sometimes inexplicitly. This literature review offers a contribution to the specific application of these frameworks (particularly risk society and governmentality). The CDS-informed approach contributes to framing all four conceptualisations of risk, and views risk to be structurally and discursively reproduced within lived realities for individuals. What these frameworks do not offer are ways in which youth voice can be re-centred to counteract the powerful discourses working to position them in marginalised spaces. It is in this space that this thesis adopts a participatory research approach to connects with wider risk-based youth research to contribute to these critiques, and to offer frameworks to centre youth voice.

2.3.2 Discourses of youth deficiency

Discourses of youth deficit are argued to pervade education contexts and preclude young people's participatory capital i.e., the resources and means available to young people to participate in matters affecting their lives (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2015). The resulting unequal power distribution between youth and adults is a micro level result of macro level discourses, which ultimately facilitate the exclusion of particular groups of young people. Groundwater-Smith et al. (2015) argue that the implications of risk discourse are inextricable from discourses of youth deficiency, because each justifies and reinforces the other. Therefore, it is necessary to explain how the framework of risk discourse around youth is embedded within, and reproductive of, discourses of youth-deficit, as these have powerful effects on young people's participatory capital, and thus the distribution of power in youth-adult relationships (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2015).

Discourses of youth deficiency and risk are arguably interrelated and reproductive of each other via the process of individualisation (Sawdener and Lubeck, 1995; Kelly, 2001; Vasudevan and Campano, 2009; Rogers, 2016), and are reinforced by age-related discourses of normative development (Kelly, 2001; Groundwater-Smith et al., 2015; Lohmeyer, 2020). Swadener and Lubeck (1995:2) argue that the individualising processes that (re)produce notions of youth as risky/at-risk (Beck, 1999) work through focussing on the individual shortcomings of youth. The individual young person is assessed as the root of their deficiency, rather than the contexts imbued with power relations that privilege certain social categories over others (Vasudevan and Campano, 2009; Rogers, 2016). Similarly, Vasudevan and Campano (2009) note the trend in 'risk' and 'deficiency' related literature around youth to focus on young people's lack of resilience in the face of risk. They argue that this literature further individualises and responsibilises young people and neglects the 'the ethical prerogative to create resilient educational arrangements that will support adolescents as they cope with life's vicissitudes and profound injustices.' (Vasudevan and Campano, 2009:341)

Individualising processes maintain a heightened focus on who young people are expected to be, and the comparison to idealised expectations is what positions them as deficient when these expectations are not met. Groundwater-Smith et al. (2015) posit that the assessment

of young people against these idealised expectations is based on the intersection of social categories to which they are assigned (age, class, ethnicity, gender, sexual identities, (dis)abilities), and how these categories intersect within various community, social, and institutional contexts. For excluded young people, who are likely to be positioned in marginalised identities and realities, the discourse of youth deficiency is stronger than that for the mainstream school population.

Swadener and Lubeck (1995) provide an overview of the links between dominant social institutions to demonstrate how the youth-at-deficit discourse reasons what children's services are for; namely, to prepare them for imagined future contexts. Discourses of risk reinforce discourses of deficiency, as the futuristic outlook embedded within normative development indicates a residual assumption that youth require preparation. This assumption justifies adult intervention, as in this discourse, youth are at risk of failure to meet expectations without it. Discourses of youth risk and deficiency thereby work to reinforce one another, and result in young people frequently being positioned as requiring adult intervention.

2.3.3 The preclusion of voice and participatory capital

The individualising discourses of youth risk and deficiency become self-actualising, and work to preclude young people's participatory capital. For example, from a governmentality perspective, in policy the preoccupation with risk-management in contexts with young people is argued to create a 'prevention' mindset, hyper-vigilance to negative possibilities, suspiciousness, and even the creation of new risks that were not previously relevant (Kearney and Donovan, 2013; Turnbull, 2016). For youth, Parkes and Conolley (2011) argue that while government publications rhetorically position them as dually risky/at-risk, it is the risky version that dominates, and incites penal and punitive approaches to young people (see also Gove, 2011:online). Vasudevan and Campano, (2009:316) argue that moral panics arising from risk-related discourses in the US has resulted in 'blunt "remedies," 'such as the development of scripted curricula and symbolic violence […] in the form of retention, disciplinary measures, extensive placement in special education, and tracking'. In UK schools, surveillance cultures are pervasive, where the anticipated risky behaviour and risky contexts are sought out and regulated by the increased presence of police officers in

schools, and by CCTV systems (Chadderton, 2014; Thomson and Pennachia, 2016; Perera, 2020). Perera (2020) and Chadderton (2014) argue that surveillance cultures of youth based on discourses of risk and deficiency reflects a view of young people as 'the usual suspects' by adults in schools and justice systems, and that this significantly damages young peoples' relationships with adults. The 'usual suspects' discourse is reiterated across youth studies in areas of youth justice, education, and social work as an identification of young people by adults, and as being based on beliefs that young people are risky/at-risk/deficient. For excluded young people, the discourse of risk and deficiency fractured their relationships because of assumptions. Teachers made their minds up about who they were, expected them to be 'bad' or 'naughty', and these expectations were directly connected to their exclusion (Gooding, 2014; Tarabini et al, 2018; DfE, 2019a). Teachers interviewed in school exclusion research also made comments indicating this pattern, saying 'you kind of don't want them in the room' before the lesson had started, implying that the anticipation of students being risky justified disciplinary practices and their exclusion from the classroom (Stanforth and Rose, 2018:1253).

Groundwater-Smith et el. (2015) argue that discursive incapacitation, which can manifest in the forms of feeling disinclined to communicate, being misinterpreted or misunderstood, and not being heard by adults, works to preclude young people's participatory capital. This is another implication of risk and deficiency discourses that works to disempower young people, which occurs when deficiency discourses 'infuse identities' and put 'children into categories such as 'special needs', 'at risk', 'anti-social', [or] invisibly 'getting by'' (2015:3). The authors argue that when young people are positioned as such, they are cornered into mobilising their participatory response in the form of 'compliance, resistance or [struggle]' in the contexts of various children's services (ibid). Neither compliance, resistance nor struggle are forms of participation on young people's terms. These forms of participation demonstrate responses to being discursively incapacitated, as they represent young people being variably silenced, contradicted, or challenged, rather than enabling youth to participate and communicate in ways and means of their choosing. This is arguably the 'exclusionary baggage' of being labelled as a young person, as the interrelating discourses of deficiency and risk preclude forms of youth voice, encourage youth

compliance/resistance/struggle, and ultimately reinforce the views of risky and deficient identities in these limited choices of participatory capital (Lohmeyer, 2020:43).

Research focusing on the social structures in which youth voice is situated argues that even when youth are not discursively incapacitated by internalising hegemonic labels of deficiency (Sharland, 2006; Austen, 2009), they still face not being listened to, or heard, by adults. In the framework of risk discourse, when adults are preoccupied with managing young people's (yet, unmanifested) risky behaviour, rather than responding to young people from the assumption of safety or innocence, Merchant (2013) argues that the space for interpretations of youth voice is curtailed. The fear of potential negative consequences can preclude adults hearing a situation from young people's perspectives, which maintains a singular, non-critical viewpoint. The experience of being unheard, misunderstood, and silenced by adults in education is reiterated by excluded young people, and connected to rigid labelling practices positioning them as deficient - academically, behaviourally, and morally (Tarabini et al., 2018; Caslin, 2019; Lamrhari et al., 2021). Groundwater-Smith et al. (2015) argue that the most significant and pervasive of young people's provisions that regulates youth voice and participation is schooling, because school is compulsory and young people are precluded from making choices about the direction, nature, and physical place of their education via being socialised into compliance of schools' expectations.

Research across education and youth studies from various perspectives, including Foucauldian approaches to the education system (Watson, 2005), broad discourse-based approaches (Youdell, 2006; Orasti et al., 2013; Lanas and Brunila, 2019), ethnographic approaches (Gilles, 2011; 2016), and those centring youth voice (Lamhari et al., 2021), note how the resistance and struggle that excluded young people's participation manifests was frequently the reason for their exclusion in the first place. This is arguably evident in the most popular reason given historically and currently for exclusion being 'persistent disruptive behaviour' (DfE, 2019a). By not complying to expectations, young people commented that they were positioned as 'disruptive', deficient to (academic and social) expectations, and thus too problematic to remain within mainstream school (see section 2.2)

Research in school exclusion that includes the voice of youth demonstrates the relevance of these discourses at a granular level in relationships with teachers, and how the labelling of them as risky or deficient produced regulatory effects, discursive incapacitation, and resistance or struggle to a system they felt was ignorant, unfair and discriminatory (Gooding, 2014; Jalali and Morgan, 2018; Tarabini et al., 2018). Furthermore, this literature emphasises how the education system made them feel angry, misunderstood, isolated, demoralised, and disempowered (Lamhari et al., 2021). Connectedly, research points to the perceived illegitimacy of emotions such as anger, sadness, and detachment in school contexts, and how the demonstration of these emotions (further) justifies the 'risky' or 'deficient' label of youth in school exclusion (Gilles, 2011). In this sense, youth became what they were expected to be, and the risk and deficiency discourses worked to reinforce and even redefine young people's identities. Discourses of risk and deficiency were self-fulfilling and exemplify the socially constitutive and conditioned nature of these discourses.

Research drawing on structuralist conceptions of risk and youth, and research on discourses of youth deficiency, provides robust arguments determining these discourses as arising from social institutions and from broader discourses of age/normative development. The majority of literature critiques the pervasive regulatory and labelling practices these discourses and institutions reproduce for young people across social sites, historically and currently. It provides a context for where education policy discourses and social practices in schools are situated. However, the majority of the literature drawing on risk/ deficiency discourse focuses on varying critiques of the effects upon young people, specifically in the preclusion of their participatory capital, without exploring the possibilities young people's responses can initiate.

A Faircloughian approach would view young peoples' (albeit restricted) forms of participatory capital as necessary alternatives to hegemonic discourse that serve to critique and disrupt accepted discourses. In school exclusion, a CDS approach would acknowledge the power in hegemonic discourses *and* in the alternative voices of young people struggling, resisting, or critiquing their effects. However, there is little CDS research in the field of school exclusion that looks at both hegemonic discourses and alternative youth voice.

Research taking up participatory orientations and critical approaches to risk and deficiency discourses provide crucial insights for this project. Firstly, in the analysis of these discourses producing regulatory effects on youth voice. Secondly, in the arguments of constricted participatory capital that corners young people into compliance, resistance, or struggle (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2015). Thirdly, in the insights youth provide on the ranging effects of these discourses - from internalising disempowering labels to rebuttals of hegemonic expectations. Finally, in their underscoring of young people's participatory methods being outside of normative or 'designated' forms that counter discourses of deficiency and articulate alternative worldviews. Vasudevan and Campano's (2009) review of adolescent literacies and risk discourse works to rewrite the narrative of youth deficiency and risk, and emerges when spaces are created for young people to lead with their existing participatory capabilities. Thus, PR and sociocultural approaches to youth literacies offer ways to address the dearth of critiques of risk and deficiency discourses, by championing young people's mobilisation of 'their identities [and engagement] in incisive social critique based on their own experience' (Vasudevan and Campano, 2009:335). This approach corelates with Fairclough's (2001) argument that individual experiences of struggle are crucial to consciousness-raising of hegemonic discourse, which empowers them to engage with further struggle and elicits further consciousness-raising of taken-for-granted discourse.

Discourses of deficiency and risk elicit two further questions for excluded young people: 1) what discourses are being drawn upon to assess their deficiency? and 2) what do these deficiencies render them at-risk of/a risk towards? In the context of education, the answer to both is the normative discourse of the ideal learner.

2.3.4 The ideal learner: how 'risk' and 'deficiency' are assessed in education contexts

> Although discourses in general position subjects in relation to the collective, the discourses of education, and specifically schooling, also position subjects in relation to the notion of an ideal, imagined school subject—the desired ''product'' of schooling. The dominant notion of an ideal imagined learner, expressed in policy, provides a point of reference around which different domains and levels of practice cohere. (Silbert and Jacklin, 2015:327)

This section draws on policy, and academic critiques taking structuralist approaches, to locate the discourse(s) of the imagined ideal learner, and by extension, the ideal learning environment. These interrelating discourses are the normative frame of reference within which the identities of young people and staff are positioned, and work as an over-arching discourse through which other social discourses intersect (Youdell, 2006). When young people's identities are construed as not meeting these expectations, they are positioned as a risk to the ideal learning environment, at-risk of academic under-achievement, and are variably regulated and excluded by adults tasked with working towards these ideal expectations (Youdell, 2006). Young people are aware of what the ideal learner performance encompasses:

> From the minute we are tossed into preschool we are told, *Be quiet, raise your hand if you want to speak, listen to authority always, put your head down and do your work, and never question anything you are told. Memorize information and regurgitate it back onto a piece of paper.* We are told, *If you follow the rules, there is a safe and clear path ahead of you: get good grades and you'll be successful. Study hard for a bright future.* (Margolin, 2020: xii. Emphasis original).

In critical approaches to Sociology of Education, Becker's (1970) notion of the ideal client is drawn upon to inform the definition of the ideal learner (Youdell, 2006). Youdell and Gillborn's (2004) work defined the ideal learner as a discourse, and as such 'a useful device for making sense of educational inclusion and exclusion' (Youdell, 2006:98). They argue that the ideal learner is white, middle-class, and male. An emphasis on this specific intersection of identities renders them ideal (i.e., being male works differently for ethnically minoritized and working-class students). Youdell (2006:96) notes how the macro level education-based discourse of 'ability' and 'conduct' of young people, 'mediate each other in a multiplicity of ways that act to constrain the possibility for a student, or group of students, to approximate the ideal'.

Recent critical approaches to the ideal learner discourse connects its existence to discourses surrounding idealised views of young people that have been touched on in the previous discussion of normative biological, psychological and social discourses surrounding the term 'youth' (Lanas and Brunila, 2019; Lohmeyer, 2020). These are discourses of 'progression' towards adulthood, and youth-deficit. In education, youth deficit is framed in relation to both academic and behavioural progression, which are brought together in ideals of

'behaviour for learning'. Ellis and Tod (2018), provide an extensive and non-exhaustive list of how school staff can determine behaviour that demonstrates the correct 'behaviour for learning'. Ellis and Tod (2018:289) tell teachers that the ideal pupil is one who wants to learn, can undertake tasks efficiently and independently, can sustain 'the discomfort of effort' 'without complaining', and shares the teacher's motivation to 'focus on positive outcomes' and 'succeed'. The ideal learner in this sense, is one who complies with expectations without these expectations being articulated to them. When young people demonstrate behaviours outside of these parameters, they are viewed as deficient to expectations, at risk of academic failure, and a risk towards the ideal learning environment. This concept of the ideal learner is reflected in current DfE endorsed behaviour guidelines for schools, where, 'good behaviour' is defined as specific types of 'learning behaviour' that students should know how to perform: 'while good behaviour does include the absence of, for example, vandalism, rudeness and indolence […] it also describes behaviour that is more broadly desirable […] good habits of study, or reasoning, or interacting with adults, coping with adversity, or intellectual challenges (positive good behaviour)' (Bennett, 2017:23). Here, moral behaviour and learning behaviour are conflated.

Gillies (2011:186) argues that the perception of the 'ideal learner' is also based on enlightenment views of intelligence, specifically, that 'intelligent' behaviour is conceptual, solitary, 'rational, detached and physically subdued' rather than physical, communal, emotional and active. The view that such behaviour reflects intelligence is evident the greater emphasis on writing-based subjects such as English and Maths (over, for example, Drama or P.E.) in standardised testing to the extent that if young people are graded below the national average in English and Maths GCSE, they are expected to retake these exams post-16. The overwhelming domination of assessing intelligence in solitary, written forms, pressurises schools to draw on pedagogies that train young people in written modes (Robinson, 2006). Thus, the ideal learner is one who behaves in such a way to develop their abilities in solitary, written skills.

The second aspect of the ideal learner as conceptual, solitary, and subdued is argued to arise from historic discourses of subjugation running through the UK education system. The discourse of youth subjugation is justified not only by the moral panics surrounding risky youth outlined previously, but also by discourses around the 'point' of the education system

– a system which develops young people's skills for the labour market. This is evident in Ofsted assessment frameworks that determine schools' effectiveness as being proved (partially) by the numbers of young people who attain a place on internships or Further Education (FE) courses post-16. Chadderton (2014:413), drawing on Althusser (1971), argues that the ideal learner is compliant to attain the skills and behaviours required to 'take up their role in the capitalist social hierarchy'. From this perspective, subjugation is necessary for young people to learn the skills required of them, and to accept their socio-economic place in relation to these skills.

The third aspect of the ideal learner discourse is uniformity, as evidenced by the popularity of school uniforms (Northern, 2011), which are critiqued for the promotion of gender normativity, and the comparable choice adults have in students' in-school dress (Wolfe and Rassmussmen, 2020). Uniforms are also critiqued internationally for their cost to families, and by young people who feel it either impractical or unrepresentative of their identity (Sabic-El-Rayess et al., 2020). These criticisms are echoed by excluded young people, particularly girls and working-class boys (Gillies, 2016). The justification for school uniforms is determined as fairness and equality, but it is also theorized to be a medium of control: that uniformity of dress elicits uniformity of behaviour (Wolfe and Rassmussmen, 2020). Uniformity of behaviour is viewed in policy as part of the ideal learner identity, as young people who are the exception to the majority are singled out and cast as disruptive (DfE, 2019a).

The DfE (2019a:48) recommends that some of the most successful methods of achieving uniformly non-disruptive behaviour for learning includes internal 'inclusion' and 'exclusion centres' to 'maintain behaviour', cognitive behavioural therapy, 'mentoring groups [to identify] barriers to attainment and finding pragmatic ways to remove them', and behaviour summer schools 'to gain an understanding of behaviour expectations'. The result of such regulation in this example, was the ideal learning environment, being 'highly ordered and structured […], where everyone is well mannered and respectful of others'. However, all of the above are individualised interventions to regulate behaviour, and are variably critiqued for medicalising young people's behaviour (Gillies, 2011; Lanas and Brunila, 2019) and criminalising ethnically minoritised, working-class youth (Youdell, 2006; Gilborn, 2010; Akala,

2017; Perera, 2020), reinforcing deficit discourses of youth facing discriminatory social contexts.

Social morality is another aspect of the ideal learner discourse. The discourse of morality is connected to discourses of youth-at-deficit, as if schools are required to teach students socially accepted moral behaviour, the implication is that they are not proficiently behaving as such beforehand (Vasudevan and Campano, 2009). Youth morality deficit is also present in the discourse of the ideal learner behaving in an 'adult' way. Read (2008:613) argues that teachers achieve subservience and the idealised 'calm' learning environment, either through outright discipline and punishment, or through an 'adultification' discourse, where 'the teacher speaks and responds to the pupil as if the latter were actually an adult of (almost) equal agency and power as the teacher' in order to promote the ''expectation' of the pupil that he/she will behave in an 'adult' manner.'

Education, learning, and morality are conflated discourses in education framing the ideal learner as: compliant to adult instructions, physically and vocally subdued, 'rational' rather than emotional, solitary, and performing well in valued subjects. When young people, either through their socially assigned identities and the behaviours they perform connected to these, demonstrate that they are at risk of not being the ideal learner, who they are and how they behave is cast as deficient, disruptive, and risky. When students are believed to be under-performing the identities required for the ideal learner they are viewed as disruptive of the ideal learning environment. These idealised views position youth consistently as at-deficit when they do not fit these expectations, and excluded young people note this. For example, Lamrhari et al. (2021:19) comment that: 'the young people involved in this project have shared a sense of frustration at being encouraged to fit into an education system which they feel is unfair, prejudice[d] and not designed to meet their needs'.

The structures in place and the rhetoric of policy legitimizing them are predicated on discourses of authorised adult power over the 'riskiness' and 'deficiency' of youth in comparison to notions of the ideal learner. For young people, the literature indicates that the effects of these discourses in mainstream education produce 'rigid expectations of conformity, behaviour and dress codes' that serve to reduce 'emphasis on individual pupil wellbeing, pupil-teacher relationship and 'belonging'' (DfE, 2019b:42). This effect can be

attributed to the 'emphasis on exam results, over and above pastoral care' (DfE, 2019b:42). Numerous studies concur that the rigid academic and behavioural expectations of students create environments where young people's well-being and relationships with adults are side-lined in favour of these expectations (see Chapter 1). When these rigid expectations are challenged or disrupted, they create tensions and conflict with the members of staff who are required to enforce them, and inevitably lead to their exclusion in a variety of forms. These discourses are critiqued for encouraging the criminalisation of young people, for the use of isolation booths, for prejudice towards students with particular social identities, for suspicion, for patronising attitudes, for school exclusion, for labelling practices of students as 'low-attaining' or 'naughty', and for 'penal' zero tolerance behaviour polices. The power imbalance imposed on adults and students in schools results in young people's discursive incapacitation, in the ways in which adults perceive and react to them, and the limitation of the ways in which they can mobilise their participatory capital (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2015).

Thus, the discourses of risk, deficiency, and the ideal learner frame who young people are expected to be and how they are expected to behave in school environments. These frameworks of discourse intersect with a number of other socially assigned identities, which is the concern of the literature in the next section, and limit young people's participatory capital. The following section looks at how broad social discourses intersect with those of risk, deficiency, and the ideal learner, to produce some of the effects above for young people. The studies demonstrate how these discourses operate at a broad social level, and at an interpersonal level, in school exclusion.

2.4 Intersecting social discourses in school exclusion

2.4.1 Intersectionality

Before dealing with the literature focusing on the ways in which socially assigned identities and their connecting discourses work in the process of school exclusion, intersectionality is outlined here as a frame for understanding how the multiple identities assigned to youth produce certain understandings, perceptions, and reactions of others towards them. In school exclusion, these perceptions are based on judgements of young people's social identities in comparison to discourses of the ideal learner. In research, the identities of

excluded young people are more often analysed together – for example, gender and ethnicity – to understand how they are positioned as risky/at-risk and excluded, socially and literally, from mainstream education as a result (Youdell, 2006; Gunter, 2017; DfE, 2019b; Perera, 2020).

Crenshaw (2018:online) describes intersectionality as 'a prism' for understanding how the multiple identities of individuals, such as gender, ethnicity, and life-stage, work mutually to influence the reproduction of certain events, perceptions, experiences, and power relations in social life. For example, 'African-American girls are six times more likely to be suspended [from school] than white girls. That's probably a race and gender problem. It's not just a race problem, it's not just a gender problem' (2018:online).

There are overlaps with a critical realist approach to identity, as intersectionality understands identity to be 'a relationship between people and history' rather than 'a self-contained unit': i.e. identities are socially produced by real experiences in social contexts (Crenshaw 2018:online), and that this happens in a hermeneutic loop. Thus, intersectionality analyses the relationship between multiple identities and how they (re)produce social realities for individuals. Intersectionality is concerned with how this interrelationship can enable us to understand the ways in which inequality is reproduced in social contexts, because 'people's lives and the organization of power in a given society are better understood as being shaped not by a single axis of social division, be it race or gender or class, but by many axes that work together and influence each other' (Collins and Bilge, 2016:11).

Much research concerning excluded young people seeks to analyse the relationship between some of these identities and the circumstances of their exclusion. This ranges from claiming young people's exclusions are the result of prejudice towards their socially assigned identities, to analysing the ways in which these identities are linked to particular social biographies and behaviours of young people (Gilles, 2011; DfE, 2019b; Perera, 2020). Although the literature emphasises the intersectional nature of identity labels, references to intersectionality are infrequent. The lens of intersectionality allows for a more nuanced insight into how discourses surrounding socially assigned identities are connected, and in

the context of school exclusion, how they are put in dialogue with discourses of the ideal learner/learning environment to position youth as deficient, risky, or at-risk.

2.4.2 Definitions of discourses in school exclusion

Youdell (2006:56) queried 'whether thinking in terms of discourse and performative constitutions can help us understand student subjectivities, students and learners, processes of inclusion and exclusion, and the interactions across these.' Youdell subsequently applied theory informed by Foucault, Derrida, and Butler to micro-level interactions between students and staff in two mainstream secondary schools to demonstrate the ways in which macro level discourses (gender, race, ethnicity, disability, social class, and sexuality) intersect to position young people in particular ways. Youdell's approach chimes with CDS approaches to discourse but does not take up a specific CDS approach to analysis.

As this research is concerned with exploring what hegemonic (or alternative) discourses influence excluded young people's realities, the literature synthesised in this section provides an insight into the interaction between these different discourses between young people and adults in schools. The literature also situates the macro level discourses identified by the excluded young people in this study (section 4.1) within other discursive, ethnographic, or participatory informed research on school exclusion.

The following definitions of discourse in school exclusion are underpinned by the critical realist view of realities, firstly that they are real experiences only knowable to individuals, and that realities are motivated by human actions within social structures. They are also underpinned by Fairclough's (2001) view of discourse being embedded between micro-macro levels of social interaction, with hegemonies accruing their power through a lack of critical questioning over their influence upon social structures. In other words, the effects of discourses are both real, lived, connected to experiences of reality and embodied by individuals, and simultaneously, changeable by human action and critical standpoints towards those hegemonic, taken-for-granted discourses.

These discourses - social class, gender, ethnicity, medicalisation and criminalisation – are not hidden to critical scholars in the fields of Education, Linguistics, and Sociology, but are

hidden in some of the lived realities of excluded young people, their parents, and adults in education settings (more in section 2.3.3). This hidden nature of hegemonic social discourses works to reproduce social discrimination and manifest in the exclusion of young people who are working-class, 'masculine' or alternatively gendered, from ethnic minority backgrounds, involved with justice systems, and with suspected or diagnosed learning needs or disabilities (DfE, 2019b). The following definitions provide a brief elucidation of the experienced realities of young people categorised via these hegemonic discourses, and how these served to reinforce discourses of risk and deficiency of them and their families. These provide a basis for the literature focusing on the experiences of excluded young people, whose realities are intersectionally produced via being categorised across a number of these discourses.

Social class

The literature underscores the high rates of exclusion of young people living in under-resourced families or communities. The real experiences of struggle, discrimination and trauma from navigating a lack of resources served to justify in-school discourses of working-class deficit. Being working class worked to position all young people as risky/ at-risk, in their behaviour or in their perceived academic failings, and worked to facilitate exclusion in strong connection with the other discourses below. Research indicates how lived realities of risk connected to economic deprivation – such as bereavement, family breakdown, and crime – causes significant stress for young people, and that this stress manifested in behaviour that is characterised as angry, disengaged, and therefore risky to school learning environments (Gooding, 2014; Gillies, 2011; Gillies and Robinson, 2012; Gillies, 2016; McGregor, 2017; Drummond, 2018; Lamrhari et al, 2021). These behaviours then frequently result in young people being labelled as angry, disengaged, and risky, labels which are reinforced by discourses of working-class deficit (Gillies, 2016; McGregor, 2017). School staff's lack of understanding or comprehension of young people's realities connected to living in an under-resourced community is indicated to be a significant factor affecting exclusion, as when young people's stress manifested as anger or disengagement, staff are not able to respond appropriately (Read, 2008; Gillies, 2011; 2016).

Bringing together literature taking discursive approaches to educational exclusion, indicates that the block in understanding between some staff and the realities of the young people is

partially related to pervasive, established discourses of working-class deficit (Maclure, 2003; Youdell, 2006; Gillies and Robinson, 2012; Gillies, 2016). These intersect with other broad social discourses of gender and ethnicity, and with the discourse of the ideal learner (Lanas and Brunila, 2019).

Gender

Male students are excluded more than female students, and the literature reviewed demonstrates clear arguments for 'masculine' behaviours and identities being regulated and disciplined more than 'feminine' identities in school environments. Similarly, discrimination towards girls was evident in that young women were caught in impossible expectations of who they were allowed to be in school, and were regulated for being too feminine or masculine in their identity presentation (Gillies, 2016; Drummond, 2018). Gendered identities frequently drawn upon to accrue social capital, or to work in defence of real risky realities (often arising from under-resourced communities), were regulated and excluded in mainstream schools (Gillies, 2016; Thomas, 2022).

Ethnicity

Young people from ethnically minoritised backgrounds, such as Caribbean, African, and 'Any other black backgrounds', along with 'Gypsy, Roma and Travellers of Irish heritage' are excluded disproportionately more than others, , (gov.uk, 2023a:online).[10] When young people performed/ were viewed to perform identities linked to minority ethnic backgrounds, these were frequently adverse to expectations of the school environment, which Maclure (2003), Youdell (2006), Gilborn (2010), Cushing (2020), and Perera (2020) argue can be dominantly white spaces. Sylvia Wynter (1990) draws out this history of racialised deficit discourses as manifesting in schools' curricula, and provides a grounding as to why schools are constructed as dominantly white spaces. Wynter (1990), via Legesse (1973), draws on a cultural model to determine how non-white populations in the US are excluded via pre-determined rules based on 'the native model of public culture in whose

[10] These categorisations are taken from the prescribed government categories of ethnicity (gov.uk, 2023a:online). Brassington (2022) points out the limiting nature of the GRT category as excluding a number of travelling community groups, such as Showmen, Boaters, Scottish travellers, and 'New' travellers. For the purposes of this section, the pre-defined official categorisations are used because the data on excluded students is presented in such a way.

world of rules we live, think and act' (1990:7). Wynter (1990) demonstrates how cultural, colonial, white-European discourses are reproduced in curricula and result in symbolic violence and discrimination against those viewed as non-native. Wynter (1990) foregrounds the histories of intersecting discourses which cohere to exclude Black children, for example biological discourses of white superiority organised via the structurisation of the notion of race. Although Wynter's (1990) analysis is US-based, the histories of discourses and their effects are UK-relevant, and support our understanding of racialised exclusive processes in English schools. Coard's (1971) work exposing the discrimination and segregation of black children to schools for the 'educationally subnormal' (previously, 'schools for the mentally subnormal') (Coard, 2005:online), demonstrates similar violence experienced by Black young people and their families via the English education system during the 1970s, due to white curricula, pedagogies, and the policies and practices of education authorities at this time. Coard (2005:online) highlighted that

> These schools were being utilized by the education authorities as a dumping ground for black children. This was especially so for those who had recently come from the Caribbean to join their parents; often after a separation of several years. These children were therefore encountering various degrees of emotional disturbance; on top of the normal cultural and other adjustment problems associated with a sudden move to an entirely new environment.

And this specific history of trauma, displacement, and adjustment is the family history of many young Black children in English schools, high numbers of whom are being excluded. Coard (2005:online) notes this, and that the education system's neglect of these challenging intergenerational circumstances have led to increasing frustration levels from Black young people, and increased exclusions as 'a regular tool for getting rid of, rather than tackling the children's problems.'

Frequently, the same discourses of risk and deficiency work to position young people from all of these backgrounds in excluded spaces, particularly via discourses of medicalisation and criminalization (Youdell, 2003; Gillies and Robinson, 2012; Gillies, 2016; Akala, 2017; Cushing and Snell, 2022). Discourses of gender and working-class deficit are also prevalent for young people from these backgrounds, and work to elicit particular identity performances that were regulated and excluded.

The terminology used in the literature review reflects that used in each specific piece of literature concerned and aims wherever possible to be specific of young people's ethnic background. However, this is not always possible in research with excluded young people, where it may be inappropriate for the researcher to ask how young people identify, or specific ethnicities are kept out of the research for reasons of confidentiality, or young people's ethnicity was unknown by the school at the time of research because of the ad-hoc timings which young people can be sent to an AP in the school year.

There is a correlation in the literature between the experiences of young people from different Black or mixed Black ethnic backgrounds, and to note this correlation, the review will refer to those from Caribbean, African and other Black backgrounds as Black[11] young people.

Young people from travelling communities are included within the ethnicity section because Roma and Travelers of Irish heritage have distinct ethnic heritage that is minoritized in British life. Not all traveller youth view themselves as members of an ethnic group, but as occupational travellers for example. In research on exclusion, the main groups referred to are Roma and Irish heritage travellers, thus these are reflected in the review. However, it is important to note that in excluded populations it may be challenging to tell how many traveller young people are excluded, let alone which travelling community they are from, as many traveller young people hide their ethnicity or community ties because of the discrimination they face (Brassington, 2022).

Medicalisation

Medicalisation is a discursive process by which non-medical problems become understood and responded to as medical or psychological disorders (Lanas and Brunila, 2019). This is pertinent to school exclusion in the high prevalence of SEND in excluded populations - 82% of excluded young people state-funded provision have a statement of SEND (DfE, 2023).

There is proliferate literature suggesting a correlation between a child being (un)diagnosed with SEND and the increased likelihood of school exclusion, due to challenges with the curriculum (see 1.7), relationships with staff and students, and gaining the right support

[11] Black is capitalised in recognition of the continued structural and societal racism experienced by Black communities.

early in their school career (Martin-Denham, 2020; DfE, 2023). Young people with SEND can find the demands of mainstream education more challenging than those without SEND, and this can manifest in disruptive, frustrated, disengaged behaviours outside of the framework of the ideal learner.

However, Taberner's recent literature review (2023:online) suggests that 'for every pupil correctly diagnosed with SEN, another is misdiagnosed, diverting resources from pupils with genuine needs.' Thus, literature critiquing the social factors that contribute to SEND diagnosis are foregrounded as useful in understanding how it is discursively produced by the discourses that are the concern of this review, and thus, how the discourses surrounding SEND can work to exclude particular groups of young people.

Lanas and Brunila (2019) point out that the former view, arising from psychological and special education perspectives, dominates the field of disruptive behaviour in schools. They argue for a discursive approach to understanding how disturbing behaviour produced in social interactions via hegemonic discourses in education to counter the potential individualising effects of the dominant perspectives, and to refocus on the ways in which discourses reproduce inequalities for students who are medicalised (Youdell, 2004; Allan and Youdell, 2015). This is the perspective of this research.

Criminalisation

Criminalising discourse here refers to the dual and cyclic nature of excluded young people a) having a higher likelihood of being in close proximity to illegal activity, and b) being perceived and positioned within identities associated with criminal activity. The criminalising discourse works to position or designate particular behaviours and individuals as criminal. Its existence and impact is evident in the proliferate term 'PRU to Prison pipeline',[12] and views of exclusion itself as designating particular groups of children as disruptive, deviant, and criminal, particularly Black, working-class boys (Youdell, 2006; Gilborn, 2010; Perera, 2020).

[12] Perera (2020) argues that the term describes both a reality of criminalising young Black students, and a discourse used by policy makers to monetise and marketise school exclusion.

Discriminatory social discourses – which are gendered, classed, and racialised - work to position excluded young people in risky, criminalised spaces, making them more likely to be exposed to or involved in illegal activity, such as the sale and/or use of drugs; illegal employment/ means of attaining money (Lamrhari, 2021); fighting and violence (Gillies, 2016); and for some travelling communities particularly, illegal land occupation (Brassington, 2022). More specifically, Black, working-class, masculine youth are more likely to be in close proximity to crime. These lived realities work to (re)produce criminalised identities, either from assumptions and misunderstandings based on the discrimination inherent in these discourses, or from the behaviours of young people which are associated with criminality.

The behaviours designated as deviant, unacceptable, and regulatable in school are detailed for schools by the DfE (see 1.7 and 2.1.3). Schools' behaviour policies, based on DfE's designations of unacceptable behaviours, are a combination of transgressions that are generally illegal (like theft), illegal for those under 18 (alcohol consumption), and others that are generally unacceptable to society (being aggressive). The designation of particular behaviours as unacceptable renders them and the young people enacting them as criminalised, and work to reason school exclusion.

For excluded young people, criminalising discourses are demonstrably powerful in (1) their out-of-school contexts which can necessitate the adoption of 'criminal' or 'deviant' identities and behaviours as a defence against traumatic, dangerous, or risky events (Gillies and Robinson, 2012; Gillies, 2016; Drummond, 2018; Perera, 2020; Lamrhari, 2021; Thomas, 2022), and in (2) school environments which can work to criminalise these behaviours and certain groups of young people (Gillies and Robinson, 2012; Gillies, 2016; Thompson and Pennachia, 2016; Perera, 2020; Cushing, 2020). Criminalisation is present throughout the other intersectional examples of discourses that follow but does not have a discrete section. However, its definition is included here to inform the results of this study (in 4.1.5), where criminalisation was a pertinent discourse across young people's realities.

2.4.3 How hegemonic discourses (re)produce realities of risk for excluded young people

By framing the literature with Fairclough's (2001) notion of micro/meso/macro levels of discourse conceptualised in figure 1, this final section of the literature review demonstrates

the operation of powerful discourses of youth-risk, youth deficit, in line with expectations in the conceptualisation of an ideal learner. These operate via discriminatory social discourses that work to position working-class, minority-ethnic, alternatively gendered young people as morally and/or academically deficient. The review draws on Groundwater-Smith et al.'s (2015) notion of young people's participatory capital being precluded into resistance, compliance, or struggle, to demonstrate how young people navigate the effects of disempowering hegemonic discourses, and thus into assimilating risky/at-risk, defensive or combative identities that justify their exclusion. As such, the literature exemplifies an initially bleak picture: that excluded young people have little choice available to change their situation. However, the final section brings together examples of young people's alternative discourses of critique that mobilise their expertise by experience (Vasudevan and Campano, 2009), and demonstrate a consciousness-raising process from their struggle and resistance against discriminatory discourses (Fairclough, 2001). This section demonstrates the potential of longer-term ethnographies, and critical language study centring youth voice, to present powerful, alternative discourses arising from the voices of excluded young people. Thus, the discourses identified here as operational in school exclusion demonstrate the potential of the CDS-informed approach of this study to dually identify macro level discourses and alternative discourses of critique. The young people's alternative discourses of critique located in the literature (section 2.4.4) also demonstrate the potential of the Youth PR approach of the thesis, to centre youth expertise by experience, and to understand the forms youth participation can viably take in education paradigms.

Working-class deficit

The stress caused by lived realities of risk for young people, that manifested in behaviours considered risky to school learning environments, such as anger, disengagement, and stress (Gooding, 2014; Gillies, 2011; Gillies and Robinson, 2012; Gillies, 2016; McGregor, 2017; Drummond, 2018; Lamrhari et al, 2021) frequently resulted in the young people being labelled as such, which were reinforced by discourses of working-class deficit (Gillies, 2016; McGregor, 2017). These are connected to the ideal learner discourse, as Maclure (2003:176-7) argues, when children do not communicate in the middle-class, white discoursing practices of schools, they can be judged as incoherent, 'a poor learner' and even 'the wrong sort of 5-year-old'. Like Hodge and Wolstonholme's (2016) and Gazeley's (2012) arguments

of working-class children and their families being unfamiliar with discoursing practices of schools, Maclure (2003:176) argues that 'children who do not get this kind of apprenticeship (in 'mainstream' discourses and experiences) run the risk of not being 'heard', if their discourse habits do not fit the patterns teachers are listening for'. Her arguments reflect how the discourses of moral and academic deficit in the conception of the ideal learner are justified via discourses of working-class deficit. This is evident with excluded young people in Gillies' (2011) study in a Behaviour Support Unit (BSU) where young people were internally excluded in their mainstream school. The young people here were acutely aware of their marginalisation, deprivation, and its impact on how they may be perceived by others. In a discussion about the case of the missing child Madeline McCann, a number of the pupils noted the differences in the social class of Madeline, and themselves, commenting that 'if it was some kid from [deprived area] no one would care' (Gillies, 2011:194). Gillies (2011) notes how the young people were angry and derogatory towards Madeline, and that the teacher struggled to address this, which reproduced a discourse of class deficit, commenting that the children lacked empathy. Instead of noting the class inequality the children had pointed out, their perspectives and experiences were silenced and excluded from discussion due to powerful discourses of working-class deficit.

Cushing (2020) and Cushing and Snell (2022) draw on a raciolinguistic perspective to demonstrate the ways in which classism and racism intersect in schools' curricula frameworks, serving to disadvantage, disrespect, and dismiss the knowledges and identities of minority ethnic and working-class students. These attitudes can manifest in teachers' exclusive practices towards these groups of young people, because the professional frameworks they are presented with encourage it. These regulatory or exclusive attitudes from staff (also in Read, 2008; Gillies and Robinson, 2012; Gillies, 2016) served to distance them from young people living in risky, discriminatory social contexts. This is indicated to be a significant factor affecting exclusion, as when young people's stress manifested as anger or disengagement, staff were not able to respond appropriately. Anger and its manifestations (verbal or physical violence) are not allowed by schools' behaviour policies, even though the literature indicates its sources come variably from justifiable contexts of discrimination, deprivation, and defence (Gooding, 2014; Kulz, 2015; Gillies, 2016; Drummond, 2018; Thomas 2022). Gillies (2011; 2016) critiques this in relation to the often highly emotional

environments of schools, where stress is placed upon relationships between adults and young people because demonstrating emotion is highly regulated. Here, Gillies (2011) correlates medicalisation with class-deficit discourses, which work together to frame working-class young people as poor learners in need of social and emotional learning support. Thus, discourses of working-class deficit and their outcomes (anger, frustration) are demonstrably powerful in excluding young people by positioning them as risky and deficient to the ideal learner discourse.

Gendered deficit

Researchers concur that anger, emotional reactions, and defensive identities necessitated by the risky contexts outlined above are highly gendered in school environments (Youdell, 2006; Gillies, 2011; Gillies and Robinson, 2012; Thomas, 2022). A number of excluded young people in the aforementioned studies performed masculine identities in response to threats and risks in and out of school, and were criminalised because these identities were viewed as risky, aggressive, and linked with criminal activity. In the case of young people from Black communities, they were also racialised.

Thomas's (2022) thesis, drawing on Foucault and Butler, is vested in exploring who it was possible for the five 15–16-year-old boys in her PRU-based ethnography 'to be' in relation to the contexts they inhabit. Thomas (2022) draws on Jared's (a young person in the study) description of needing to perform gender differently in and out of school. He said that mainstream school required hyper-masculine performances as a defence against bullying, but that such performances (such as fights) were regulated by staff and had contributed to his exclusion. This is reiterated by female and male excluded young people (Gillies and Robinson, 2012; Gooding, 2014; Gillies, 2016; Drummond, 2018). The boys in Thomas's (2022) study also emphasise their adult status through their experiences of struggle based on realities of economic deprivation and crime. Youdell's (2006) notation of the classed nature of gendered performances in schools is relevant here, where working-class experiences are drawn on to position male youth as 'men' rather than 'boys'. Youdell (2006) argues that this adultification is in opposition to the ideal learner discourse, which construes the learner as at once 'feminine' and 'middle-class male', submissive but agentive in learning, static, non-vocal, lacking knowledge, and as a child who behaves like a 'grown-up'.

Here, defensive-aggressive, masculine behaviour performances required by risky realities of deprivation and racism were framed as deficient in school environments by the contradictory gendered expectations of behaviour in the ideal learner discourse. This necessitated the young people to perform two distinctly gendered identities to get by in and out of school. In terms of risk, gendered, classed, defensive performances in response to lived risk positioned the young people as risky and excludable.

For female students, discourses of working-class deficit and patriarchal discourses led them to adopt defensive identities that were positioned as risky/at-risk in school environments. Gillies (2016) notes how Amy, a student in the BSU, drew on broad social constructions of femininity that encourage the view that women can exercise power through their appearance. However, when this performance was put in dialogue with the masculinised environment of school that normalised sexual violence and bullying, Amy's gender performance is individualised, judged, and dismissed by staff. Amy was bullied by other students for performing this feminine identity, and put in the BSU to diffuse the fights arising from this. However, as Amy was viewed as 'a vacuous teenage girl obsessed with boys', the sexualised behaviours she was seen to perform led staff to believe she was 'beyond the paternalistic pale' and to ignore a sexist attack towards her (Gillies, 2016:58). The cycle of risky realities individualised Amy as risky/at-risk, and placed her in another risky situation, demonstrating the relevance of Beck's (2001) framework.

Other girls in this research reiterated the macho environment of their school, and that they felt unsafe in school because of it. However, in front of male students, Gillies (2016:48) describes how the girls 'did not behave like powerless victims in the playground or classroom'. However, Gillies (2016:48) argues that such performances indicate that these relationships operated within, and are based upon, an 'aggressive, patriarchal, heterosexualised framework in which the boys were very clearly top dogs', and that the girls felt the need to take on masculine behaviours to deter bullying, fights, and intimidation. This is reflected by the excluded girls in Drummond's (2018) study where Shannon, a female student, also demonstrated a defensive, masculinised response to the masculine environment of the PRU that positioned her in the same deficiently-feminised, sexualised way as Amy in Gillies' (2016) study. This incident is worth outlining for the complex intersection of hegemonic social discourses Dray (2017) (the co-researcher in Drummond's

2018 study) intimates are being negotiated in the PRU setting. This began with some of the male students looking up the word 'mandingo' online and using it from this definition from 'a slavery context where it was used to mean a black/African male with a very large penis' (Drummond, 2018:172). One of the boys (Nathan) decided 'to try it on Shannon (who is not in his year group and therefore wasn't party to the initial hilarity it had caused in the Y10 lesson), suggesting to Shannon that she might like to go to a "mandingo party" […] Shannon responded angrily and aggressively and scared Nathan out of his wits with her threats to beat him up and aggressive stance.' (Drummond, 2018:172). Dray (2017:47) elaborates that

> Shannon's aggressive contribution to his 'joke' bewildered him. His understanding was that he was being funny and Shannon would appreciate the joke as she was one of the 'boys'. There was a table between Nathan and Shannon and he used it to respond to her threat by over-throwing it in front of her. Shannon said afterwards that Nathan's utterance had made her "feel gang raped", moving 'mandingo' towards a violently abusive reality in which sexualities mattered, and 'being one of the boys' had disappeared. Nathan refused this reality, working to turn it back into a bit of fun by saying that his remark had been "just banter".

This incident, where Daniel and Nathan place subversive topics reflective of masculine, heterosexual hierarchies (Kehily and Nayak, 1997; Youdell, 2006) through the objectification of women in order to subvert dominant discourses in the school context, is fraught with misinterpretations based on gendered identities produced by contradicting discourses. To Shannon, the 'joke' is a form of masculine violence against her because all the boys knew the meaning of her being at a 'mandingo party' before her, leading her to 'feel gang raped'. Shannon's response is reminiscent of the defensive, working-class masculinities of other male and female excluded young people (Gooding, 2014; Gillies, 2016; Drummond, 2018; Thomas, 2022), and she may feel cornered into this performance because it communicates effectively to the boys the harm they have inflicted on her. This points to a wider issue, potentially in the male-dominated environment of this particular centre, where her violent response serves to reinforce Nathan's view of her as 'one of the boys', that made him feel the 'joke' was originally unproblematic. Nathan's view may be founded on Shannon's behaviour, but in a masculine environment feminine identities are concealed from view, and lesser-enacted, potentially because they are not seen to communicate or socialise effectively (Gillies, 2016).

Here, gendered discourses, their performance, and difference in interpretations, produces misunderstandings, conflicts, and exclusions, arising from contradictory gender expectations of young people in the school environment. Particularly, this incident also demonstrates what research into exclusive school practices reiterates: that schools can be masculine environments, and consequently can have particularly harsh effects on girls (Gillies, 2016; Drummond, 2018). It indicates how young women also feel the need to perform defensive gender roles, either in masculinities or femininities (Gillies, 2016). It also demonstrates how gendered identities intersect with macro social discourses of ethnicity and social class to produce subversive discourses that are drawn upon (consciously or unconsciously) by the young people, and how when these surface through gendered discoursing that works to negotiate power relations, they are regulated and excluded.

These examples indicate that the gender expectations for female students are apparently unnavigable. Being masculine is necessary in some school environments but is regulated for the risk it poses to being the ideal learner, and being feminine is also risky performance which elicits judgement, violence, and silencing from students and staff. The examples also indicate how gender performance was drawn upon to necessarily negotiate power imbalance, and to navigate demands in and out of school.

Racialised deficit

Patriarchal discourse in schools is also indicated to elicit critiques of Black, working-class, single mothers. Despite consistent critiques of the construction of Black boys embodying deviant and dangerous forms of masculinity (connected to criminality and medicalisation) (Gillies, 2016; Perera, 2020), arguments also exist that they are 'over feminised' because of the assumed matriarchal families they grow up in (Sewell, 2010). Gillies and Robinson (2012) point out the relevance of this perspective in UK policy moves to employ more Black male staff in education contexts with Black boys to fulfil the assumed father-figure deficit in lone mother families. This is alluded to be connected to school exclusion, where the teachers in this (2012:164-165) study commented that the 'conduct issues' of the students could be attributed to 'families [that] are completely dysfunctional' because 'the men have gone' and 'the women are also struggling to find their roles'. Again, this view is held by the recent UK Prime minister, who in 1995 (Johnson, Online) said that '500,000 women have chosen to

marry the state. [I] accuse men of being responsible for a social breakdown […] and which is producing a generation of ill-raised, ignorant, aggressive and illegitimate children'. The assumption that Black boys are not used to the masculine disciplinarian strategies of the school environment, because they 'lack' male role models, and therefore resist this form of discipline more than young people from white, patriarchal family units, is, as Perera (2020) points out, the racist patriarchal intersection producing a deficit view of Black boys and Black mothers, as these discourses position Black boys as 'running riot' without their fathers' discipline. Gillies and Robinson (2012:165) counter this male-deficit discourse Gillies (2016) draws on Giddens's risk framework to argue that mothers suffer the responsibilising and individualising effects of exclusion. Gillies's (2016) argument is visible in in the ways in which mothers are more likely to burden the responsibility for managing the exclusion process (Gillies, 2011; Kultz, 2015; DfE, 2019a).

Like the girls, this is another example of the impossible demands on Black boys' identity performances, where they are presumed to be masculine and aggressive, but simultaneously feminised and out of control. Both intersect to position Black young people as deficient, risky, and criminalised.

In Gillies and Robinson's (2012) study, Marcus, an African Caribbean young person, was criminalised for the fights and violent crime he was embroiled with outside of school. The authors (2012:167) argue that criminalisation discourses intersected with gendered and racial profiling in Marcus's case, as the school were,

> considerably more anxious about the risk they felt [Marcus] posed to others. […] Marcus was one of four black Caribbean boys marked out by the school as troublemakers. The head teachers suspected they were involved in criminal gang activity […]. This conjecture placed them under particular scrutiny with slang, clothing, gestures and text messages liable to be misinterpreted as sinister forms of secrete communication. (2012:167)

These circumstances also led to 'Marcus and his friends [being] regularly followed, stopped, and harassed by the police to the effect that there was no one to turn to when they feared for their own safety. In this situation, Marcus, and many of the other young men in our study cultivated their experience of anger as a protective force on the street'. The anger necessitated by these contexts, the authors argue, intersects with medicalising discourses

where the boys were individualised by the school as having anger-management issues and needing to attend sessions to correct it, rather than the anger being recognised as a powerful tool necessitated by social contexts outside of school. This particular example demonstrates the powerful cyclic and reinforcing nature of living in risky contexts related to inequality, to being individually labelled as 'risky', being regulated and surveilled, and adopting risky strategies to deal with risky circumstances – further reinforcing the 'risky' label. Marcus's context was not heard by adults because of these circumstances.

Like working class young people, the authors underscore how the performance of defensive anger is a 'risky strategy': 'Shortly after we had completed our work with Marcus he was confronted and stabbed outside of the school', that ultimately culminated in his exclusion (2012:168-9). Here, a culmination of powerful discourses and realities both silenced Marcus's experiences and led to his exclusion.

Young people from travelling communities are also subject to discourses of deficiency and risk that elicit their exclusion. Literature evidences the stressful nature of realities for some travelling communities due to higher than average rates of: absence-due-to-sickness of traveller young people in school (Race Disparity Unit, 2022); adult mortality, specifically related to abrupt deaths from traumatic accidents and long-term illness (Rogers, 2016); suicide amongst men from Irish travelling communities (Rogers, 2016); drug and alcohol use; depression and anxiety; infant deaths, still-born or miscarried children; maternal death in child-birth or soon after (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012). Historic and current experiences of discrimination are a root cause of travelling communities distancing themselves from mainstream life in the UK (Mulcahy et al., 2017; Brassington, 2022).[13] This can work to isolate communities from local authority support services and schools, to distance them from others, and promotes further misunderstandings and discriminatory attitudes towards them. When these circumstances are put in dialogue with the static, situated nature of mainstream schooling in the UK, young people from these communities are removed, when the requirements of their community are placed at-odds with schools. Derrington (2007) terms this the push-pull effect, whereas Robson (2015) takes

[13] Irish travellers speak Shelta, a secret oral language designed to strengthen community/cultural cohesion and work as a buffer towards those outside the community (Velupillai, 2015).

a discursive (but not a CDS) view towards the broadly discriminatory social factors working to position young people in this way.

As young people from travelling communities are less likely to be in school frequently or at all, this can produce particular views of them from teaching staff (Robson, 2015; Mulcahy et al., 2017). The literature indicates that these range from believing traveller youth and their families are disengaged or non-committal towards education, to seeing young travellers as underperforming or of lower intelligence than their peers (Mulcahy et al., 2017), and finally as problematic and time consuming - because of the above, and due to the belief that the young people will leave the school sooner than their peers (Rogers, 2015).

The cumulation of these stressful circumstances and the lived experiences of being misunderstood and discriminated against work to position traveller youth in risky situations, and to adopt risky identities of compliance, resistance and struggle. Derrington (2007) assessed three behavioural responses of traveller youth to discrimination in school as 'fight, flight, or playing white': verbal or physical retaliation to discrimination, truancy or self-imposed exclusion, and concealing their heritage. These responses did not inevitably help young people navigate their lives in or out of school, thus Derrington (2007) labels them maladaptive coping strategies. Fighting led to poor relationships with teachers, flight had the dual academic and social repercussions of distancing the children from socialising and forming friendships and of exacerbating teachers' judgments of them as uncommitted towards their education. Playing white was superficially argued as an effective strategy, as half of those drawing on this strategy went on to complete their education. However, it is ineffectual in the long term because it relied on the denial or oppression of cultural identity, which can have negative psychosocial consequences (Derrington, 2007). The deficit discourses of travelling communities, reinforced by lived realities of intersectional discrimination based on deprivation and gendered identity performances, are another example of how young people are cornered into particular behaviours, and excluded as a consequence.

Medicalised deficit

Processes of medicalised deficit discourses are classed, raced, gendered, and connected to academic and moral ideas from the ideal learner discourse. These discourses also work to position young people in excluded spaces, and is reflected in the high numbers of neurodiverse young people in Alternative Provision (DfE, 2024).

Taberner (2023:online) summarises that there is growing support for a 'social-medical model of disability' to understand disruptive behaviour and learning capabilities as 'artefacts of complex interactions between physiological, environmental and social factors', specifically to critique 'how changes to school organisation, driven by hegemonic socio-political and cultural rhetoric and the need to seek cheap fixes to compensate for systemic failures, have affected pupils' interpersonal experiences and engagement with the learning process.' Lehane's (2017) CDA of SEND policy evidences this.

Lehane (2017) identified the change in tone and ideology from 1994, 2001 and 2015. The 2015 policy encouraged an 'arms-length' approach to those with SEND, who are to have services commissioned for them outside school, and that

> None of the three Codes consider what inclusive practice might look like. Similarly, there is no mention of models of disability […], nor any interrogation of the relationship between disability and standards, poverty or minority. The word "poverty" never appears in any of the Codes. The nature of *SEND is assumed and given*, a set of needs to be serviced, albeit through a choice of means. (2017:63)

This relates to wider literature in Sociology of Education critiquing the 'SEN industry' (Tomlinson, 2012), where the rise in young people being diagnosed with SEN in mainstream schools does so in line with the expansion in SEN experts and services. Tomlinson (2012) suggests that governments find the expansion of these services appealing, partly due to increased numbers of requests for diagnosis, the pressure to raise academic standards, and the need to remove disruptive students from classrooms. These reasons all position young people believed to have SEND as academically deficient, and therefore a risk to schools. Youdell (2004) identified this in practice as 'educational triage', based on an ethnographic study of exclusion in mainstream secondary schools. Drawing on earlier work, this triage manifested as students being sorted into the 'safe', (those believed to be on track to attain desired grades), the 'dead' or 'hopeless cases', and those 'suitable for treatment', (perceived

as having a chance of attainting benchmark grades if provided with extra resources). They identified how group membership was distinguished by social class, race, and gender, where 'white middle-class students and girls were disproportionately placed in the safe group, whereas working class, ethnic minority (particularly Black), male students, were disproportionately identified as 'hopeless cases; and white middle-class boys were disproportionately allocated for 'treatment' (Youdell, 2004:412). This concept was developed via a Foucauldian approach, resonant with governmentality approaches to risk, seeing the triage as part of 'disciplinary technologies that deploy and inscribe particular, and arguably hegemonic, discourses of markets, meritocratic individualism, ability, and conduct' that are, 'constitutive of particular sorts of students'. (Youdell, 2004:412).

Strand and Lindorff (2021) indicate the connection between SEND diagnoses and ethnically minoritised, male students living in deprived communities - the same groups over-represented in school exclusion statistics. Their report for the DfE sought to determine the extent of ethnic disproportionality in the identification of SEN in England, whether other pupil characteristics (such as age, gender, socio-economic status etc.) played a role, and trends in SEN identification since 2006. SEMH was first determined in the SEND Code of Practice, and included behaviours such as

> becoming withdrawn or isolated, as well as displaying challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour. These behaviours may reflect underlying mental health difficulties such as anxiety or depression, self-harming, substance misuse, eating disorders or physical symptoms that are medically unexplained. Other children and young people may have disorders such as attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactive disorder or attachment disorder. (DfE, 2015:98)

Strand and Lindorff (2021) found that odds of being identified with SEMH needs were much higher for boys, for Black Caribbean young people, for pupils from disadvantaged neighbourhoods, and for those in secondary school, particularly years 10 and 11. However, this was not correlated with academic ability. Finally, they ascertained that secondary schools working with deprived communities with large populations of Black Caribbean and Mixed White and Black Caribbean pupils raised the odds of higher SEMH identification. Strand and Lindorff (2021:13) suggest that this association could 'include unmeasured factors associated with high deprivation (e.g., high levels of crime, violence or gang culture),

negative peer effects (such as disaffection or disengagement) or school policies (e.g. pre-emptive or zero tolerance disciplinary strategies).'

Therefore, the effects of government policy are arguably to medicalise and exclude, or to exclude and then medicalise, those who are withdrawn, isolated, displaying challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour, unsuccessful in forming social relationships, and those whose learning progression is below average. The DfE's (2023) statistics on exclusion do not break down the type of SEN within the excluded population, so it is not possible to know whether those diagnosed are weighted in behavioural or learning assessed forms of SEN. There is a correlation between exclusion and SEMH as Persistent Disruptive Behaviour is the most common reason for exclusion, as Strand and Lindorff's (2021) study and the aforementioned literature on school exclusion underscores, those who are disproportionally (seen to be) behaving as such are minority ethnic, male, working-class young people. This is medicalisation in action, as the disruptive behaviours of those students living in stressful, challenging, discriminatory social contexts are those diagnosed with SEMH in zero-tolerance, results-driven secondary school environments. Therefore, medicalisation of particular groups of young people is another discourse serving to justify young people's perceived disruptive behaviour as risky to the school environment, at-risk of academic failure, and thus justifiable of exclusion. Gillies (2016) and Akala (2017) evidence the intersection of these discourses in action.

Gillies (2016) notes the academic pressures upon schools are connected to discourses of standards, excellence, and equity, and that these contribute to positioning young people as risky/at-risk, and subsequently segregating them from mainstream school. Gillies (2016:6-7) argues that these practices escape scrutiny because of medicalising discourses towards excluded young people, who are

> represented as having particular needs […] regarded as being set apart to enjoy special help rather than being ghettoized. This masks the extent to which a framework of 'inclusion, with its roots in a radical agenda for social and structural change, has seamlessly morphed into a psychological deficit model (Gillies, 2011) […] and a remedial process through which deficits and dysfunctions are corrected.

Gillies (2016), Akala (2017), Blatchford and Webster (2018) and Caslin (2019) also note how the medicalised labels of SEND/EBD results in internal exclusion via class separation. These

studies also note how young people can internalise medicalised labels, such as describing themselves as having an anger management issue (Gillies, 2016) or feel like they are being labelled as stupid or incompetent. The emotions outlined above can also arise when these labels are misappropriated (Akala, 2017).

Akala (2017) draws on research and personal experience to exemplify how Black young people's voices are obscured and silenced in mainstream education, and how these lead to Black young people being placed outside of mainstream schools. Gillborn's (2000) study on race, ethnicity, and educational attainment strongly suggests that teachers racially profile intelligence in favour of white and Asian children over Black children. Akala (2017) argues for the powerful positioning effects of social discourses and labelling: 'if […] your teachers constantly assume you are way less clever than you actually are simply because you are black, and treat you accordingly, you are going to resent them and it will naturally affect your self-esteem and your grades' (Akala, 2017:85). Cushing (2020:432-3) reiterates this point related to teachers' policing of non-standardised Englishes and the correlated 'deficit attitudes towards speakers of non-standardised forms', drawing together research arguing that children on the receiving end of such discrimination as having 'various consequences, from negatively affecting students' confidence, motivation, and desire to participate in classroom activities' and 'can lead to those speakers feeling insecure and facing threats to their identity'.

Akala (2017:70) explains how the racism he experienced from teachers made him (and his mother) feel and be angry, depressed, and disengaged with education, because: 'real-life racism makes you paranoid, even in children it creates the dilemma of not knowing if someone is just being horrible in the 'normal' way, as people so often are, or if you are being 'blacked off''. This is relatable to the 'hyper-vigilance' McGarvey (2018:61) speaks of for those living in deprived communities, the readiness to respond to perceived threats that may/may not exist. The anger expressed at racial injustice led to those involved being distanced from adults in schools, to their experiences being unheard, and inevitably to the exclusion from mainstream spaces. For Black young people, the anger expressed at injustice becomes a cyclic justification of exclusion because it serves to justify racist prejudices of Black youth as angry and therefore dangerous, resulting in greater surveillance and regulation and inciting further anger and exclusion. This is because anger is both a

criminalised and medicalised (Gillies, 2011; 2016; Lanas and Brunila, 2019), individualised as the fault or choice of young people, and thus regulated in schools. Throughout the above examples, anger at the situations of inequality, racism, and their effects, is a justifiable response from Black, working-class young people, but one which is unheard because the reasons behind it are unseen, misunderstood, or dismissed through adherence to/ uncritical attitudes towards the hegemonic discourses (re)producing discrimination in the first place. A lack of criticality towards these hegemonic discourses and the discriminatory impact they have on specific groups of young people, here demonstrably incite their exclusion by positioning young people as risky, at-risk, and/or deficient.

2.4.4 Alternative discourses of critique: youth voice in exclusion research

The examples above from the voices of young people indicate excluded young people mobilising their expertise by experience to initiate consciousness-raising processes of hegemonic discriminatory discourses (Fairclough, 2001). The following provides more detail of young people's critiques, via foregrounding their alternative realities of school exclusion, to underscore the ways in which their participatory choices were precluded to compliance, resistance or struggle in the face of these discourses, and how this was operationalised by discourses of risk and deficiency (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2015). Therefore, these examples demonstrate that excluded young people mobilise alternative discourses of critique in a range of ways, and that these discourses are framed as resistant/ struggling by different approaches in research. However, none of these approaches sit within CDS/ YPR.

Firstly, the boys in Thomas's (2022) study mobilised their experiences arising from the challenges of living in deprived communities to assert themselves as capable, agentive, knowledgeable, responsible 'men' rather than boys. Although this caused issues in a school environment, the participants tell Thomas (2022:166-7) 'You don't know what he's been through […] You can't say he's not a man' to discursively claim empowered identities based on experiences that are foregrounded to the researcher. As such, they offer alternative critiques to discourses of working-class deficit, and raise consciousness of their experiences to evidence this.

Similarly, the young people in Drummond's (2018:39) study put forward critiques of classist discourse in: underlining of the researcher's potential assumptions towards them; their reclamation of discriminatory social labels - 'we call each other [chavs], cos we're all from near enough' - and in their analysis of the inherent inequalities and power distribution relative to social class.

A young person in Drummond's (2018) study provides an analysis of the impact of intersecting politically pedalled hegemonic discourses related to social class and military service. They indicate the intersecting challenges their family contend with, and, like young people in Gillies (2011) and Gillies and Robinson (2012), voices a convincing and justified critique of the realities of deprivation and the deficit discourses connected to it. The young people in the latter research offer another counter-discourse to deprived community deficit, by positioning themselves as rich in relationships: 'While teachers were prone to portray parents as irresponsible, incompetent and culpable, BSU attendees were emphatic in describing family as the most important thing in their lives. […] students conveyed a strong sense of caring and being cared about. Mothers were particularly valued.' (Gillies and Robinson, 2012:166-7) The perspective of this research demonstrates an anti-deficit view of excluded young people, in that their voices offer critiques of social injustice evident in the racist, patriarchal discourses their families face. The young people raise consciousness of these discriminatory discourses by offering alternative discourses based in their realities.

Young people in Drummond's (2018), and teachers in Cushing's (2022) research offer alternative discourses critiquing deficit discourses of Black, working-class groups in schools, situated in personal experiences of the effects of these discourses. The examples below demonstrate the alternative perspectives at work in education contexts, and the challenges they face just in being voiced. These challenges are further indicative of the existence and power of the hegemonic discourses operating to disempower Black students and teachers from minority ethnic backgrounds, and the effort required to navigate them.

Drummond's (2018) study detailed common words used by the young people, one of which was:

> **Racist […]** Another word with two distinct (yet somehow related) meanings. On the one hand, it was used in its standard meaning of describing discrimination or

> prejudice based on race or ethnicity. However, it was also used to describe general (perceived) unfairness, regardless of whether this had any connection at all to race or ethnicity. For example, we heard it being used to describe a difficult maths problem that the teacher had written on the board and asked them to solve: 'that's racist that' [Nathan]. (Drummond, 2018:220)

However, it is arguable that Nathan's (a Black young person) levelling of the difficult maths problem as racist maybe has more connection to race or ethnicity than it superficially appears. Firstly, Nathan has designated the situation of the challenging maths problem as racist, not the teacher. The situation is an example of young people being asked to perform/comply to discourses of the ideal learner. Here, that requires doing as the adult asks and demonstrate academic proficiency as designated by the requirements of standardised curricula/testing. The literature previously discussed in this section explains how, for Black young people, performing ideal learner identities requires great amounts of effort with an almost impossible outcome, as the ideal learner is white and middle-class (Gillborn, 2000; Youdell, 2006). Black young people deal with more challenges in performing ideal learner identities because they are more likely to have greater demands on their energy in dealing with stressful life circumstances related to racism and inequality, be disengaged, lacking in confidence with academic abilities, and to have experienced hostility from teachers (Akala, 2017). They are also more isolated though being a minoritised group, where their identities can be whitened and silenced (Cushing, 2020, Cushing and Snell, 2022).

The situation of Nathan having to do this maths problem is therefore demonstrative of unequal power relations between young people and adults, and in the context of Nathan being a Black young person, is related to border social practices and discourses inciting racialised inequalities. As the unfair practices of schools are imbued with racist attitudes, maybe 'racist' is a more fitting word than originally thought to describe school-based unfairness, particularly when voiced by a Black young person.

The adult reaction to Nathan's use of this term was of 'concern about the word being used in this way. They felt that it was a 'dangerous' term to use given the likelihood that it could be misinterpreted by people who might overhear and not be aware of the context.' (Drummond, 2018:220). Presumably, the danger here is that the teacher might potentially be seen to be being accused of racism. Although clearly the maths teacher is not racist

simply by doing their job, the situation in which students and teachers are placed, by a racialised school system predicated on the disempowerment of particular ethnic groups, means that they can enact these values to particular extents. These values are hidden by the hegemonic discourses of youth deficit, the value and necessity of academic progression for youth to become the right kind of adults, and of the ideal learner being white and middle-class. And that is why it is 'dangerous' - because at the micro level of interaction, the system is hidden by powerful discourses and the individuals are blamed for enacting the discriminatory values the system can encourage. Nathan, however, potentially sees this, and defines the situation as racist, not his teacher.

The teachers in Cushing's (2023b) research faced similar issues in school-wide sensitivities to calling out white supremacy inherent in English curricula. Both teachers saw the current curricula as oppressive to Black, working-class identities of students, which 'did not allow [them] to produce their natural language – with most children saying as little as possible due to fear of getting it wrong and a complete linguistic and cultural disassociation with what they were being asked to do' (Cushing, 2023b:265). The redesigned curricula approach from both was met with resistance and policing from management, based on the discourses drawn upon to justify designating students as white, middle-class ideal learners who develop as such through white middle-class curricula:

> management had silenced [Mowahib's] efforts to bring critical attention to the anti-Black logics underpinning word gap interventions and that they were deliberately attempting to derail her work under the argument that the language around race and power was 'too strong' and 'unsuitable' for a school policy (Cushing, 2023b:270).

The fact that the teacher in this instance is 'Black, working-class, and an immigrant' (Cushing, 2023b:267), is further indicative of the arguments that critical Black voices towards racism and white hegemony are viewed as 'too strong' and 'unsuitable' for school environments. Mowahib was thus treated as risky, and was regulated, just as Marcus (Gillies and Robinson, 2012), Akala (2017), and Nathan (Drummond, 2018) were. However, their voices demonstrate resistance and struggle against these hegemonic discourses, and thus raise consciousness of and criticality towards their existence and operation. Being voiced by people from Black, working-class communities foregrounds their expertise by experience justifying their critique.

The young people in Drummond's (2018) research voice such experiences via their language practices in the PRU. These practices index the genre of grime music, which is 'black music's rawest cry for political justice (Empire, 2018:online), even though it 'is not always made by black people' (Hancox, 2018:33). Those injustices, such as poverty, violence, weapons, crime, substance misuse, mental health challenges, suicidal thoughts, the demands of masculinity, lost childhoods, and the feeling of struggling against individual powerlessness in the face of these situations, are exemplified in its lyrics (Dizzee Rascal, 2004:online).

Hancox (2018:33) also underscores the misconception of grime as antisocial, because of 'all that clatter, hostility and bad attitude', when in reality, grime:

> has always been community music: invented and developed collectively and collaboratively, by people whose lives and roots are deeply entwined, and who made music because it was a sociable thing to do. […]

The language used by the young people in Drummond's (2018) PRU is thus arguably fitting, as, from numerous examples throughout this review, the injustices in grime are experienced by excluded young people disproportionately to the wider youth population. Thus, grime-indexing can be seen as part of similar cries against injustice by excluded youth, and is a linguistic practice with specific roots in communities experiencing the effects of socially produced injustice.

Considering the above definitions of grime, drawing on grime-informed discoursing practices are both relevant and appropriate for the boys using it in Drummond's (2018) research. These practices include the use of language features associated with Black Englishes and a 'stance of toughness', and rapping/spitting frequently embedded in day-to-day conversations and situations (Drummond, 2018:247). There is sparse detail on the lives of the boys outside of school in this study, but it is indicated that they are variably from Black and white communities, affiliated with - or knowledgeable of – justice involved people, and suspicious of those with perceived authority (Drummond, 2018). The young people perform identities related to some experiences common in grime. Being excluded, young people are more likely to experience social injustices, and this is thoroughly evidenced. In this research, the young people may be practising identities that correlate with these experiences, and there is an appeal in an artform that facilitates empowerment (via participating in a communal, creative project, where shared experiences of injustice are voiced). This is integral to grime,

and maybe part of the perceived 'toughness' of its creators. Grime is tough because it is 'male', resilient, and based on lived experiences of injustice that justify the anger running through it. Just like the anger at injustice communicated by other excluded young people (Gillies, 2016; Drummond, 2018), grime can 'ask hard questions about what is going on around us' (Claxton, 2005:22) (see also Gillies, 2011). These qualities make grime powerful and feared, and as such, a criminalised artform. It is literally policed, where 'the Met began systematically monitoring, targeting and shutting down black music nights' (Hancox, 2018:171). Hancox argues that the marginalised identities of grime artists and fans are the very reason for the policing of grime.

The young people in Drummond's (2018) research are arguably an example of what happens when 'all of that clatter, hostility and bad attitude' (Hancox, 2018:33) is viewed as 'bad language' and thus 'bad behaviour' (Cushing, 2020), rather than as a communal response to broad social injustice based on experience (Hancox, 2018). It is a school-based example of how wider discriminatory discourses criminalising minority ethnic, working-class communities are excluded from school, with their realities, identities, experiences and knowledges of social injustice marginalised in the process.

Cushing and Snell's (2022) and Cushing's (2020) research sheds lights on the history of why and how the forms of communication connected with Black working-class communities – that are collectively enacted in grime music - are policed and thus criminalised in schools. Thus, their research traces the roots of the discourses the young people in Drummond's (2018) study critique. Cushing and Snell (2022:3) review linguistic research identifying how 'regional dialects were stigmatised as ignorant, sloppy, and impure through their association with lower class speakers. These ideologies were held not just by privileged groups in society but also by marginalised groups, who could be coerced into accepting the norms of the powerful and regulating their own behaviour accordingly', and how this was evident in Ofsted reports praising the erasure of nonstandard English, where 'many of these activities including proxies for race. For example, 'writing a rap song into standard English' (2002) (2022:16).

Cushing, (2020) also draws attention to the ways in which policing children's language works to police the behaviours, identities and knowledges of those from marginalised communities. He also emphasises how these are situated in criminalised school

environments, where ‘policing is much less of a metaphor’ than it is a reality, in the form of zero-tolerance behaviour policies, police officers in schools, and ex-military personnel teacher recruitment schemes (Cushing, 2020:437). All of which operates under the ideal learner discourse, which espouses better employment and economic opportunities for students who meet these expectations. Cushing, (2023a), elaborates this further to connect racial and classist discrimination of young people’s linguistic ‘deficit’ (against the ideal learner expectations) leading to their criminalisation and exclusion.

The paranoia underscored in the press in Drummond’s (2018) work of ‘white kids sounding black’, and of young people ‘talking their way into unemployment’ are emblematic of the criminalising, deficit discourses of Black working class young people Cushing (2020) and Cushing and Snell (2022) elucidate. It is pertinent that the excluded young people in Drummond’s (2018) research speak in grime-indexing ways that are parallel with Black working-class marginalised Englishes (Cushing, 2023a; 2023b; 2020), and as Cushing and Snell (2022) note, as oppressed by the school system in England.

Throughout, we see how lived realities of risk that are structurally and discursively produced, lead to ‘risky’ identities and labelling practices that reproduce realities of risk, and the preclusion of participatory capital as compliance, resistance, and struggle.

However, these alternative discourses encapsulate a complex picture of excluded young people’s participation. On the one hand, it could be argued that they present a bleak assimilation of restricted identity choices in relation to risky, deficient contexts where defence against these contexts takes precedence over remaining in mainstream education. On the other hand, these can be seen as powerful voices of critique that rally against social injustice and draw on expertise by experience to validate them.

This expertise by experience is the crux here, making both perspectives true, because lived experience of oppression can’t happen without oppression existing in the first place. The Faircloughian-informed perspective of this thesis offers a productive lens through which to see truth in both perspectives. Firstly, to foreground deficit discourses to enable change via a distinct knowledge of how they operate, and secondly, to distinguish the alternative discourses and ways of knowing young people possess for that change to occur, crucially, led by youth experiences and perspectives. For exclusion, the literature reviewed demonstrates

the possibility afforded for this when young people's voices and participation is centred in the research process through long-term knowledgeable relationships with adults, and critical language study to see these possibilities and the overall workings of discourse at all levels of social life. Participatory Research supports the latter theoretically and methodologically. This indicates the interdisciplinary possibilities for CDS and PR approaches.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter explores the intersecting possibilities for Participatory Research and CDS emerging from this research (research question 3). It provides an overview of Fairclough's three-dimensional model of discourse (2001), PR approaches, and then details how they were brought together in the development of the Power and Participation (P and P) model. The model was designed as part of the research process, and contributes a new, CDS-informed perspective on approaches to evaluating participatory projects with young people. The use of the P and P model to assess youth participation in this research context also supports an exploration of the different realities of those involved in school exclusion, the discursive power relations influencing these realities, and the ways in which young people's realities can be shared with practitioners for the benefit of all involved in the exclusion process.

After providing an overview of Fairclough's three-dimensional model, an overview of Participatory Research is provided to demonstrate the basis from which Youth Participatory Action Research and Participatory Arts-based research branch out from. The former two are also provided to elucidate the approach of this research: Youth Participatory Research, which is distinct from YPAR, but also fundamentally aligned with it. This is not a new approach, but rather alternative terminology that best reflects the approach of this research (in a field that can be criticised for lacking a coherent set of methodological terms – more below). In providing an overview of CDA and YPR approaches, I highlight their combined application in this study. Critically, this approach allows for youth experiences and knowledges to be centred, and thus to counteract hegemonic discourses and discourses of youth deficiency (Wright, 2020).

Subsequently, this chapter explores specific models of PR in contexts with young people, focusing on Cahill and Dadvand's (2018) P7 model of youth participation. The P and P model is an adaptation of the P7 model, augmented by a CDS-informed perspective on power to inform questions of where power emerges across, within, and outside the participatory process at the micro level of child-adult interactions and at the macro level of societal power relations. The participatory research process with excluded young people centres their voices and crystallizes their critiques of macro-level power structures, which are underscored via the CDS informed approach applied in the P and P model. Thus, the P and P model, with its CDS perspective, supports an understanding of school exclusion as a context of a significant power imbalance.

Finally, this chapter explains the stages of the research design (ethnography, semi-structured interviews, thematic analysis, co-analysis, and arts methods) and the roles the young people, the PRU staff, and I played together in their execution.

3.1 Fairclough's 3-dimensional model

Fairclough (2001:193) presents this model with the critical aim to

> […] help increase consciousness of how language contributes to the domination of some people by others, because consciousness is the first step towards emancipation. That consciousness of language in particular is a significant element of this 'first step' follows from the way domination works in modern society: it works […], through 'consent' rather than 'coercion', through ideology and through language.

Fairclough outlines this aim as integral to understanding the assumptions the 3-dimensional model is based on, that texts and the social processes connected to them are ideologically loaded, that discourse structures produce consent to hegemonic social beliefs, and further, that critical language study can enable consciousness-raising. Fairclough's (2001) model informs the thematic analysis of the discourses operating at different levels in section 4.1, the identification of these discourses in contexts of youth participation in section 4.2, and the analysis of discourses present in the artworks produced by the young people in section 4.3.

Fairclough's model recognises three dimensions of a communicative event: (1) text, (2) discursive practice, and (3) social practice. At each dimension, Fairclough provides corresponding stages of analysis: description, interpretation, and explanation. These stages are not wholly distinct or discrete, because analysis at text level requires a discussion of discursive practice. They are presented by Fairclough as a broad framework.

The text dimension in this research comprises the semiotic resources that constitute language – speech, writing, images, sounds, body language, and 3D objects. The analysis of text draws on tools from Halliday's (1978) Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and is 'concerned with formal properties of text' (Fairclough, 2001:21). These include: vocabulary (individual words), grammar, 'cohesion' (how clauses and sentences are linked), and 'text structure' (how the text is organised) (Fairclough, 1992:75). A description of these textual properties involves asking questions of the people (or actors) featured in the text, their role, their attitudes and stances, and who is given agency and how.

The discursive practice dimension focuses on how texts are produced, distributed, and consumed in society. There are two processes of this dimension. First, to interpret how the text is produced (editorial procedures, the genre of the text) to become coherent i.e., how each part is meaningfully related to make sense. And second, to analyse how it is altered when brought into play with other discourses, or in other words, its intertextuality with other texts and contexts. In this thesis, sections 2.4 and 2.3 demonstrate the intersecting, intertextual nature of various discourses in the contexts of schools specifically to position young people and adults. For example, broad social discourses of gender intersect with discourses of social class, ethnicity and others *within* the ideal learner discourse situated in school contexts (see figure 1). Exploring the second process here asks questions of who the audience are assumed to be and what they are assumed to know, and what mode(s) the text is distributed in. An example of this is in comparing how different newspapers narrate the same stories, demonstrating how different assumptions of audience knowledge, genres, and modes of distribution mediate texts differently. This second level of interpretation is interested in clarifying how production and interpretation are socially constrained: firstly, 'by the available members' resources, which are effectively internalized social structures, norms and conventions', and secondly, 'by the specific nature of the social practice of which they are parts, which determines what elements of members' resources are drawn upon, and

how' (Fairclough, 1992:80). The final dimension of analysis, social practice, is concerned with explaining 'the relationship between interaction and social context – with the social determination of the processes of production and interpretation, and their social effects' (Fairclough, 2001:22). This stage of explanation looks to identify ideological struggle, and the power relations that produce it in discourse. This is based on the view of ideology as 'an accumulated, naturalized orientation which is built into norms and conventions' that is 'located both in the structures (orders of discourse) […] and in events themselves' (Fairclough, 1992:89).

All the dimensions are dependent on each other, and therefore to analyse one aspect, analysts must consider the other two, and the relationship across all three. Crucially, analysis in CDS starts at text level, where the analyst keeps an open mind towards what the text is saying, rather than forcing ideologies and categories onto the text. In CDS, 'it is not possible to "read off" ideologies from texts […] because meanings are produced through interpretations of texts […] they are processes between people' (Fairclough, 1992:89). The analyst's role is key in how the text is processed, as their interpretations are influenced by the language, discourses, and ideologies in their immediate experience. The inescapable influence of these, as argued by the interwoven perspective taken towards discourse and society in CDS, has reasoned critiques of CDS approaches because of the biases of CDS researchers (Breeze, 2011; Weniger, 2012). However, the aim of CDS approaches is not to evade bias, but to clarify it up front. The reflexive approach of CDS analysts arises from their critical agenda. They recognise that bias in discourse affects everyone, including the researcher, and it is this all-encompassing scrutiny of texts, processes, and ideologies that enables criticality in CDS. Fairclough's (2001) model informs the approach taken to analysing the discursive reproduction of power at these three interconnected levels across the data generated in this study (in the thematic analysis and participatory analysis) and underpins the multimodal analysis of the young people's art works. The latter is distinctly aligned with Fairclough's (2001) approach because it uses analytical tools arising from Halliday (1978) for textual analysis, whereas the thematic and participatory analyses do not. Fairclough's (2001) three-dimensional approach appropriately underpins the methodology of this research. The three-dimensional approach provides a nuanced lens that supports us to view the interwoven macro, meso, and micro levels of discourse operating in school exclusion (figure

1). As the research seeks a comprehensive view of the language of school exclusion, Fairclough's (2001) approach guides the analyst to home in on each level, to understand the ways in which each of the three levels inform each other, and thus how they work comprehensively to position excluded young people and adults in specific ways in education contexts.

3.2 Participatory Research approaches

Drawing on key tenets of Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) and Participatory Research (PR), I have termed the participatory research approach applied in this thesis as Youth Participatory Research (YPR). It closely aligns with motives specific to participatory research contexts with young people frequently outlined in YPAR-focused research, namely its investment in foregrounding youth as expert critics, intervenors, and activists in their own lives (Ozer and Douglas, 2015). YPAR approaches are also invested in critiquing injustice specific to young people, most of which, as I argue via the CDS-lens taken in chapter 2, are predicated on discourses of youth risk and deficiency. However, the YPR approach of this research does not incorporate a significant action dimension (the reasons for this are outlined later in this chapter). At the same time, while my approach falls broadly under the umbrella of PR, the specificity of its engagement with youth perspectives and practices necessitates an explicit reference to this life stage. Hence: Youth Participatory Research.

The YPR approach of this research sought to practically centre young people's voices as alternative critiques of social justice issues, and thus complements CDS perspectives on the potential of foregrounding alternative discourses to enable consciousness-raising of hegemony and its effects (Fairclough, 2001). A CDS approach frames these realities and experiences through a discursive lens (Fairclough, 2001), and thus the intersection of CDS with YPR approaches can enable an exploration of the linguistically-realised power imbalances in school exclusion. These approaches are the foundation of the P and P model.

3.2.1 Participatory Research

Participatory Research (PR) is understood as an orientation to research, rather than a methodology, that essentially seeks for the research process to be with, not on, participants

(Vaughn and Jacquez, 2020). It works as an umbrella term for a range of participatory approaches and practices tailored to specific research contexts, researchers, and participants (Nind, 2011). PR essentially seeks to place participants' knowledge and experiences at the centre of the research process. By expanding opportunities and spaces for participants to become repositioned as lead actors in knowledge production and construction, their perspectives and realities can guide what is being researched, how, why, and for what outcomes (Chevalier and Buckles, 2019). Pant (2009:100) outlines the following critical dimensions of PR: the 'development of critical consciousness for both the researcher and the participants', the 'improvement of the lives of those involved in the research process' and the 'transformation of fundamental societal structures and relationships.'

PR's investment in power sharing is embedded in social justice. It has been used as a means to work with young people, those involved in justice systems, communities situated in low-income areas, refugee groups, and those diagnosed with physical and/or psychological disabilities (Nind et al., 2012; Groundwater-Smith et al., 2015; Kim, 2016). Thus, several PR approaches, such as co-production, aim to draw on knowledge outside academia to challenge established structures and discourses that can be propagated and solidified by research institutions (Bell and Pahl, 2018).

To democratise relationships between the researcher and participants, PR projects may include any combination of the following: co-ownership of the research tasks, goals, and research questions; co-production of data; co-analysis of data and findings; knowledge transfer between researchers, participants, and the wider community; co-authorship of research publications or other outputs; an on-going, long-term relationship outside of the parameters of the project; and knowledge implementation in areas outside the research context and university such as policy and local community practices (Higginbottom and Liamputtong, 2017). The focus on people and their perspectives means that PR often draws on qualitative methods and ethnographic approaches (Nind, 2011; Groundwater-Smith, 2015).

PR's vested interest in power-sharing arises from its constructivist epistemological stance. This stance understands reality to be experienced through individual perspectives, and therefore values individual experiences over empirical ontological views. PR is informed by

Freire's (1996) concept of critical consciousness, which advocates for a critical understanding of reality, and in the case of Participatory Action Research (PAR), to inform active interventions in it. Freire's (2001) stance, like the critical realist position of this research, is that to achieve a critical understanding of reality, people need to observe how events, histories, and human relationships mutually work together to construct their contexts. As people cannot be separated from their contexts, the decisions and actions people take in these contexts are significant and powerful. Freire's interest in how critical knowledge of reality could be harnessed by marginalised groups informs the with-not-on approach in participatory research. Through dialogue between researchers and participants, realities are articulated, understood, and validated. Alternative knowledges can challenge culturally established knowledges when articulated through the experiences of marginalised groups. As such, critical consciousness can clarify oppressive power structures and empower marginalised knowledges through participation in research processes. Freire (2001) argued for dialogue in exploring and championing the everyday knowledge of non-academic communities to challenge hegemonic power structures for their benefit. Strongly informed by Freire, PAR is invested in the transformative power of marginalised knowledge outside of institutions.

Higginbottom and Liamputtong (2017) define Freire's work as the basis of PR traditions from the global south, which are furthered by Boal (1985), Fals Borda (2001), and Fals Borda and Rahman (1991). These traditions are informed by Freire's proposition of education as a liberating force, and that marginalised social groups have valuable, relevant knowledges that they can construct in meaningful ways outside of established ways of knowing. In the global north, Higginbottom and Liamputtong (2017) note the rise of PR in North America and Europe to have some relationship to social movements in the 1960s and 70s critiquing patriarchy and white hegemony.

The work of the southern and northern traditions informs the theoretical underpinnings of PAR. Lewin's (1946) theories on action research from the northern tradition aligns with Freire's (2001) views of knowledge production between people, the ground-up approach to social change, and champions research beyond producing 'nothing but books' to take informed action for disempowered groups in context (Lewin, 1946:35). PAR's investment in action for social change also has foundations in Fals Borda's (2001) case for urgent action in

response to communities suffering the consequences of capitalist structures. Such action, he argues, needs to be informed by academics critiquing the influence of capitalism to notice how 'education, information, research, and scientific work have been geared to the upkeep of unjust power structures' (ibid:34). This is the reason why this research is more suited to a definition of YPR rather than YPAR. Although the young people draw on their expertise by experience to produce critiques of hegemonic discourses impacting exclusion, the multiple challenging circumstances they faced outside of school and the limitations of the length of the project significantly impacted the time and opportunity to develop active interventions in their context. This is demonstrated in the P and P analysis in chapter 4.

3.2.2 Benefits and limitations of PR in this research

These theoretical underpinnings offer a basis for exploring the multiple experienced realities of participants, and importantly how external factors and human relationships work together to construct these realities. The investment in centring marginalised knowledges and activism for consciousness raising and social change have similarities to Fairclough's (2001:194) notion of active struggle being dialectically related to consciousness-raising as 'struggle opens people to the raising of consciousness, which empowers them to engage with struggle', and thus brings the common-sense or hegemonic aspects of discourse to the fore. Like Freire's (2001) notion of marginalised knowledges being meaningful as they are based in the experiences of marginalised communities, Fairclough (2001:194) also determines raising of consciousness being based on people recognising oppression 'through their own experience of it, and their own activity struggling against it.' The activist roots in PR approaches also resonate with van Dijk's (2013:online) articulation of CDA being discourse analysis 'with a rebellious attitude of dissent against the symbolic power elites that dominate public discourse, especially in politics, the media and education.' Thus, the theoretical underpinnings of YPR are productive for exploring young people's realities in the PRU, and for the intersecting approach of this research with CDS.

However, participatory approaches are critiqued for being too idealistic or insufficient in the face of a myriad of structural oppressions, allowing for merely tokenistic inclusion of participants, and lacking criticality towards the established power of researchers and universities in PR relationships with marginalised groups or the organisations that work with

them (Bradbury-Jones, et al., 2018; de Oliviera, 2023). They can also place significant, unpredictable, and emotional demands on researchers because of the time and personal investment they require (Lenette, et al., 2019). Researchers taking up PR orientations frequently note these challenges, and instead argue that aiming for the unachievable should not prevent the uptake of participatory orientations, but should instead be viewed as a continual process via which structural oppressions can be surfaced, articulated, critiqued, and intervened upon.

The following sections on participatory research contexts with young people, and PABR as a popular contributing approach in participatory projects, give further insights into the applicability of these in the research context, and the specific benefits and challenges in PR approaches with young people.

3.2.3 Youth Participatory Research and Participatory Arts-Based Research

This section draws on literature concerned with YPAR to elucidate the aspects of relevance to the YPR approach of this study.

In research, youth participation is,

> held to be a marker of quality within interventions involving young people. It is variously framed as an issue of social justice, a platform for positive development, a medium for active citizenry, a human right, and a strategy for nation-building (Cahill and Dadvand, 2018:243).

Participatory research with young people frequently seeks to achieve youth-informed, and in the case of YPAR, youth-led, change and transformation in social contexts concerning them (Ozer, 2016). Wright (2020:35) defines YPAR as 'an epistemological framework, pedagogical approach, and research method that counters deficit views of youth'. This is fundamentally the concern of Youth Participatory Research as distinct from other approaches in PR.

Aspirations for social justice are clear in the contexts identified in Kim's (2016) literature review of youth-led research, which notes topics and issues addressed to include health and mental health; violence; drug and tobacco use; family, school, and community-based problems; and service development. Kim's review also found that PAR projects frequently

engaged with marginalised young people, such as 'low-income students, immigrants, women, people of colour, or youth in disadvantaged communities' (2016:43). Wright (2020) notes that PR projects have been demonstrably supportive for young people experiencing racism, classism, and xenophobia, which are relevant to the lives of excluded young people. Youth PR aims and approaches are distinct from wider PR approaches in their specificity to this life stage. The advantages arising from PR with youth in Kim's (2016) literature review were measured in the development of young people's leadership, communication, and research skills; critical awareness of issues relevant to their communities and in wider social contexts; and confidence and empowerment. These benefits were sometimes extended from the micro experiences of individual young people to macro contexts of their communities. Kim (2016) also found that the literature dominantly sat within the PAR tradition of using a wide range of methods for data collection, and that these were dominantly qualitative and visual. Researchers using visual or creative methods argue that the combination of PABR and YPAR in projects with young people are dually beneficial because the tools and perspectives of PABR (creative, evolutionary, multimodal) further enable the research skills and tools for youth in YPAR to challenge the deficit discourses of youth (Wright, 2020). All of the above are relevant to the YPR approach of this research. However, the approach taken in this research lacks the 'action' element in YPAR, as there was little scope for the young people to translate our research into action in the context of school exclusion. The definition of active intervention is flexible, and this is not to say that the young people's participation was not a form active intervention. By collaborating with the PRU staff and myself in the research, the young people asserted their realities of exclusion to adults with some influence over the context. However, due to numerous limitations on the research (the time allocated for the project, the various demands the young people contended with both within and outside of the PRU), I made interventions on their behalf (for example, presenting the research to policy makers at DfE).

PABR draws on the ideals of PR and Arts-based research, and thus views those participating in arts-based inquiry as social activists (Finley, 2005). Arts-based methods have worked successfully for researchers working in PR paradigms because of the inherently participatory, collaborative nature of numerous arts practices (Leavy, 2017), including theatre, film, photography, visual arts, narrative writing, music, and collage. There are a range of

methodologies and practices connected to these, such as photovoice, videovoice, photo elicitation, videography, visual ethnography, ethnocinema, ethnodrama, ethnotheatre, and art journaling (Margolis and Pauwels, 2011; Leavy, 2017).

Creative orientations to producing data are popular in projects with excluded or marginalised groups. This is because of their potential for emancipatory outcomes, and the way they enable alternative knowledges to be developed and articulated through multimodal resources (Finley, 2005; Nind et al., 2012). Finley (2005) argues that the process of using visual arts methods inherently questions the power afforded to language-based ways of engaging with the world. The power of language over other media for expression is prevalent in education contexts, and is one reason for the popularity of arts-based methods in such contexts. In terms of expressing and legitimising marginal knowledges (Freire, 1996), arts practices are argued to connect and develop embodied knowledge drawn from sensory experience (Fox, 2016). In this way, arts provide a new dimension through which to explore individuals' subjective realities, and when used with excluded or marginalised groups, open new discourses to challenge established, marginalising discourses. These are the aims of revolutionary arts-based inquiry – to call out oppression and transform praxis (Finley, 2005). Again, the connection with Fairclough's (2001) view of the potential of alternative, marginalised knowledges struggling against hegemonic discourses to critique hidden power in social practices is clear.

PABR is popular within participatory research projects with young people, because youth are a group who experience social injustice, prejudice, and exclusion (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2015; Kim, 2016). Arts methods and creative orientations to research are argued by those working in youth-led research to be something young people prefer to questionnaires or interviews, because the creative process provides more opportunities for young people to take leadership in expressing their responses. The liberating potential of arts-based practices in traditional education contexts is foregrounded by youth participatory researchers, who argue that the creative activities allowed young people to 'try on' new selves and explore important aspects of their education that the mainstream context did not allow because of the dominance of particular modes of communication over others (Holloway and Lecompte, 2001; Nind et al., 2012; DeJonckheere et al., 2014; Goessling, 2017). This is also noted by multimodal critical discourse analysts (Jancsary et al., 2016). As art shifts the paradigms of

communication and critical engagement, it has also produced unanticipated data as young people are freed of the expectations of their situated contexts (Leavy, 2017). This contributes to the critical lens in arts-based research, which has been utilised in PAR to lead action for social change, as the creative pursuits drew on existing, but lesser expressed knowledges and experiences of research participants to inform social action in their interests.

Thus, YPR and PABR approaches are fitting and productive to exploring the realities of excluded youth in their: inherent activist roots, aims to challenge individualising, deficit discourses pertinent to excluded young people, usefulness in education contexts that can work to restrict young people's communication practices, demonstrable benefits in use with those experiencing the marginalising effects of discriminatory discourses, and the flexible range of methods and participatory forms they create for young people in the process.

However, for the excluded young people in this research, the aims of the participatory research process arguably present an ethical issue, as the CDS/YPR approach seeks to surface discriminatory discourses and their effects via youth experiences of it. The process of this is identified by Fairclough (2001) as the active struggle of those experiencing marginalisation to become aware of it, and to call it out. PR researchers note the process as being potentially harmful to participants, who may have been less-aware of the challenging effects of marginalisation they experience prior to the research process, and particularly when engaging with a researcher who may be distant from their communities and experiences (Fals Borda, 2001; Mannay, 2010; Groundwater-Smith et al., 2015). This may cause youth to feel judged or embarrassed and withdraw from the research process. However, this view can be contested as potentially patronising and mobilizing of an 'at-risk' discourse towards participants and preclude participation. Lohmeyer points to the danger of assuming that young people are in a disempowered state, as this can produce 'a hierarchical transaction whereby the lower status participant gains power, seemingly at the expense of the higher status researcher' (2020:46).

Franks (2011:15-16) addresses the impact of these discourses in the relationships between the researcher, their institution, the project funder, the research partner, and the young people involved, and argues that 'the call for participation can at times ignore the

complexity of power relations' between them. Groundwater-Smith et al (2015) draw further attention to this, underscoring that as participatory research grows in popularity (for the way it meets impact targets for research), care needs to be taken over ensuring that participatory research is not tokenistic. Connectedly, Banks et al. (2013) note the impact of disempowering discourses suggesting that young people responded inaccurately or dishonestly to the topic of the research's creative output. Lohmeyer (2020:44) highlights the potential influence of institutional discourses in improving these situations and makes the case for 'new language to conceptualise the researcher-participant relationship', to invert the present situation of research institutions being constructed and designed in the interests of adults, not youth. All the above indicate the potential for a CDS-informed approach to youth participation in order to identify ideologies and hegemonic discourses operating in youth-adult relationships and participatory research.

Lohmeyer (2020) underscores the potential for visual, art-based methods to be an assumed preference for youth. Lohmeyer (2020:42) critiques arts-methods as potentially patronising of young people because 'supposedly, only creative mediums can engage these passive and incapable people' and can lead researchers to miss other motivations young people have for participating outside of the research being engaging. This critique resonates with accusations of arts-based methods with youth lacking scientific rigor (Kim, 2016). However, these are the very attitudes arts-based methods and orientations with young people seek to critique and change, to 'imagine a life lived otherwise' (Finley, 2005:692), and the ways in which young people do research and create data in PR paradigms are often multiple, varied, and creative, and this is argued to produce richer data than maintaining traditional qualitative and quantitative methods (Wright, 2020). Lohmeyer suggests that the motives of young people and the researcher should be seen as 'parallel projects', to ensure that the outcomes young people want from the research are met, and thus meet the aims of YPR projects - to draw on existing knowledges, experiences and concerns of the participants (2020). Lohmeyer's (2020) research demonstrated several youth parallel projects, such as wanting to be kind to those involved, to tell their story, and to develop self-understanding.

The connected theme across the criticisms and challenges of PR/ YPAR approaches is the need for a model that allows for a greater degree of nuanced identification of the macro-level power structures that influence participation and how young people, adults, and

researchers navigate these at the micro level of interaction. As when greater critical awareness of these discourses occurs in situ, participants have a greater degree of knowledge upon which to act and navigate around them to enable youth participation. The next section explores models of youth participation that address these discourses and challenges by placing the emphasis on the degrees to which young people participate and the number of ways they can do so.

3.2.4 Models for evaluating youth participation, and Cahill and Dadvand's (2018) thinking-tool

In their explanation of the P7 model, Cahill and Dadvand (2018) map the development of youth participation models, their influence on one another, and appraise their strengths and limitations. These stem from Hart's (1992) Ladder of Participation, which labels participation in ascending degrees, from 'manipulation' (not participating) to and 'child-initiated, shared decisions with adult' at the top. Although Cahill and Dadvand (2018) point to criticisms of Hart's Ladder being hierarchical and adult-centric in its nature, Hart's model is seen as providing the starting point for articulating and measuring forms of participation. Developments following Hart include adaptations by Tresedar (1997, cited in Cahill and Dadvand, 2018), who reconfigured Hart's model by placing the top five rungs in non-hierarchical order, and identifying five 'degrees of participation' that focus on the presence of adults in young people's decision-making and participation: 'i) assigned but informed, ii) consulted and informed, iii) adult-initiated, shared decisions with children, iv) child initiated, shared decisions with adults, and v) child initiated and directed' (Cahill and Dadvand, 2018:244). Shier (2001) also built on Hart's model, but focused on the relationship between participation and empowerment, and how people and institutions develop participatory journeys.

As participatory models have developed, more attention has been paid to the sociocultural and contextual factors influencing participation, the dynamic nature of these in the relationships between young people and adults, and considerations of how to move away from linear, hierarchical ways of measuring participation. Cahill and Dadvand (2018:247) propose a framework that connects Purpose, Positioning, Perspectives, Power relations, Protection, Place, and Process as an assemblage (influenced by Deluezian conceptions of the

interconnected and interactive nature of assemblage) of ways to measure participation in research with young people, that invite 'both critical thought and practical response'. The P7 model, influenced by feminist, post-structural and critical theory, furthers the developments of the models above. Cahill and Dadvand's (2018) thinking tool provides nuanced questions that encourage researchers to consider unintended negative consequences, and to address the adaptable, fluid nature of participation in response to context, relationships, and power dynamics in research with young people. The model has features that make it apt within the CDS-informed approach, and for identifying youth participation in the PRU. Particularly, this model is productive for guiding attention towards critiquing several diverse ways in which young people's realities of exclusion are brought to the fore in the research process, and for an ethical approach and assessment of youth participation. The P and P model is an adaptation of the P7 (Cahill and Dadvand, 2018) model with a CDS approach (see section 3.2.6) .

Overall, Cahill and Dadvand (2018:252) stress the aim of their thinking-tool to make 'patterns of inequality', 'the status quo', 'discourses which categorise, segregate, and stigmatise' or ''regimes of truth' (Foucault, 1980)', more evident to researchers and participants in the process. Connectedly, Cahill and Dadvand (2018:252) argue that 'if participation is understood as complex assemblage, it will become more readily evident that what it 'produces' is influenced by broader cultures, discourses, structures, emotions, material conditions and actions'. These aims arise from some of the theoretical bases that also inform the critical aims of CDS, both in surfacing taken-for-granted hegemonic discourses and in the potential of alternative, marginalised realities to critique the aforementioned discourses (Fairclough, 2001; Wodak and Meyer, 2016)

The theoretical underpinning of CDS and PR share an interest in critiquing hidden power-imbalance via the knowledges of marginalised groups. The P7 model is apt for this research because it enables the process of PR with young people to target the arising issues sourced from deficit discourses (significant in the lives of excluded youth), and enables a more nuanced analysis of how these factors work together to influence youth participation. The 7Ps are not seen 'as separate territories', but recognise 'the intraconnectedness of actions across these domains' (Cahill and Dadvand, 2018:252). This assemblage view dually focuses

on the macro level power relations being negotiated within micro level contexts of interaction, and has resonance with Fairclough's (2001) three-dimensional model of discourse. Thus, the model (Cahill and Dadvand, 2018) represents a complementary participatory thinking tool to the CDS approach of this research in its comprehensive view of language. Even though the Ps are an assemblage and inextricable from one another, considering the requirement of YP(A)R models to enable a greater degree of nuanced understanding to the mobility of power in participatory research contexts, Cahill and Dadvand's (2018) model may benefit – particularly in its use in this research - from a more explicit focus on how power relations are *pervasive throughout* the research process, and not as a cog turned by other Ps (see Cahill and Dadvand's (2018) diagram conceptualising the operation of the 7Ps). Cahill and Dadvand (2018) say their intention is to highlight the embedded connectivity of all 7Ps, and the assemblage notion does this work. However, the mechanical cog-based diagram acquiesces clarity on this notion in favour of highlighting the ways in which separate Ps are mechanized by each other in the research process.

3.3 Power and participation: A CDS-informed model for assessing youth participation

In this section, I argue that Fairclough's (2001) three-dimensional model of discourse can work to inform Cahill and Dadvand's (2018) P7 thinking-tool. Specifically, to sharpen its focus on the power relations and imbalances imbued throughout research contexts with young people in order to critique their operation, and ultimately, to better-inform our understanding of the multifarious forms youth participation can take, and how certain power imbalances may obstruct youth participation. I adapt Cahill and Dadvand's (2018) thinking-tool with a Faircloughian (2001) informed perspective on discourse as a site of power struggle, and, by understanding discourse as revelatory of power struggle across macro, meso, and micro levels of social interaction. This perspective allows for greater specificity in focussing on power relations as pervasive at micro, meso, and macro levels, and therefore as pervasive throughout the research process. As such, this adapted model is named the Power and Participation (P and P) model. I also draw in Lohmeyer's (2020) notion of parallel projects to contribute to understandings of young people's purposes and power relations that may be at play outside of the research context. This reinforces an

acknowledgement of youth agency within broader powerful social structures, and maintains the ethical focus of the research within an orientation to listening and valuing the young people's perspectives.

Schirato et al., (2021:49-65) identify the Foucauldian notions of power which inform CDS perspectives, as (1) that 'forms of knowledge, categories and discourses aren't natural – they are part of the 'effects of power'', (2) that power is pervasive and mobile across 'apparatuses, discourses, knowledge and sites', spanning physical bodies, perspectives, materials, and social structures; and (3) that 'the perception that a position, value, idea or narrative is true' facilitates and naturalises systems of power and ideologies. When applied to Cahill and Dadvand's (2018) P7 thinking tool, it demonstrates how Purpose, Positioning, Perspectives, Protection, Place, and Process, operate together within pre-existing power structures that CDS identify as being evident at the micro level of interaction. Thus, CDS approaches to discourse being a site of power struggle, and Fairclough's three-dimensional view, supports the development of Cahill and Dadvand's (2018:252) aims - to emphasise that the participatory assemblage of their 7Ps will make 'more readily evident that what it 'produces' is influenced by broader cultures, discourses, structures, emotions, material conditions and actions'.

The CDS view of power as surfacing through social and discursive struggle via alternative discourses of critique (Fairclough, 2001), further empowers youth voices and choices in participatory projects to be part of a consciousness-raising process (Fairclough, 2001; Freire, 2001) in their refusal to consent, naturalise, or accept hegemonic ideologies across sites of social interaction. Below, I add these CDS-informed perspectives on power and discourse to Cahill and Dadvand's (2018) model, and as such sharpen the focus on powerful social structures that may elicit inequalities in youth research contexts, and centre youth voice as expert critics of hegemonic discourses in these contexts. I also place Lohmeyer's (2020) notion of parallel projects at the centre of the research process in order to draw attention to how young people's aims external to the project are brought in alongside, or in tension with, adult designs. This supports Cahill and Dadvand's (2018) aim to highlight the alternative, and potentially negative aspects of the participatory research process. As such, it also potentially supports surfacing the operation of power relations outside of the project, and thus provides

greater nuance to our understanding of other micro, meso, and macro power relations the young people navigate (un)related to the project.

Process is placed around the 6Ps in figure 3. to demonstrate how these are both framed by, and motivational of, the process itself. Place in this model is the literal context in which the research process happens, and is thus also framing and motivational of the research process. Power relations is referenced twice, (1) at the micro-level of interaction (placed in the middle), and (2) as the final external aspect that runs through the Place, Process, and other 6Ps – the macro level of hegemonic social discourses. The bi-directional arrow from the macro-level Power relations represents its pervasiveness across the other 8Ps, and the ways in which these 8P's can potentially be harnessed to surface, critique, or negotiate hegemonic discourses (see figure.3). This organisation of the micro level of interaction being mediated by and within and macro level discourses, and vice versa, is informed by Fairclough's (2001) three-dimensional approach. A CDS-informed approach to power applied to Cahill and Dadvand's (2018) participation model informs the embellished questions offered by Cahill and Dadvand (2018) in Table 4.

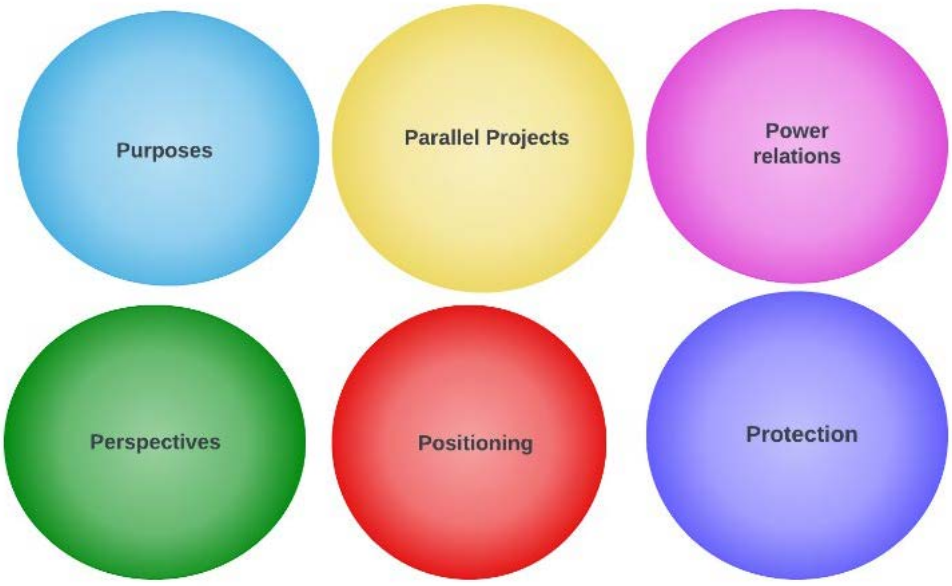

Figure 2 6 Ps at the centre of Power and Participation

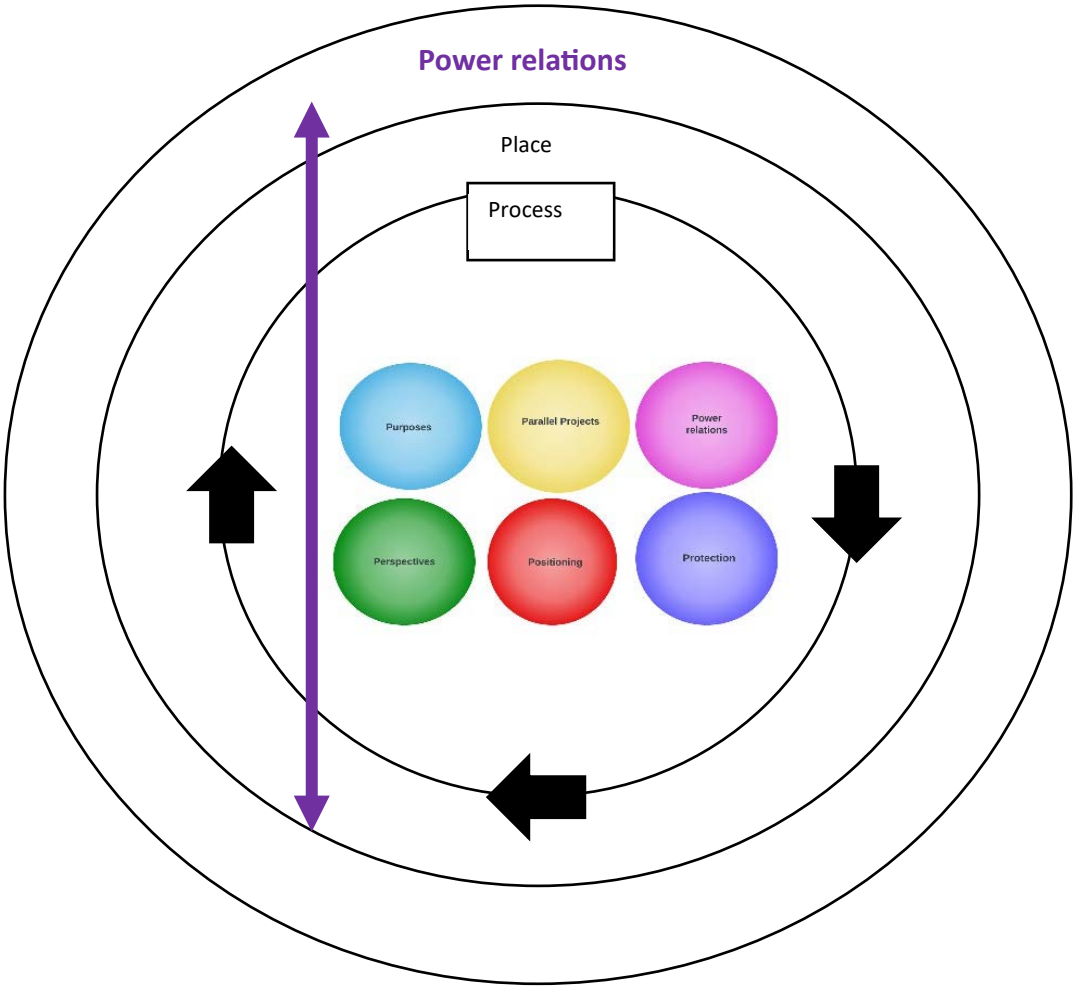

Figure 3 The Power and Participation model

Table 1 Guiding questions in the Power and Participation model

P	**Evaluative questions**
Power relations (1)- micro level of interaction	'How are roles and responsibilities assigned, adopted and enacted in the program?' (Cahill and Dadvand, 2018:250) What do these indicate about the macro-level power relations and hegemonic discourses that may be operating at the level of Place, Process, and Power relations (2)? Are alternative discourses of critique present (Fairclough, 2001)? How do these manifest/ what semiotic resources are used to articulate them?

	‘How are relationships managed to ensure equity and respect is enacted between all parties?’ (Cahill and Dadvand, 2018:250)
Purpose	What are the purposes? (Cahill and Dadvand, 2018) Whose are dominant? How are they negotiated? ‘What opportunities can be constructed to enable young people to play an active role in shaping or evolving program objectives?’ (Cahill and Dadvand, 2018:249)
Parallel Projects	Are there any sites of struggle between purposes, or parallel projects (Lohmeyer, 2020)?
Positioning	‘How are young people positioned within the wider cultural discourses, and how might this limit what is initially imagined to be possible?’ (Cahill and Dadvand, 2018:249) ‘How are young people positioned within the program itself, and how do they in turn position others?’ (ibid) What positions are naturalised, or adhered to? Are these positionings up for negotiation throughout the research process? What are the available resources available to individuals to (re)position themselves? ‘What processes might work to interrupt limiting assumptions about the capacity of young people?’ (ibid)
Perspective	What are the various perspectives of those involved? How do these inform their interaction with their purposes in the project? What discourses and ideologies are emergent when different perspectives are in dialogue? Do any of these signify power struggle, or alternative discourses of critique? ‘Whose perspectives and voices are included, excluded or privileged in the program? What methods are used to invite diverse perspectives? Who remains marginalised or is rendered ‘voiceless’ in the process?’ (Cahill and Dadvand, 2018:250)
Protection	Were the young people protected from risks to enhance their participation? (Cahill and Dadvand, 2018)

	What were the factors influencing risk to young people in the project? Were they preventative of youth participation? Were these related to hegemonic discourses of risk or deficiency? 'How can young people themselves play an active role in ensuring the safety of their peers and those affected by their programs?' (Cahill and Dadvand, 2018:251)
Place	Are any macro-level power relations emergent or impactful in the geographic, cultural, material, relational and structural factors of the place? Does the place allow for a renegotiation of Positionings or Perspectives? 'What strategies might be needed to create reach and access to the spaces of participation?' (Cahill and Dadvand, 2018:251)
Process	What discourses and positionings are present that may affect the possibility of the process being 'understood and approached as "an ongoing conversation" (Clark and Moss, 2001, p. 10), rather than a singular event'' (2018:251)? What aspects of the process enable alternative voices, and connectedly, consciousness raising of hegemonic/ alternative discourses? (Fairclough, 2001; Freire, 2001) 'Which methods will best foster practices of inclusion, respect and support for others?' (Cahill and Dadvand, 2018:252)
Power relations (2) – the macro level of hegemonic discourse	Are there macro-level hegemonic discourses indicated in the micro-level of interaction - the 'processes between people' (Fairclough, 2001:89) - in the research context? What are these, and how are they negotiated by a) the participants and b) the participatory research process across the other 7Ps? Are the methods of negotiating these power dynamics similar/different across the 7Ps?

The P and P model, developed from Cahill and Dadvand (2018) via the lens of CDS, enables greater precision in viewing the manifestations and movements of power in the ways that hegemonic power relations and discourses position and influence Purposes, Places,

Perspectives, Processes, Protection, and micro-level Power relations. It places this in dialogue with the focus of PR on how alternative, or marginalised discourses bring the power of hegemonic discourse to light, and to question in the research process.

3.4 Research Design

This section describes the stages of the research design, and how they were iteratively produced and negotiated between me, the young people and the PRU staff, in response to our shared evolving context, and the realities of the young people (Bryman, 2016). This methodology is thus comprised of a range of qualitative, participative, creative approaches and methods that respond to the participants and their context, to offer multiple ways in which to engage with the research and share their experienced realities of school exclusion. It draws upon the Power and Participation model throughout to analyse the impact this range of methodological approaches had on youth participation and power relations at each stage. Table 4 summarises these stages: the methods and approaches, data created, the participants involved, and how each stage informed the next.

As the research design is predicated on understanding the context of the PRU centres and the needs of those within it, this section firstly sets out the context of the two learning centres involved, the participants, their individual positioning in those centres, and their relationship to one another (table 2 and table 3). Secondly, it outlines my positionality to indicate its impact on my relationships with the young people, staff, and the research process. Then each stage of the research process is described as it developed between the me and the participants whilst negotiating the research context. Like many participatory research projects, this research was characteristically messy due to the consistent negotiation of the needs of the research, the university, the PRU, the individual learning centres, and the different participants (Thomas-Hughes, 2017). Table 4 attempts to show the progression of the research in stages for clarity, whilst demonstrating how different stages ran concurrently and built on one another. In this outline of the research design, participants, and the context, I have attempted to both include and clarify the complexities and mess in this particular process (Thomas-Hughes, 2017).

3.4.1 Context: the PRU, centres and participants

The relationship with the PRU involved in this study was developed by the Manchester Centre for Youth Studies (MCYS) prior to my recruitment for the PhD studentship. The PRU was a selected partner because of an established working relationship with MCYS. I worked with two of the PRU's learning centres, which were selected in collaboration with a senior member of PRU staff.

The PRU caters for primary and secondary age pupils who have been officially excluded from school. At the time of research, the PRU's student population was split across several learning centres around the city, the neighbourhoods of which varied in infrastructure quality, resources, and demographics related to age, ethnicity, and education. This represents the diversity of the city itself, however the young people in the PRU represent the significant proportion of the city's residents, who are young (under 24), ethnically diverse, and living below the poverty line (one third of residents) (Smithson et al., 2024). Young people were not always placed in centres local to their homes, as for some, being in their local area was considered a safeguarding concern. In these cases, young people were either provided with taxis, or alternatively often made long and complicated journeys across the city via public transport. Attendance at the PRU could be variable due to the travel difficulties stated above, young people being excluded from mainstream education at different times in the academic year, and events[14] outside of school.

Each class in the centres I worked in had up to ten students. The curriculum covered English, Maths, Science, Art, Sport, Citizenship, and some flexible time on certain days for the students to choose different activities. Y10 and 11 took GCSEs in all the aforementioned subjects. Teachers moved between the centres, with centre managers and youth workers mostly remaining at their assigned centres throughout the year.

Centres involved in the research, Heathley and Northern Vale (pseudonyms) were selected out of the five PRU-run learning centres as sites for the research, based on prior relationships my supervision team had with these centres. My commencement of the research was scheduled for April 2020.

[14] These frequently aligned with those outlined in wider school exclusion research in section 2.4.

However, my entry to the centres was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic coupled with the PRU's restructure, caused significant disruption to the two centres and subsequently the research process, throughout 2020-21. In total, research was delayed by 8 months due to social distancing restrictions. Reoccurring outbreaks of COVID meant the centres closed frequently for temporary periods until mid-2021. Reoccurring COVID outbreaks caused anxiety for staff and students, particularly in the consistent negotiation of support bubbles to prevent mixing between centres, social distancing measures within centres, and the changing national guidance.

The pandemic had a significant impact on the research process in these early stages. It created barriers to developing relationships, and thus to producing data. In the initial months when COVID had the most impact, I engaged in a familiarisation process, and no consent forms were signed to enable data collection.

The restructure, whereby some centres were earmarked for closure or merging with other PRU learning centres, was an on-going process throughout the research. Concern was keenly felt by several members of staff, as many feared their jobs would be impacted. The restructure affected Northern Vale substantially more in comparison to Heathley. Northern Vale was closed and the staff and young people were merged with a larger centre, Brocton Park. The re-structure combined with the pandemic, imposed further demands on the staff and young people, both in their personal lives and their working/ learning context on top of the usual day-to-day unpredictability of life in the PRU.

The following sections of this chapter provide a detailed description of the methodological steps taken to undertake the research.

Learning centres

Heathley is a converted youth centre in a more deprived area of the city compared to Northern Vale. Some of the windows have bars to prevent burglaries. The staff commented that to an outsider, the barred windows exacerbated the stereotype of PRUs' being similar to prisons. The entrance to the building leads to an open space and a kitchen. The open space has a pool table, several sofa-type chairs, and tables with plastic chairs where the staff and the young people eat at break times. Through the corridor there is a sports hall with

basketball facilities. Upstairs is an office, two small classrooms (to accommodate approximately 10-15 students each), and a large open space used for Art and Media, which is divided by a metal rolling partition. The centre is covered in various displays, mostly of students' work. One of the displays included information on the effects of drug and alcohol use and other 'risky' behaviours.

The research began at the same time at the second site, Northern Vale. However, as Northern Vale closed in September 2021, the young people and the staff merged with Brocton Park, a larger more mainstream school-like learning centre which already housed younger PRU students. Situated in one of the city's most affluent areas, Northern Vale's original building was owned by a college, and the centre shared the site with the (larger and newer) college buildings. Northern Vale was set across one floor. The entrance leads to a large open space with a pool table and an assortment of chairs. The two classrooms, the office, the meeting room, and fire escape were all connected via the open space. Unlike Heathley, the centre had no sports facilities.

The move to Brocton Park was a significant change. The modern building is spread across one ground floor, with high ceilings and open, spacious classrooms. The centre has facilities comparable to a mainstream school: a well-equipped Art room, Food Technology room, gym, and mugger pitch with basketball facilities, and a large canteen.

The centre had several younger students (aged 11-14) attending, and the increased amount of space and people meant that the environment could be much louder and busier than Northern Vale. Particularly in the first instance when everyone was developing relationships and negotiating the frequent timetable changes. Northern Vale's centre managers were attached to the young people from Northern Vale (so they supported them in class and at break times), but were no longer responsible for managing the centre as they were for Northern Vale.

The most significant differences between Heathley and Northern Vale were the introduction of earpieces for staff to communicate across the building, the use of 'colour codes' - for example 'code red' for a student in crisis - and the introduction of metal detectors for students upon entry to the building to check for phones, E-cigarettes or weapons.

The existing context of the PRU, the young people and staff, and the context of navigating a restructure and global pandemic, required a research approach and design that worked in the best interests of participants to support them. As such, the research design outlined below is underpinned by youth work principles, participatory approaches, and an ethics of care (Bussu et al., 2021), to develop consistent, caring, supportive relationships that centred the voices, choices, and needs of those involved.

This approach was informed by my prior experience as an English teacher and youth worker in AP schools. The experience supported my knowledge of the PRU context, the potential realities of the young people, and how to develop supportive relationships with (excluded) young people. Some PRU staff knew me already from their work with other APs, and some of the young people had attended previous AP schools I had worked in. I had taught some of them, which proved useful in negotiating distances (Mannay, 2010) between us established by different positionalities (see section 3.4.2), as I had some established familiarity with several of the young people, their parents, friends, and communities. When I re-met those who knew me, overall it was a positive experience to have conversations about how the people we knew (teachers, parents, ex-students, and young people in the community) were doing, and these participants were supportive in introducing me to others to develop trusting relationships that opened up communication between us. This allayed my initial concerns that this could have gone the other way, due to some of the punitive school policies I was required to enact towards students in my previous role. The combination of my previous identity as a teacher and youth worker, and as a consistent, participating guest in the young people's space, supported the young people to feel safe(r) to share their experiences with me.

Participants

Eighteen young people and seventeen adults (including fifteen PRU staff, one parent, and one mainstream teacher) participated in the research. The tables below identify the participants' pseudonyms, gender, and learning centres they were based in.

Table 2 young people, centre and year group.

Key: Female (F), Male (M), Northern Vale (NV), Brocton Park (BP), Heathley (H).

Name	Gender	Learning centre	Year group
Kareiss	F	H	11 (age 15-16)
Shauna	F	H	11
Michael	M	H	11
Josh	M	H	11
Romero	M	H	11
Hamza	M	H	11
Hassan	M	H	10-11 (age 14-16)
Declan	M	H	10-11
Akiel	M	H	10-11
Ally	F	H	10-11
Adrian	M	H	10-11
Grace	F	NV/BP	10-11
Molly	F	NV/BP	10-11
Dylan	M	NV/BP	10-11
Darnell	M	NV/BP	10-11
Bailey	M	NV/BP	10-11
Mia	F	NV/BP	11
Corinne	F	BP	9 (age 13-14)

Table 3. Adult participants and roles

Key: Female (F), Male (M), Northern Vale (NV), Brocton Park (BP), Heathley (H), Centre Manager (CM), Youth Worker (YW), Teacher (T), Caretaker (C).

Name	Gender	Learning centre	Role
Cathy	F	H	CM
Elaine	F	H	C
Joe	M	H	CM

John	M	H	CM
Rob	M	H	YW
Anna	F	H	YW
Tina	F	H	Declan's parent
Michaela	F	NV/BP	CM
Alistair	M	NV/BP	CM
Tommy	M	NV	YW
Emma	F	NV	YW
Susie	F	NV	C
Clare	F	Across centres	T (Maths)
Sean	M	Across centres	T (English)
Stephan	M	Across centres	T (Art)
James	M	Across centres	T (Sport)
Suzanne	F	Mainstream staff (not affiliated with the PRU)	T

Table 4 The Research Stages

Stage	Months	Method	Data generated	Participants	Rationale
1	1-6	Familiarisation process/ ethnography	N/A no consent	N/A	To initiate a free space for the participants to familiarise themselves with me, the research process, and understand the consent implications. This was fundamental to the development of relationships.

2	6 - 13	Ethnography	Fieldnotes	PRU staff and YP	To enable an insight into how power dynamics between young people and adults (myself included) were negotiated, and what language resources were drawn upon to achieve this.
3	7-13	Semi-structured interviews	Transcripts	PRU staff, YP, mainstream teacher, and parent	To consolidate the above, and enable a retrospective discussion of the exclusion process prior to the young people's entry to the PRU. The interviews also provided an insight (along with stage 2) for young people and adults to observe topics of concern to the research.
4	11	Initial stages of thematic analysis of stages 1 and 2 using Nvivo	Broad themes identified, collated by participant group	Completed by the researcher	To synthesise data from stages 2 and 3 to develop resources for stage 5.
5	11-12	Co-analysis of stage 4	Slide presentation of themes from young people's data results, sheets	YP with the PRU staff and myself supporting	To create space for the young people to critique my analysis of themes.

			completed by YP, fieldnotes		
6	12-13	Multimodal, arts-based methods	Graffiti, lyrics, podcast, fieldnotes of the process	YP with the PRU staff and myself supporting	To activate the young people's critical analysis in multimodal, creative expressions of their realities of exclusion based on stages 2-5.

The stages outlined above provide a rough idea of the research process, however, as is common with participatory research projects, the reality was less clear-cut (Thomas-Hughes, 2017). This is explained in further detail in the Power and Participation analysis, and in some of the sections below, but overall the young people and staff took part in different stages of the research process at different time of the school year and the school day as and when it was convenient for the majority. For example, the interviews took place throughout the process. The familiarisation process was also not a consistent 6 months of time in the learning centres with the young people due to COIVD breakouts. This meant that the centres closed periodically, and there were instances where heightened anxiety around COVID brought the nature of the project (as between two centres, rather than contained in one 'support bubble' of staff and young people) into question. The PRU itself can be a highly emotional environment. I noted that some days:

> Felt like chaos from start to finish. There were so many things going on all the time, at the same time, it's hard to write about each thing individually, they all felt like they bled together (fieldnotes).

The environment is a product of the nature of the young people's lives, and the PRU being an under-resourced education facility. Combined with (and compounded by) the effects of COVID on the local communities and the school, 14 years of austerity policies and cuts to public services, and the restructure of the PRU - which saw a number of members of staff being made redundant (including the senior PRU manager who was the university's link for this project), navigating the project required a specific approach in response. The approach was founded upon the positionality I sought to take in throughout the research process, to respond to the ever-changing context of the PRU due to these intersecting external factors.

3.4.2 Positionality

Positionality refers to the positioning of the researcher in relation to the social and political context the study is situated within - the organisation, participant group, and the community (Coghlan and Brydon-Miller, 2014). As researchers adopt multiple stances and positions in relation to the research context depending on their social contexts, positionality also refers to the concept that people are made up of various characteristics related to multiple, socially-defined positions – for example sister, teacher, artist (Thurairajah, 2019). Thus, positionality refers to broad social identities such as gender, ethnicity, and class, and to more niche identities that arise from sharing professions, locations, cultures and experiences. Positionality is the combination of these socially constructed identities applicable to individuals, which are dynamic in relation to different social contexts.

My positionality in the PRU is important to outline, not just to provide an understanding of how my positionality impacted participation and data creation, but because the positioning I actively sought to take is underpinned by the methodological approach explained in the Power and Participation model: to bring to the fore any positionings reflective of the inequalities between myself and the young people, and in doing so, to de-naturalise and critique them. This positionality was negotiated, taken up, and held in mind throughout stages 1-6.

This positioning was based on youth work principles, which were adopted and implemented by the PRU staff, namely, to lean into the demands of a highly changeable, unpredictable context. Batsleer defines this open-mindedness in practice as starting with the individuals the youth work practitioner is there to support: 'youth and community workers […] Listen and talk. Make relationships. Enable young people to come to voice [they] go to meet people and start where those people are with their own preoccupations and in their own places' (2008:5). In going to meet the young people where they were at, in their geographical, cultural, material and relational place, I sought to open up the space for the young people to negotiate their positions in the research context and process.

I analyse positionality here through the first part of Milligan's (2016:240) notion of positionality as a 'balancing act' between (i) 'the positioning that the researcher actively

takes', and (ii) the ways in which the researcher's role 'is defined by how others involved in the project […] view the researcher'. The latter is addressed in chapter 4 via the Power and Participation model, where the young people's changing assessments of me are analysed for their impact on the participatory process. This, and the thematic analysis earlier in chapter 4, like the experiences of excluded young people outlined in chapter 2, also provide nuanced insight into what was going on in the young people's lives that necessitated this specific positionality to navigate the needs of the young people, the staff, and the research process.

Considering the hectic, unpredictable realities of the young people in the PRU, how they may have felt towards adults in the past, the broader context outlined previously of the restructure and the pandemic, and the job of the PRU staff to respond to this in a way that respects the individual places and perspectives of the young people (Wood et al., 2015), the positioning I actively sought to take was responsive to the needs of young people and staff. This was based on:

- taking an 'orientation of inherent worthiness' towards participants and their involvement, married with empathy to 'lay the groundwork for collaboration that allows all participants to flourish' and mitigate the centring of researchers' interests and goals (Vasudevan, 2023:80)
- being a consistent, supportive presence and by physically being in the centres every week, and in my personal approach to relationships- to respond to inconsistency and unpredictability
- developing trusting, supportive, listening relationships initiated by the young people to counteract potentially negative past experiences of adult relationships
- being flexible, understanding, and responsive to unpredictability, rather than pushing the needs of the research on participants
- being invited in by participants, and thus a guest in every context.

This youth-work informed approach compliments the CDS/PR-informed ethical approach of the research to surface and address potential power-imbalance between participants and researchers, and, via the opportunities for traditional adult-child positionings to be renegotiated. Thereby, the approach facilitated the research process to be 'an on-going conversation' that enables alternative perspectives, experiences and discourses to come to the fore (Clarke and Moss, 2001, *in* Cahill and Dadvand, 2018:251). Such a positionality is also underpinned by a flexibility in how it can be negotiated by young people and staff in situ. Drummond and Dray's (2018) positionality, which this research is informed by, (namely

via a situated, relationships-focused approach), allows for young people's voices to come to the fore. By positioning themselves as participating guests in the world of those Drumond and Dray (2018) conducted research with, space is created for the perspectives and understandings of researchers and the young people to be put in dialogue. This can facilitate researchers to practice greater reflexivity on their own positionalities via the young people's negotiations of it, and for the young people to assert their own positions in response. This leads researchers to 'understand identities and performances [are] only one possibility of many' (Drummond, 2018:123), and exemplifies how researchers can see their positionality as 'a balancing act between the positioning that the researcher actively takes' and crucially, 'the ways in which their role is defined by how others involved in the project […] view the researcher' (Milligan, 2016:240). Reflexivity was crucial in understanding and negotiating my positionality so that I could effectively and ethically respond to the highly changeable contexts and corresponding positionalities of young people and adults, both regarding this specific education setting, and in the context of a global pandemic.

An effective way to develop relationships, and maintain open communication about my role, was to be involved with lessons and activities. I supported activities in classes, spent time with the staff and young people in breaks, and joined in various games and sports. Like Drummond and Dray's (2018) positioning as classroom assistants, I assumed this positionality throughout the research, but particularly in stages 1-3 (see table 4). As Dray (in Drummond, 2018:122), notes, taking up such positioning in an alternative education environment can have specific emotional impacts on the researchers, due to their emotional and physical proximity to young lives that hold such complexity and hardship:

> I feel like I keep dipping into this world and then leaving it, only to dip back into it again. But it is not that easy to leave emotionally and mentally, even if you leave the physical space. Sometimes the things I observe keep me awake at night. These lives affect me, even though I don't have a clue in all honesty what they are really going through.

This reflection demonstrates different degrees of experienced nearness and distance (Mannay, 2010) of the researcher to the lives of the young people. The initial distance, from the dipping in and out of their world and 'not having a clue' as to what the young people are experiencing, is contrasted by the intense emotional investment that draws Dray nearer to

the PRU and the young people, even when she is not physically there. However, even though the emotional demands of research in this context can be significant for the researcher, inevitably, by emotionally investing in relationships, the researcher is more likely to gain a greater understanding of the perspectives of those involved. Such understandings enable empathetic relationships to be developed between those involved, which facilitate a negotiation of distances between them (related to positionality) and how it might be changed. Finally, such positioning, as outlined in the bullet points above, is crucial for close relationship development in this research context (and indeed, any changeable research context with participants whose lives are characterised by challenge, complexity, or trauma). It enables a clearer revelation of the injustices children experience that keep us awake at night, so that we can have a better understanding of 'what they are really going through' and an improved ability to alter the contexts causing injustice in the first place. In this way, the positionality sought by the researcher was fundamental in responding to the specific context of excluded young people – that of being misunderstood, unheard, or silenced.

The positionality I sought to take enabled the following stages of the research designs to be iteratively produced and negotiated between me, the young people and the PRU staff (Bryman, 2016). The range of methods were developed based on the conceptual framework of intersecting CDS and PR approaches, via PR's investment in centring youth voice in response to power imbalances and via CDS's recognition of the potential of alternative or marginalised discourses.

3.4.3 Ethnographic research and the consent process

The ethnographic approach I adopted was informed by critical realism. Rees and Gatenby (2014:4) note that ethnography's main tenet is to uncover taken-for-granted subjectivities of individuals through sociological observation, however they contend that to be an effective method of social research which supports us to gain a 'full understanding of social phenomena', ethnographic practice,

> needs to be grounded in an ontological, epistemological, and methodological position that can provide a deeper understanding than subjectivism is capable of,

> one which is able to link the subjective understandings of individuals with the structural positions within which those individuals are located. Critical realism offers such a position.

Rees and Gatenby (2014:4) argue that with a critical realist underpinning, ethnography can explore the 'links between these subjective understandings and their structural social origins'. As such, my ethnographic practice was informed by a critical realist and CDS approach: to uncover taken-for-granted or normalised language use and social practices in the PRU, and thereby infer power relations, discourses and social structures that may be relevant to participants. The ethnographic process provided an opportunity to record conversations concerning the lived realities of exclusion, and interactions between the young people, staff, and myself that were not directly prompted by the research. This data contributed insights for the results analysed via the Power and Participation model, and to the results co-analysed with the young people.

Taking the PRU student population and working context of the PRU staff into account, I used the first 6 weeks as a period of familiarisation for participants, without taking notes or making formal observations. Introducing consent forms before the young people knew me had the potential to jeopardise my relationships with them, and subsequently their participation. This is connected to the official look and language of the consent form, and the previous negative experiences the young people may have had signing similar-looking forms (for example, in youth justice or social work settings). When consent forms were introduced, the terminology and academic language was not easily understood. The challenges of gaining consent process required time.

It is worth briefly outline the consent process to demonstrate how the challenges of the context required time to navigate in order to facilitate participation. They are imbued with power imbalance and the corresponding positionings of participants, as young, excluded, and experienced in contexts which serve to marginalise them.

Staff signed the consent forms first, and then young people. The majority of the young people signed the consent forms when they were to participate in interviews, the process of which helped to illustrate what the project was about more clearly than a decontextualised explanation. As most of the young people were under 16, parents were contacted by phone to gain consent, and a letter sent home with the information sheet and consent forms

attached. This description of the consent process is simplified, the reality took months of ethical amendments and collaboration with the PRU staff to finalise the most effective way of reaching parents.

My initial plan for gaining consent was to send a letter home for parents to sign. However, mailing the information sheets to the young people's home addresses got no response from parents, as they were repeatedly lost, or forgotten about.

Giving them to the young people to take home and get signed had a slightly better success rate, but it was still time consuming to give them the information sheets which they said they/ their parents had lost, so there was still no adult signature. There was also an instance of parents preventing their participation because they were ashamed that their child was excluded, and did not want them sharing it widely in a research project. Without being able to contact parents, I wasn't able to explain the project, or make a case for their child's consent. These circumstances, coupled with young people's sporadic attendance, meant that getting signed consent forms returned was particularly challenging. Sporadic attendance could be down to a number of circumstances, encapsulated in a discussion with staff:

> One young person had severe anxiety and depression, and so wasn't attending school (not getting out of bed), another had someone threatening to seriously harm them. Elaine said that this had been going on for a long time. She also said that their parent had recently lost their job because they had worked somewhere that required them to be fully vaccinated for COVID. Their parent had refused, and was subsequently unemployed. Consequently, they couldn't afford the cost of taxis to send their child to school, which the PRU were attempting to resolve with a taxi share with other pupils. However, this had to be navigated cautiously, because of the links some students had to groups in different areas of the city. Another young person was being transitioned to another project, another was moving area, and another was off due to a family bereavement (fieldnotes).

After speaking to Joe and Cathy, they asked if verbal consent via phone or text would be ok. This proved more effective, as I was able to communicate with parents when it suited them, be introduced by their child or by PRU staff (who they knew well), circumvent any literacy issues, and answer any questions they had verbally at a time that suited (frequently busy or overwhelmed) parents. This took more time to put in place as it required submitting another ethical amendment for approval from the university. After the six weeks familarisation process, and the young people understood what the research was about, those who participated were keen to share their experiences. The young people at both centres voiced

their frustration at the arbitrariness of having to be 16 to sign the consent forms without their parents. However, their frustration at having to wait to participate in the project, demonstrates that the familiarisation process was crucial in overcoming pre-existing challenges to participation. They had begun to know and trust me, understand what the research was about, and could participate on their terms.

Once consent was gained, I observed whilst participating supportively in the day-to-day life of the PRU. This combination of observer/participating guest continued throughout stages 1-6, to maintain positive, communicative relationships with participants, and during stages 4-6, to record how the young people participated, and how ideas for their arts projects were brought to fruition.

I did not take fieldnotes in front of the YP and staff, instead taking notes on my phone throughout the day and recording them after I left the centres (Drummond, 2018). I felt this less disruptive to lessons and activities, particularly in the early stages when the young people were getting to know me. I personally would have found it more challenging to position myself as a fully participating, consistent guest if I were making notes. Arguably, this is not as clear to participants from an ethical perspective, as they may have forgotten what I was doing and why I was there. To counteract this, when I noticed something interesting or relevant, I told those involved that I wanted to record it and why, asked whether they were ok with it, and reminded them that they could opt out and see what I was writing if they wished. This worked to remind the participants of what I was doing, and gave the young people opportunities to reassess their participation.

3.4.4 Semi-structured interviews

As Maclean (2018:7) notes, approaches towards interviews with young people that 'involve discussion of sensitive issues should be conducted in an informal and relaxed manner, without time pressure or strict adherence to structure'. Semi-structured interviews suited this project. All participants had emotional connections to the issue of exclusion which required flexibility and sensitivity. Secondly, semi-structured interviews can create a relaxed conversational environment where the participants could surface themes I may not have considered. Finally, semi-structured interviews have the potential to produce data that could

develop insights into the day-to-day life of the PRU recorded in the fieldnotes, and to provide crucial further detail on past experiences of exclusion prior to the young people's entry to the PRU. The latter was important to assist an understanding of the realities of exclusion for the young people.

Themes for the semi-structured interviews were iteratively developed from discussions I had with participants in Stages 1-2. As these conversations were informed by my past experiences working with excluded young people, this experience also informed my questioning. The themes provided a springboard for most of my initial questions about the PRU, the language of exclusion, and the discourses the participants may have thought relevant. During each interview, I reiterated to all participants that parents, young people, mainstream teachers and PRU staff would have different experiences and understandings of exclusion, and that the project was concerned with finding out what these were. There was no time limit on any of the interviews, which were recorded on my phone, uploaded to a secured file, and transcribed in Word. The interviews were carried out in the learning centres, and varied in length, some took 15 minutes, others up to 2 hours. This was related to the needs and interest levels of participants, and to the number of participants being interviewed. Most interviews were carried out in groups, but some were 1:1. Again, this was predicated on the needs of participants, when the opportunity arose conveniently to request the interview (see below), and when they were useful for the staff/young people in the PRU to participate.

Interviews with young people

When interviews were timetabled for each group was dependent on when was convenient. Interviews took place when the young people wanted/needed something to do, or when some of the young people were not on site so the learning centres were quieter for me to speak to those who remained. The following outlines how I interviewed each of the groups to take into consideration the needs of the participants and the PRU context.

All the young people spoke with varying enthusiasm, indignation, anger, sadness and humour about their experiences in mainstream school. The informal style, group format, being in a space where they were supported by people with whom they had a relationship,

made them feel more comfortable. They also asked each other questions about their experiences, acting as interviewers, and positioning themselves as experts on school exclusion. Some students stayed behind after group interviews to talk to me 1:1. This indicates that the group format I had offered worked well for the majority, but not all. I recorded the interviews on my phone. I considered using a voice recorder, but the was too formal and had connotations with contexts the young people may have had negative experiences of (such as youth justice).

Interviews with adults

Where staff participation in student interviews was more significant – i.e., they were brought into the conversation, rather than being in the background, they were very supportive. Some staff had already completed an interview and had a good grasp of the research topic, what the young people might find interesting, and helped to rephrase some of my questions. Throughout the interviews with staff, my experience of working in similar contexts grounded my linguistic fluency and empathy with most topics they spoke about. This, along with the familiarisation process in the PRU and my positioning as a supportive guest, supported us to be on the same page with what the research was focused on. My relative nearness (Mannay, 2010) to staff and student experience may have worked to illicit assumptions on my part and thus covertly guide interviews through my past experiences. However, the familiarisation period partially offset this, as it allowed me to be introduced to the participants and their context, and time to assess the existence and validity of any assumptions I had. The developed relationships, the familiarity with the PRU environment, and being interviewed about a topic all the participants were well experienced in, also supported my assumptions to be challenged, as the participants felt comfortable to do so.

Suzanne's interview was conducted 1:1 on Teams because it was convenient for both of us. As the only mainstream teacher taking part, Suzanne's interview provided a vital comparable and contextualising perspective to the young people's critiques of mainstream school, and thus the initial context of their exclusion.

Tina (a parent) was interviewed at Heathley with Declan, his siblings, and Cathy present in the background. The informal, relaxed approach to interviewing where Tina was surrounded by those she knew, supported her to feel safe to participate. Tina's interview provided an

insight into what was evidently on-going stressful events around Declan's exclusion, which resonated with those of other parents of excluded described in chapter 2.

What was evident in every adult interview was their commitment and care for the young people, the intersecting social structures they saw to reproduce unjust experiences in education, and the disempowerment they sometimes felt in the face of these structures.

3.4.5 Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis (TA) offers flexible steps to develop, analyse, and interpret patterns to identify themes in qualitative data sets (Braun and Clarke, 2021). TA is often presented as a single method, but there are multiple approaches and procedures. As Braun and Clarke (2021) note, there have been numerous claims that few guides exist that support researchers to undertake 'rigorous' TA, seeking hard and fast rules to apply in every research context. However, Braun and Clarke, (2021:11) critique such claims, arguing that TA needs to be a reflexive and flexible method, because the researcher is a 'situated, insight-bringing, integral component of the analysis' and that analysis in individual projects happen uniquely through 'the intersection of the dataset, the context of the research, and researcher skill and locatedness'.

My discussion of thematic analysis here is as part of the methodological approach to data production. It is how I produced the analysis the young people co-analysed in stage 5, but it is also the format I used for data analysis in the thesis (see section 4.1). The interview transcripts and the ethnographic fieldnotes were combined and analysed in Nvivo. The thematic analysis served three purposes: (1) to inform youth co-analysis and subsequently the development of youth arts projects; (2), to compare the realities of school exclusion between the young people and adult groups; and (3) to identify relevant examples of youth participation.

The analysis process followed Bryman's (2016) synthesis of guiding principles. 1. Read through the data, 2. Code, 3. Elaborate codes into themes, 4.a Evaluate important themes through reoccurrence and number of sub-themes, 4.b. Label themes and sub-themes, 5. Examine possible links and connections, 6. Write up insights/ narrative arising from analysis.

The process was repeated several times to ensure labels and themes were defined distinctly and synthesised appropriately.

The analysis was conducted inductively and deductively. Deductively, to explore the CDS and PR informed questions in the project, namely, of powerful social discourses, forms of youth participation, and power-imbalances and I held these in mind throughout the research process and in my analysis. However, the analysis process mostly occurred inductively, to take a comprehensive view of what the participants identified as significant about their realities of school exclusion. Although these are also well-documented and influenced by the pre-existing discourses and power relations, the individual experiences of those in the PRU would be unique to this context, and I attempted to be attentive to these idiosyncrasies. The combination of inductive and deductive reasoning is fitting to the interdisciplinary nature of the project. CDS on the surface implies a need for deductive reasoning, with its focus on powerful discourses and social structures operating to variably marginalise and empower different social groups. However, in undertaking critical discourse analysis, emphasis is placed on inductive forms – allowing the data to speak for itself as far as possible – and choosing the method of CDA to apply to best suit the data (Wodak and Meyer, 2016). As van Dijk (2013:online) argues, wider methodological plurality outside traditional linguistic methods, which are frequently informed by functional grammar (Halliday, 1978), is required in CDS. The methodological plurality, van Dijk (2013:online), can enable CDS scholars' realisation of the critical goals integral to critical discourse analysis. Van Dijk (2013:online) is clear in the critical approach of CDS being 'a state of mind, an attitude, a way of dissenting, and many more things, but not an explicit method for the description of the structures or strategies of text and talk', and that CDA practitioners

> may be supposed to do so from a perspective of opposition, for instance against power abuse through discourse. […] CDA is (any) DA of critical scholars, and hence CDA is rather a social or political movement than a method. Of course, the *kind* of DA they do, should be adequate to realize their critical goals, namely to analyze and denounce domination and social inequality.

The inductive approach to the thematic analysis process, to listen as openly as possible to participants' responses, and deductive, to hold a critical awareness of the discursive

manifestations of domination and social inequality, are stances informed by CDS. Thus, the thematic analysis is CDA informed.

3.4.6 Co-analysis

Co-analysis is implemented in research designs to provide an opportunity for participants to analyse an aspect (or aspects) of the research process. Fear et al. (2006) argue that research participants should be provided the opportunity to co-analyse data to critically reflect upon it. In opening up space for participants to analyse the data, the participatory process is advanced from the data production stage, and offers several benefits: a check on the researcher's original analytical assumptions; a chance for participants to be repositioned as expert commentators on the data's meaning; and the opportunity to offer new, collaborative perspectives and reflections on the research process. For the intersecting CDS and YPR approaches, the co-analysis stage renegotiates adult-child dynamics by positioning the young people as the analysers, with their purposes and perspectives centred at this stage of the research process.

The young people at both PRU centres analysed my CDS-informed thematic analysis of interview transcripts and ethnographic fieldnotes to assess which themes were most prevalent to them in school exclusion, to challenge or add to my analysis, and to apply this thinking in their arts projects (see figure 4) The sheet with the themes for the young people to analyse were based on youth-created data that was relevant to their experiences of exclusion from mainstream school. As such, the themes they analysed are slightly different to the themes presented in 4.1. The themes were created to inform their artwork, and it may have been productive to explore and compare the thematic analysis of adult data, but this would have removed the focus from youth experience and required further sessions with the young people at a time-limited point in the research process and the school year.

Both groups were shown a PowerPoint (either as a group, or in printed packs for 1:1 discussion) I had created containing a list of these themes, and quotes from young people participating to further elucidate the meaning of the theme. For example, 'Academic Pressure'. Next to each theme was a column to for young people to explain their evaluation of it, or to offer further thoughts.

As the centres were operating in very different contexts at this time (Northern Vale had moved to Brocton Park), the co-analysis sessions took different forms, both from young person to young person, and between the centres. This is discussed further in chapter 4.

3.4.7 Multimodal arts-based methods

Multimodal CDA is an approach within CDS that understands the potential of lesser-dominant modes of discourse to critique established media, both in their content and form (Jancsary et al., 2016). Multimodal CDA also offers the range of critical, analytical tools apt for multimodal, creative data. Arts-based methods in PR approaches further CDS' understanding of the potential of lesser-dominant modes of communication, by underscoring the criticality in multimodal communications as being able to express new ways of understanding and being in the world (Finley, 2005). Arts-based methods are the tools introduced via participatory, critical approaches,– through which the multimodal data for CDA was created by the young people. This final stage of data creation worked to facilitate opportunities for the young people to review, refine and reframe existing alternative discourses of critique expressed in the previous research stages. PR approaches to arts-based data creation enable the alternative discourses Fairclough (2001) views as essential to consciousness-raising to come to the fore. Multimodal CDA provides distinct analytical tools critiquing the effects of power imbalance that may be communicated in the art.

The offer of multimodal, arts-based methods with young people in the PRU was to firstly, open opportunities to engage with experiences of exclusion outside of the semi-structured interviews. Secondly, to offer a way to develop their articulation of these experiences, and to explore the meaning of these experiences in new, multimodal ways. And finally, to put forward their messages to adults with influence over the exclusion process. The arts offer was introduced informally in the familiarisation stage, i.e. I told the young people they could create some art connected to the project if they wanted, and that they could choose the artform. I reiterated the arts offer throughout the year. Some of the young people had ideas about this straight away, whereas others developed their ideas throughout the course of the project.

Once the ideas were articulated, I asked other young people taking part in the research whether they would be interested. I received responses ranging from enthusiasm, acceptance, acquiescence, and zero interest. Those who appeared most invested (Declan and Grace) were instrumental in bringing their artworks to fruition. Dylan and Adrian's participation in the arts project exemplify both parallel projects, and how their positioning as PRU-students/ young people had to be navigated in adult-dominated contexts. More detail is provided in the Power and Participation analysis.

Chapter 4: Results and discussion

There are three different approaches to data analysis tailored to distinct forms of data, which correspond to different stages of the research process as the data was built and developed by the young people. All three approaches take a comprehensive view to the language of exclusion via being underpinned by Fairclough's three-dimensional approach to discourse (3.1). In this chapter, the stages of analysis correspond chronologically to data produced in the PRU. It demonstrates how each stage built on the former, and how the data was analysed to augment the next stage of data production and analysis (see table4).

This chapter firstly presents the results of CDS-informed thematic analysis of all interviews and fieldnotes to exemplify the adult and youth realities of school exclusion, the hegemonic discourses affecting these, and their impact upon youth participatory capital. These results inform section 4.2 the analysis of youth participation via the P and P model. This analysis is focused on the fieldnotes documenting the young people's participatory process in developing their multimodal, arts-based data produced from their co-analysis of major themes. This approach provides an insight into the prevalence of the hegemonic discourses and their effects highlighted in section 4.1, and how these discourses operate in participatory contexts. It also provides an insight into the knowledge and experiences the young people used to navigate these discourses, and themes they brought through into their arts projects. The final section uses multimodal CDA tools to demonstrate how the young people critique hegemonic discourse via their artworks with alternative knowledges, and how they resist/ navigate discourses positioning them as risky or deficient. The discourses

surfaced through the multimodal CDA of the artworks are thus based on the data developed in the previous research stages.

The analysis in 4.1 and 4.2 informs the analysis of the artworks in section 4.3. Each stage of data is at the micro level of interaction in the PRU and elucidates the macro-micro level operations of hegemonic discourse, and of alternative discourses of critique the young people develop in resistance to macro level discourses. This chapter therefore exemplifies the comprehensive approach to the language of school exclusion the thesis sought to develop.

4.1 A CDS-informed thematic analysis of the language of school exclusion

The thematic analysis results show that powerful discourses in education settings individualise young people as variably risky and at-risk (Beck and Beck Gernsheim, 2002). The findings reflect the observation that the risky version of youth dominates discourses (Parkes and Conolley, 2011), and that young people are aware of these discourses. In their interviews, young people describe instances of adults positioning them in mainstream schools[15] as deviant from the ideal learner and as disruptive and risky. These powerful discourses of risk are underpinned by discourses of deficiency. These discourses operate intersectionally, encompassing age, capability and intelligence, particular performances of masculinity or femininity (Gillies, 2016; Thomas, 2022), ethnicity (Akala, 2017), social class, criminalisation (Youdell, 2006; Gillies and Robinson, 2012; Gillies, 2016), and language use (Drummond, 2018).

The results are informed by the Faircloughian three-dimensional approach to discourse in school exclusion presented in chapter 2 (see figure.1). This approach brought in concepts of youth risk, deficiency, and the ideal learner with the broad social discourses noted in exclusion literature above, to understand the discursive power relations operating in the exclusion process. The results further the discussion of exclusion literature by framing the effects of these discourses upon young people's participatory capital (Groundwater-Smith et

[15] For reference, in interviews the young people refer to mainstream school as 'school' and to the PRU as 'PRU' (even though the PRU is also a school).

al., 2015) to understand the micro level impact of these discourses on youth-adult relationships. Overall, the results indicate that youth voice is curtailed, unheard, or silenced in the exclusion process.

The thread of events leading to exclusion is reiterated as having its source in firstly, the demands of the school environment that both justify and encourage the enforcement of the ideal learner discourse upon young people by adults. This is reflected in the theme all four groups referenced the most: **Academic pressure**. The young people's descriptions of their environment echo Vasudevan and Campano's (2009:316) argument of the 'blunt "remedies"' to youth risk in the US of 'the development of scripted curricula and symbolic violence […] in the form of retention, disciplinary measures, extensive placement in special education, and tracking'. This environment works to justify the ideal learner as a regime of truth (Foucault, 1977), and led to labelling practices of young people as good, naughty, smart, stupid, or disruptive. These intersected with macro level discourses addressed in this chapter, of **Class**, **Gender**, **Ethnicity**, and **Criminalisation** to reproduce discriminatory effects on young people, and justified controlling responses of adults. The governmentality perspective of risk, where individuals are defined and labelled against a norm in which they have little to no say, to construe them as risky/at-risk and justify the management of social groups, is a useful lens through which to view the outcomes of these macro level discourses – **Control and unheard realities**. The enforcement of the ideal learner discourse upon young people by adults persistently worked to corner young people's participation into compliance, resistance, or struggle (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2015), all of which were variably disempowering and ineffectual for asserting young people's purposes or projects (Lohmeyer, 2020). The result of adult control and precluded participatory capital was the unheard realities of young people. These unheard realities demonstrate the cycles of risk, where being labelled as risky or deficient caused the individualisation and responsibilisation of young people's contexts to them - rather than social structures inciting inequality – and create circumstances that breed uncertainty and risk (Beck, 2001). These precarious situations justify the rhetoric of further control and risk-management of individual young people, and precluded their participatory capital and voices even further in the event of their exclusion.

The following examples demonstrate the operation of these discourses, and the detrimental impact on youth-adult relationships in school contexts. The discourses identified in the first five sections are matched to those discussed in the literature review, and demonstrate the continued operation and influence of these upon excluded young people. 4.1.6 demonstrates the micro level effects of these discourses, namely that they obscure or silence excluded young people's realities through justifying adult control. The justification is reasoned through the frameworks of discourse identified in the literature review, of youth risk, deficiency, and expectations of the ideal learner. 4.1.7 demonstrates how the excluded young people in this study resisted these discourses through **anger and humour**, and frames these as alternative discourses of critique.

4.1.1 Class

Direct references to social class or economic struggle by the young people were minimal. Mia, spoke of how her social class positioned her as deficient to the ideal learner expectations and led to offensive attitudes from staff:

> they didn't really care if you didn't do work, like, well mine didn't anyways it was pretty deep. […] [staff member] was like 'I've been on holiday, but I don't think you would know what that feels like (interview)

However, deprivation and class remained an implicit theme throughout the research. For example, Grace's comment about my social class in comparison to hers ('oo look at gyal cracking out them big words!'). As such, references to class are analysed mostly in their intersection with other discourses.

Adults referenced youth deprivation and social class, firstly in comparison to adults, and secondly, in the frequent invisibility of deprivation to teachers. Adults identified that teachers may not have time or the capacity within their role to recognise or engage with the lived reality of deprivation young people may be faced with. However, the centre managers and youth workers in the PRU said that their history of working in the Youth Service helped them to explore what was behind young people's behaviour because they had seen similar challenging realities faced by deprived communities:

> Cathy: as youth workers we've worked on the […] estates, the rough estates, the poor estates, […] so when you're in the Youth Service you see what's going on at home – there's kids going home and there's nothing in the cupboards. You see that the kid's going home and there's people knocking on the door and going and giving them out drugs. (interview)

Cathy also said that their role allowed them more time than teachers to analyse the impact of the stressful circumstances of deprivation, and how they resulted in deviant behaviour: 'we can sit around and say well hang on a minute the mam and dad have been piss-fighting all night, and now he's come in and done something violent. That's a direct thing.' (interview).

Suzanne and Sean noted how the distance between the social class of teachers and young people could cause friction in their relationships. Suzanne said that class could cause divisions:

> I've never thought of myself as posh, but possibly they perceive me, not just me but other members of staff as - they just think oh it's ok for you, you've got your big car in the car park and you're doing whatever, you don't have a clue about my life, you know, so there might be a them and us thing as well at times.' (interview).

Sean commented that the English curriculum was:

> white middle class-centric, which has always irritated me, you know, a few years ago it was 'write about a holiday', and the kid said to me 'I've never been on holiday', I mean why would you put that in a... it's not occurred to that examiner that there are kids that do not go on holiday. 'cause straight away they're looking at that exam paper and … depending on what day they're having they're gonna feel like crap (interview)

This example echoes the perspective of the member of staff Mia spoke of, and demonstrates the ways in which children living in under-resourced communities are positioned by curricula and teachers as deficient to the ideal learner. The teachers in this study critique the unjust divisive effects of this for young people's relationships with adults and underscore the challenge hegemonic discourses of class pose to them in relating to and helping young people.

The issues brought up by Suzanne and Sean are reiterated in the experiences of young people in Gillies' (2011) research, where the teacher viewed the excluded children in their

class as deficient of empathy because they called out class-based injustice. If such experiences regarding classist attitudes are common towards young people, both in the difference between themselves and teachers, and in the white, middle-class curricula teachers have to deliver (Cushing, 2023a; 2023b), then discourses privileging middle-class children as ideal learners are potentially serving to cause friction in relationships between young people and adults. Furthermore, they can place young people in isolated positions imbued with risk.

All participants noted that the enforcement of the curriculum in the form of academic pressure, was another major facet contributing to excluded young people being positioned as deficient, and to causing fractious relationships with adults.

4.1.2 Academic pressure

All participants underscored the over-arching pressure of mainstream school environments that place certain expectations on the behaviours, identities, and relationships between young people and adults. Suzanne, the only mainstream teacher participating in this study, described the pressures of 'a qualification driven system', on teachers, particularly new teaching staff, where 'after five back-to-back lessons you're on your knees'.

She emphasised how staff at her school 'go out of their way' to form good relationships with the students at break and lunch time, implying the lack of time for this in classroom settings. This lack of time begins for those in year 7 and led to her school running 'a really big transition program that starts when they're in year six' so that the staff were given time and 'a real opportunity to […] get to know the kids'. They also did a summer school, additional activities for year 7 to socialise, had 'an additional building on the site […] like a halfway house between primary and secondary', alongside an intensive behaviour support program, and interventions from the eating disorder team, Anger management workshops and others 'coming in to visit, talking about toxic masculinity, gangs, […] county lines all that sort of stuff'. The volume of support the students at Suzanne's school receive is alongside the demands of 'a qualification driven system'. The reasons for the support are both pastorally and academically motivated: 'we try and cover […] all our bases as early as possible, so by the time they're in, year 8-9 or 9, 10, 11 they're settled and ready to learn.'

The young people also felt intense pressure to perform academically in mainstream school, and simultaneously that the environment and regulations of mainstream schools could make academic progression challenging. Romero said that when he first told his mum he was being sent to a PRU, he thought 'you've fucked up your life now, you've fucked up your GCSEs' (interview). Mia, Grace, Kareiss, Declan, Josh, and Molly commented on how the loud, busy environment of mainstream school created a challenge to concentration, and that 'quietness' was better, because 'you can just get on with your work' (Declan, interview) (see also Martin-Denham, 2020).

Dealing with the academic pressure of mainstream school was also often noted as a competing priority with issues outside of school. Grace explained how aspects of her life outside of school infringed on her ability to engage in school, and the stress this caused when these circumstances resulted in her missing out on education, either by making her late, having to constantly explain to staff what was going on, or being punished when she missed school due to these issues. This made her feel frustrated and reticent to attend school, because she felt that no one understood what she had to deal with, and that she would be punished if she shared her circumstances: 'how do you expect me to open up yous when you're just gonna be like punishment, punishment, punishment?' (interview).[16]

For the young people, the impact of academic pressure on their relationships with staff was significant, as it justified them being labelled as 'naughty' or 'stupid', and 'the smart kids'/ 'the good kids' getting preferable treatment. Sean and Clare also commented on how young people can internalise these labels, leading them to 'think they're stupid' or that they cannot meet the academic standards required. The combination of being labelled as 'naughty' or 'stupid' led staff to have less time for them, in an environment that already demands a high level of academic, rather than social, time with teachers and peers. Michael said that the favouritism to the 'smart' students meant teachers ignored him, and that this led him to give

[16] Interestingly, Grace chose her own pseudonym (automatically when asked). During summer 2020 a 15-year-old girl of the same pseudonym was imprisoned in Michigan for not doing her homework, and an online campaign ensued (Vasudevan, 2023). I was unaware of this at the time of research in the PRU, but the experience of Grace in this research as a 15-year-old racially minoritised girl unjustly criminalised and punished in the English school system, and of Grace in Michigan, is comparable. It would have been interesting if Grace's choice of name was connected with stories she knew of Grace in Michigan.

up asking for help. Josh reiterated how being labelled as 'naughty' elicited high levels of criticism and punishment, and this was intensified in higher performing classes:

> if you're naughty and in bottom-set it's like the teacher don't care what you do in the actual lesson, whereas if you're 'naughty' in top-set it's like if one of your mates is talking, [the teacher] looks at you and tells *you* off. And don't tell your mate off. […] you get a harder time. Because they're expecting you to do good. (interview).

Kareiss summarised the impact of academic pressure on adult-youth relationships:

> you're only with [that teacher] 30 minutes a day - I'm not getting to know you in those 30 minutes I'm trying to do my maths […] but then when I'm in your lesson for 30 minutes and you think you can shout at me for talkin'… I don't know you, I'm instantly not gonna like ya, cos you're shouting at me for something so stupid. (interview).

It is implied that the teacher believed Kareiss is not doing her work because she is talking, even though she says she was trying to learn. Kareiss is not meeting the expectations of the ideal learner for this behaviour, by speaking whilst learning, and from her perspective, based on her being labelled as naughty and not one of 'the smart kids'. The distant relationship between Kareiss and her teacher, caused by the prioritisation of particular forms of learning and views of intelligence in the ideal learner discourse, makes Kareiss more reticent to listen or accept her teacher's criticism, because it is based on 'something so stupid'. This example correlates with the experiences and perceptions of some excluded young people in Martin-Denham's (2020) research. Kareiss elaborated on other situations with teachers seeking to control or single her out because of her 'naughty' label. She said that 'they always tried to embarrass me', one teacher 'made me sit at the side of her desk on a camp chair. Am I disabled? I don't need special needs, don't need you monitoring me, I don't need you helping me, just what the fuck.' This exemplifies the presence of medicalisation discourses that Kareiss has noted are used to position young people in intensely regulated and monitored situations, and to be singled out, patronised, and embarrassed in comparison to 'the good kids'. It is comparable to Akala's (2017) experience of being treated differently because he was perceived as deviant, and of being placed in a special needs group to remove him from his peers. The most powerful example of the impact of teacher control based on Kareiss not meeting the expectations of ideal learner behaviour (of progressing

academically and being subservient to adult instruction) demonstrates how this control precluded her participatory capital and disempowered her:

> there was this one teacher […] everyone was a bit intimidated by him because he raised his voice loud, […] and like one day I'd done something wrong in my work, and I'm sat there and he's come over and he's slammed on the desk and shouted at me in front of the whole class. And this embarrassed me, and when I get embarrassed I like kind of fight back a little bit. So I've stood up now yeah and gone 'who the fuck are you shouting at?' And the guy just went quiet and then went 'no one in however many years of working here has disrespected me like that'... you've just disrespected me! You've just stood up, I'm only in year 7, I'm 12 years old, you've stood up, a big tall man in front of my face and shouted at me in front of everyone! And you expect me not to shout back, do you think I'm a dickhead?

Kareiss's emotional reactions of embarrassment, physical and emotional intimidation, and anger at the injustice of this teacher's reaction to her, are mobilised in resistance and struggle against these discourses, to assert herself and call out the injustice of power abuse towards a child who is 'only 12 years old'. However, her range of responses are limited to resistance and struggle, and these serve to reinforce her deviant or 'naughty' label, and to single her out for teacher surveillance and punishment. In this case, a risk discourse of academic under-performance continues to reproduce a risky lived reality for Kareiss, where she is targeted by staff because of the deviant behaviour this discourse both frames and reproduces, causing conflict in adult-youth relationships and for Kareiss to be unheard by adults. When I asked her if she thought adults understood that she felt embarrassed, she said 'when I get embarrassed - it makes me angry […] they think I'm just being horrible.' This correlates with Dray's (in Drummond, 2018:123) description of a female PRU student, who 'has been through horrible things' and came across as

> aggressive, rude and unapproachable much of the time but I am realising that this is part of her survival strategy. She is possibly one of the most 'vulnerable' YP at the centre (not sure what I mean by 'vulnerable'), yet she doesn't project this. […]. To me, she appears to be doing a good cover up job most (but not all) of the time.

Dray infers that this kind of performance may be related to those who are 'coping with difficult relationships in which they are potentially extremely disempowered' (Drummond, 2018:123). It was indicated by several members of staff that Kareiss utilised a similar

performance due to taking on adult-level responsibilities at home that put her under intense emotional pressure (fieldnotes). These defensive performances are reiterated by many excluded young people as reinforcing of labelling practices of them as deviant or risky (in this research, and Gillies, 2011; 2016; Drummond, 2018), and caused specific issues for the female students in this research. As such, the defensive performances in response to risky realities, ensuing from labelling practices of young people, were often interpreted as deviant or deficient, and led to them being surveilled, regulated and excluded. Time for relationship-building, which the adults and young people in this study underscore as essential for hearing youth realities and understanding behaviour, is sacrificed in favour of a qualification-driven system, with catastrophic results for young people dealing with risky, challenging circumstances.

4.1.3 Gender

This section foregrounds the experiences of the female young people in this research. Firstly, this data has more directly gendered references than data from male participants, and secondly because of the contribution their experiences make to exclusion research, which is traditionally focused on boys' experiences. The results echo those noted by excluded young people in Gillies (2016) and Drummond's (2018) research, where girls are regulated for being at once too feminine in their appearance, and too masculine in their behaviours.

The main theme the girls reiterated was how their physical appearance was regulated to meet expectations of the ideal learner. These expectations are imbued with the privileging of middle-class, white, non-sexualised, and ageist discourses, that the girls reiterated were not standards their teachers (and sometimes other students) had to adhere to (Wolfe and Rassmussen, 2020). The girls deviated from the ideal learner appearance in their hairstyles, make-up, nails, coats and uniform standards. Grace, Ally, Mia and Kareiss said that their choices around their appearance were used to communicate their identities, to overcome/ hide feelings of anxiety, insecurity, discomfort, and mental health challenges, or were related to their caregivers' incomes. Ally pointed out the hypocrisy of being punished for these coping mechanisms for anxiety and stress, when

> they're crazy about mental health right, and some girls right, they're not even

> comfortable in their own body […] when they're puttin' make up on they're like you've gotta take it off, […] but then you feel insecure because you've got spots on your face and you feel like everyone's staring at you - so you put make up on to feel better about yourself […] And then you get to school and get told to take it off and put in isolation. (interview)

Gillies' (2016) research with excluded female students in a BSU, and incidents with female students in Drummond's (2018) research illuminate the issues excluded girls have in performances of femininity. These are echoed here, where Kareiss, Mia, Grace, Shauna, and Ally gave examples of when they drew upon broad social constructions of femininity that encourage the view that women can exercise power through their appearance. These encompassed the length of skirts, ties and socks, types of trousers, nails, piercings, and wearing coats over school blazers. Indeed, the young people identified that these performances were utilised by female members of staff, who 'walk up to ya like this in their high heels and everything […] And they just look at ya like they're gonna scream in ya face' (Ally, interview). This furthers the observation that adults have an unfair amount of choice/ freedom regarding clothes and self-expression by emphasising how adults' choices over appearances accrue power, which in this context, is leveraged against young people to intimidate them. When young people draw on the same social constructions of femininity or seek to accrue power via self-expression and their appearance, they are regulated by staff demonstrating the same choices. Shauna also indicated that ethnicity played a role in the regulation of female students' appearances: 'this Black girl yeah she had like… box braids right, and [staff member] goes to her you've gotta take them out' (interview).

Mia said she was regulated for wearing a skirt that was too short, even though she had explained it was her relative's, and was just too small for her. Adults do not appear to be concerned about why Mia does not have her own (new) school regulation skirt, indicating a lack of recognition of the multiple risky realities Mia narrated related to being working-class. The only example of male appearances being regulated was given by Kareiss, where she said her brother:

> is in school now and he come in with trainers on - cos his school shoes had rips in - and my mum could only afford to get him plain black trainers, sent him in and said to the teacher sorry, I can't get normal shoes, and then he got put in isolation for that, for his shoes. So me brother said I'm not doing that, I've got shoes on me feet, I'm

> dressed smartly, so then they'll send him home, and when he comes in again – isolation. And if you don't wanna do it, it'll be the next day. So it's just a cycle (interview)

This exemplifies the reproduction of lived realities of risk for Kareiss's brother, where the middle-class expectations of the appearance of the ideal learner are unattainable, and he becomes cyclically punished for resisting these discourses, and thus placed at further risk. This instance is comparable to young people in Gillies and Robinson's (2012) study, where working-class appearances were discriminated against, and resulted in defensive behaviours that justified their exclusion.

Grace felt that she was targeted for her incorrect uniform, and, like the pettiness articulated by Kareiss regarding being shouted at for talking, said this was 'a petty issue keeping me from my education'. Mia agreed: 'they deal with your socks being white before they deal with your education' (interview). For Grace, the anger at this created a cycle: 'sometimes I just feel like they try and use it against ya. Like I roped them into this – *you* roped *me* into this. […] and then some teachers would be like d-d-d—d-d, if you don't wanna be here then don't, but then, you're putting fines through my door when I don't turn up? No, I don't wanna be here' (interview). The impact of being 'over-minded', surveilled, and labelled as deviant because of their appearance, meant that the girls' lived realities of risk went unnoticed, and caused resentment towards adults who they felt did not understand, or try to engage with the challenges they faced:

> I wore makeup because I was very insecure, of course, but that was my own issue, they didn't then have to put that on me again. Like so yeah I did turn up to school, at 12 o clock, with a full face of make-up and blue and red hair, but that got me, that helped me. That was me doing me. And I feel like they should be able to accept that. […] but I just feel like, they didn't … like, I'm good at hiding things, d'you know what I mean? Like I could pretend to you yeah, I'm fine, when there's dinosaurs behind me? D'you know what I'm saying, and these dinosaurs, they're trying to bite my head off... but I'm fine... And it's like, don't just take what you see and make your own story behind it. Because you don't know. If you're not gonna try and get in and help, then just go away. (Grace, interview)

The punishment worked to individualise ('put on') these issues, and reinforced the strong

('I'm fine') cover up job (Drummond, 2018) required to manage lived realities of risk. The coping performance of being 'fine', demonstrated by 'a full face of make-up and blue and red hair' being misunderstood as defiance and deviance to discourses of what ideal female learners should be, i.e., not exercising power or individuality via a 'feminine' appearance, places Grace at further risk in school in the adult control this performance works to justify, and the ensuing damage caused to her relationships with adults.

Furthermore, when the girls' performances were put in dialogue with the masculinised environment of school, they were regulated and excluded. This correlates with the female students in Gillies (2016) and Drummond (2018) from the five girls here, where they gave examples of behaving in stereotypically 'masculine' ways as a form of defence against sexist attacks, and were reprimanded for doing so:

> literally I'm running around the building yeah going I'm gonna fucking 'av ya […] got down them stairs so fast, I've seen her yeah and I've smacked her in the head, I've started punching her, and I've felt dead bad, but like, I'm not a stripper or a prostitute yeah don't call me that. And then we were going to the office yeah to sort things out, and then the [staff member] goes to me 'why have you assaulted her?' (Shauna, interview).

Here, Shauna being female is risky because it elicits sexist attacks, and she responds with aggressive, masculinised behaviours to counteract this. Like the girls in Drummond's (2018) study, this reaction may be because Shauna sees these behaviours as an effective option in a patriarchal environment, which is indicated by the internalised misogyny another female student directs at Shauna in the first place. This response could be read as compliance (with the masculinised environment), resistance (against the misogynistic attack), or struggle (she has limited options through which to assert herself), but either way she is reprimanded and regulated for it by adults for the assault – an excludable offence. Like the girls in Drummond's (2018) and Gillies' (2016) studies, the girls in this research cannot win, and their gender identities combined with being working-class, labelled as risky and deficient to expectations of the ideal learner, work to position them in lived realities of risk and exclusion.

Shauna's narration develops understandings provided by the young people in Drummond's

(2018) and Gillies's (2016) studies because it demonstrates how female students are cornered in their performance of gender, and *by* other female students' performances of gender. Both Shauna and the girl she assaults perform gendered behaviours and expectations dictated by patriarchal values - where women are told they can accrue power by being overtly feminine, but are reprimanded when their power oversteps the boundary (Gillies, 2016). Shauna's violent, masculinised defence to take back power in this situation is regulated by discourses defining this form of masculinity as outside the remit of the ideal learner, and has negative consequences on the girl espousing misogynistic discourses at Shauna in the first place. Considering these via the lens of compliance, resistance, or struggle, this research develops our understanding of how young women are cornered and positioned in nuanced ways by hegemonic patriarchal discourses in school environments, and how these discourses place them in further positions of risk.

Shauna underscores the power of ageist discourses in a comparable context where the ways in which her behaviour was cornered, was unseen. A female staff member 'gripped me up yeah by my blazer yeah and started dragging me about going get in isolation now, […] so I've gone what the fuck are you doing get off me, and then there was like a camera on top of her like, so I'm standing next to her on the camera so you can see it'. Her caregiver was brought into a meeting where they all saw the incident on the tape.

> Kate: what happened after?
>
> Shauna: nothing. She got away with it. I was like are you fuckin' mad? (interview)

All students, regardless of gender, felt that they were labelled and singled out as 'naughty'. Kareiss and Shauna internalised this label, saying that their version of deviant behaviour was seen to be more extreme than other girls' in their schools, and they were singled out because of the more physical or aggressive behaviours that were not expected for female students. Shauna also felt this was racially motivated. I asked her 'why do you think you were singled out?' she replied, 'because they're racist' (interview).

4.1.4 Ethnicity

Considering the over-representation of certain ethnically minoritised groups in exclusion, this was not brought up as much as might be expected by the young people. It is also not possible to analyse their responses in relation to their specific ethnic background, as this information was not sought by me or disclosed by the young people. From my understanding based on the PRU's data, the young people came from a range of backgrounds mostly reflective of current exclusion statistics, but aside from Shauna, the young people did not reference racialised perspectives towards them. However, race and ethnicity were evidently an undercurrent throughout the young people's experiences of exclusion because many of them were not White British.

Shauna's examples are provided here because of their explicit reference to race, and thus demonstrate the ways in which the aforementioned discourses work intersectionally to reproduce deficit discourses and justify exclusive practices.

> I swear down you know my school used to be racist […] So I've gone into the lesson now yeah, this guy used to hate me so much, I don't know what it was like, I was so kind to him sometimes. And then he was like do this question and I was like but I don't know what it means yeah, and then he was like 'ahr your mum didn't raise you right d-d-d—der...' I'm like are you fuckin mad? So I've gone angry I've said who are you talking to? […] so I stand up and he said 'oh yeah you were born in a barn' and I'm like... you fuckin what? He was like 'only animals slam the doors after them'... I goes who are you calling an animal? (interview)

There are a number of powerful discourses at play here working to corner Shauna's participatory capital (again) into resistance and struggle. Firstly, she believes there's a racialised undercurrent to her relationship with teachers who 'used to hate me so much' for potentially unfounded reasons. Secondly, this situation is triggered by Shauna being positioned as deficient to academic expectations ('I don't know what it means'), and the adult saying Shauna's parents and upbringing are deficient, and that her 'angry' physical ('I stand up') reaction to this provocation is animal-like. This final comparison is particularly discriminatory and cruel for its connotations with racialised attitudes, colonial logics and slurs historically targeted towards Black communities (Wynter, 1990; Akala, 2017), and recalls the psychological-deficit discourses in medicalised perceptions of deviant behaviour, which is framed as out-of-control and overly emotional rather than rational (Gillies, 2011;

2016; Akala, 2017; Strand and Lindorff, 2018; Lanas and Brunila, 2019). This instance is reflective of multiple Black young people's experiences, where white hegemony produces risk for racially minoritised youth (Wynter, 1990), and the defensive behaviours or identities drawn upon to resist or struggle against it, work to further justify racialised stereotypes of Black youth as risky, deviant, and requiring regulation – creating cycles of anger, resistance, and regulation (Gillies, 2016; Akala, 2017; Perera, 2020). While the aforementioned research focuses more on the experience of Black boys, this incident demonstrates parallels for female students who are also not meeting the academic requirements of the ideal learner, and having 'the dilemma of not knowing if someone is just being horrible in the 'normal' way, as people so often are, or if you are being 'blacked off'' (Akala, 2017:70).

While the young people, excepting Shauna, did not explicitly reference race or ethnicity, the fact that many of them were not White British cannot be ignored. Staff provided further insight into how the structures of school render Black students outside of the ideal learner discourses, and the demands placed upon their energies in navigating white hegemony (see also, Coard, 1971 and Akala, 2017).

Teachers, Alistair and Tommy reiterate points made by Akala (2017), where Black young people can perform two different identities, at home and school:

> within schools, what a lot of Black young people I've worked with say, is that they don't understand 'em. […]even the language was different that your parents would use at home. How you go about your whole evening was totally different. And then you switch off, and you're going to school tomorrow and it's like a different country. […] we've got a lot of Black people, Black students within the PRU I would imagine, who have that going on (Alistair, interview).

Alistair touches upon another theme the staff and young people noted about the young people's realities – 'even the language was different'. Alistair could be referring to this in a non-English sense, or in the sense of non-standardised Englishes brought up across the data, including swearing, Jamaican slang, Patois, and language connected to 'grime culture' (Sean, interview). The PRU staff note that these forms of non-standard English are regulated in school contexts and are embedded within particular lesser-heard realities arising from discursively marginalised communities.

Sean noted that the languages and realities connected to them are regulated by the assessment frameworks of the English Language/ Literature curriculum. From his current English teaching, Sean believes that increasing numbers of young people in the PRU are using language that had 'Jamaican slang in its origins' and that 'it's to do with the music and stuff that they're listening to, and it's to do with the way that they speak now, and it's now massively informed by […] grime culture'. Sean is hesitant about describing this because he felt it distant: 'culture's probably not the right word, this is where you've gotta be careful when you're old and you're talking about things that you don't understand'. However, he noted that:

> what you're finding, was these inner city, by and large poorer white kids adopting Jamaican patterns of speech, Jamaican slang […] that is their normal way of speaking and that will come across in their writing […] these white kids are starting to do this automatically now and not realising that it's grammatically 'wrong'. (interview)

Sean points out how the curriculum regulates such language use as a non-standard variety of English because in comparison it is 'grammatically incorrect'. Suzanne also brought up the differences in language practices for young people between home and school, how this informed the approach teaching staff took towards the students, and how the distance between the realities of home and school can impact upon whether a child can 'do well'.

This data reinforces arguments by Cushing (2020; 2023a; 2023b) and Cushing and Snell (2022), that schools' curricula, environments and pedagogical formats can be imbued with white hegemony, and that this encourages regulatory responses from teachers. It also correlates with the language practices of excluded young people in Drummond's (2018) PRU, who came from a comparable range of local, ethnic, cultural, and socio-economic backgrounds to the young people in this study. Grace and Mia gave an insight into the ways in which these language practices were forms of youth resistance to adult power:

> Grace: I'm a respectful girl and I'll only swear when it's necessary, like if I'm jokin' […] I used to cuss at teachers in Patois me
>
> Kate: like when you were wound up?
>
> Grace: yeah. That's how you know. That's how people knew I'm not jokin' no more. (interview)

Grace mobilises an identity and communicative practice she believes is distant and lesser understood by the adults who have offended her, and enacts a deviant identity from the ideal learner to resist hegemonic discriminatory discourses. Although this is still resistive participation (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2015), this can be read as an alternative discourse of critique (Fairclough, 2001) that works to surface the whiteness of schools' linguistic practices and expectations of young people.

Rob, a youth worker who worked across a number of PRU centres, noted that a number of students took up linguistic and identity practices informed by music on social media:

> they wanna look like they know every single lyric to a song on YouTube. They wanna come into school, but they wanna make sure that their trousers are way below their backside […] they wanna talk in a language which is almost like backslang[17], they wanna walk and sway their shoulders, even though they're only coming up to my waist. (interview)

As Rob works with the same groups of young people as Sean, the genre of music implied here is at least informed by 'grime culture' (Sean, interview). His description of young people's embodiment of the masculinised, defensive, and linguistically distancing performance in the PRU is deviant from all aspects of the ideal learner, and is an alternative, resistive discourse of critique, founded in the experiences of Black, working-class, and marginalised communities (Drummond, 2018; Hancox, 2018).

In dialogue with Cushing's (2020; 2022; 2023a) and Drummond's (2018) work, this study underscores the same hegemonic, discriminatory discourses related to ethnicity, class, gender, and age, that young people contend with in school contexts. This study furthers the discussion by indicating the ways in which young people mobilise deviant discourses to resist multiple, intersecting discriminatory discourses. The mobilisation of these alternative discourses works to simultaneously underscore the existence of the hegemonic discourses by their very contrast, and to resist them. However, as with the young people in Drummond's (2018) research, it is telling that the young people who mobilise such resistive alternative discourses have been excluded from school. This demonstrates (again), the cycle

[17] Backslang can take various forms, but is essentially 'a language you can speak without being understood by other people that don't know how to speak it' (Urban Dictionary, 2023:Online)

of risk, where young people living risky realities are individualised as risky and deviant, and are then regulated by adults, leading to resistive or struggling participation. These forms of participation further justify their risky label, and lead to young people's regulation and removal from mainstream settings by adults. Therefore, while the young people did not identify that their race and ethnicity as a factor in their experiences, the inferred whiteness of the ideal learner.

4.1.5 Criminalisation

The references to crime were predominantly from Adrian (accused of criminal behaviour), Grace (a victim of crime), and Mia (associated through her relative's involvement in crime). However, the young people also discussed criminalisation in terms of the school environment being comparable to justice systems and the effects this had upon them being labelled as deviant.

For Adrian, an accusation of criminal behaviour led to his exclusion. The misinterpretation that Adrian was involved in a situation that 'wasn't to do with' him led to a criminal record (interview), but the fact that he 'didn't get proven guilty' did not matter: the criminal record existed, labelled him, and justified his exclusion from school. Adrian reiterated numerous times the effect of having a criminal record, and being put in isolation as a criminalising process that counteracted his attempts to comply with ideal learner expectations:

> I knew some teachers that hated me, and they wanted me to get kicked out before I was even kicked out […]. They wanted to. But they didn't even give us a chance, I was isolated for months - months - months, not even doing our actual work, not with our friends, with a bunch of naughty kids in a classroom – so what do they expect us to do? (interview).

He critiques the unfairness of this labelling process, saying that he knew students who were 'worse behaved than me and they're still in school.' This led Adrian to believe that he was targeted, and that the punishments he endured encouraged him to misbehave more. Shauna, Kareiss, Michael, Josh and Mia reiterate that they were overly sanctioned, or blamed for something they did not do. The young people also said the effect of associations

with others considered as deviant contributed to them being labelled as such, and to adult's hyper-sensitivity towards their behaviour.

Hamza said that teachers judged him by his relatives, Declan's mum said that he was judged by a relative's exclusion, Mia said her relative drew her into fights she did not start, and that she then got in trouble for. The good/ naughty labels resulted in favouritism, their behaviour being exaggerated, and to their criminalisation and surveillance via radios, CCTV, being 'patted out, your pockets took out, your bag emptied' (Adrian, interview), and the presence of police officers in schools.

In Mia's case, her relative's involvement in crime affected her communication with the school, where she felt that the school did not want to get involved with the situation:

> at that point I did have a lot going on, my [relative] was getting arrested every single day […] my mum said to them 'you're still putting her in seclusion every single day because her attitude's changed in school, but you're not seeing why'. (interview)

Here, Mia's school not seeing why her behaviour had changed led to her being disciplined rather than supported. Mia also indicates that her mum tried to explain to the school, but that the school ignored this, and continued to put Mia in isolation daily. Here, Mia's lived reality of being in close proximity to crime led to her feeling stressed and distant from those in school, and positioned her as deviant, risky, and punishable. It is a powerful example of how young people's lived criminalised realities result in criminalising discourses and inappropriate punitive responses in school. The criminalising discourse of Mia's behaviour serves to silence Mia's stressful circumstances related to violence at home, and positions her in further risky, punitive circumstances.

For Grace, the trauma connected to being a victim of crime made her feel sensationalised by those around her, and led her to stop talking about what had happened:

> Everybody was talking about it, everyone was coming up to me about it. Honestly, teachers, students, it got so annoying like. […] and honestly like, I can't describe it in words because … like all the teachers were like, whilst I was in lesson tryna get a cheeky conversation out of it […] Whilst the class is going on, and it's like […] mind your business. Like, I don't wanna think about that again. And then, cos I got offered therapy for it and that, but then the school themselves they did not help […] but I feel like the school just said it, dyou know what I mean? They just said it to make

> themselves look good. Cos I didn't receive no help. […] Nobody actually like spoke to me about it. And I just feel like I didn't really trust 'em that much anyways to. (interview).

In each of these examples, the realities of the situation and how the young people are feeling unheard due to variably exaggerative, sensationalist, criminalising discourses that position Adrian, Grace and the other young people as risky and thus in need of regulation, monitoring, or surveillance. For Adrian, the criminalising environment of school combined with his proximity to criminal activity outside of school positioned him at further risk in his exclusion based on this incident being individualised to him, even though it 'wasn't to do with me'. They indicate a broader issue in the structures imposed on mainstream schools that serve to constrict time and capacity for relationship development between adults and young people (see sections 1.5 and 2.4). This is exemplified particularly by Grace's experience, where the dialogue between herself and adults was read as uncaring, poorly timed, and serving the needs of the school rather than Grace's. Although the lines of communication were open between Grace, school staff and mental health professionals, the communication was ineffectual due to her feeling sensationalised, lacking trust, and too traumatised to think or talk about the incident at that point. This experience distanced her further from those in school. It is a powerful example of Grace's perspectives being curtailed and silenced by misinterpretations and misguided reactions to her circumstances, and is especially difficult considering the resonance Grace's words have with experiences of trauma. Van der Kolk (2015:43) notes the isolating effects of trauma that 'drives us to the edge of comprehension, cutting us off from language based on common experience or an imaginable past', where traumatized individuals may not want to 'think about that again' and 'can't describe it in words' (Grace, interview). Van der Kolk (2015) also explains how children often hide their traumatic experiences and feeling from others because they view it as dangerous or punishable to share them. These observations are true for Grace, where she is sensationalized for her unimaginable circumstances, and feels like she can't 'open up' to adults because she will be punished for doing so (Grace, interview). Like Mia, Grace is isolated, silenced, and misunderstood through lived experiences of crime, and criminalised for her behaviour in response to her circumstances.

Like the experiences of young people in Gillies and Robinson's (2012) and Gillies (2016) research, all three examples again demonstrate, the cycle of risk, where young people living risky realities connected to experiences of crime are individualised as at-risk, risky, or deviant, who are then regulated and surveilled by adults. Again, participatory capital is precluded in resistance, struggle, compliance or is outright silenced in Grace's case. These forms of participation further justify their risky label, and lead to young people's further regulation, isolation, and removal from mainstream settings.

Suzanne outlined a number of ways in which young people's realities can be obscured to staff. This is connected to the 'complex backgrounds' of the young people which can frequently work to distance the young people and their parents from the school. Firstly, it manifests in the defensiveness she believes some students feel the need to perform because of gangs, criminal activity, and those associated with crime outside of school. She also commented on the need some students feel to 'preserve their reputation' because of these dangers out of 'complete self-protection and fear' (see van der Kolk, 2015). Connectedly, Suzanne spoke of the challenges for school staff in the 'snitch mentality' amongst students which prevented the staff from 'getting to the bottom of' the situation around a behavioural incident: 'if you're asking other students for their input […] they just don't want to get involved. They don't want to be seen as a snitch. And it's really frustrating', and that this became more pronounced as students entered year 10-11. Considering the criminalising environments of mainstream school referenced by Adrian, the other young people in this study, excluded young people in other studies (Gooding, 2014; Tarabini et al., 2018; Lamrhari et al. 2021), and critiqued by Chadderton (2014), Perera (2020) and Cushing (2020), a 'snitch mentality' is unsurprising when teachers are positioned as regulators, surveyors and punishment-givers of young people's behaviour, appearance, and academic progression. It is another way in which the hegemonic discourses predicated on academic progression and the ideal learner, work to distance young people and adults by reducing time for relationship development and masking young people's lived realities of risk.

4.1.6 Control and unheard realities: the result of hegemonic discourses

These themes were highly reoccurring across the youth data, and are the results of the aforementioned hegemonic discourses at the micro-level of interaction outlined above upon the young people.

Illustrated in the above sections, control was a reoccurring theme across all groups, but particularly for young people, where control was frequently referred to as the (unjust) exertion of teachers' power over them in mainstream settings. Teacher control was mostly referred to as instances where young people felt emotionally or physically intimidated by teachers in mainstream settings. There were a number of references to being 'gripped up', chased, locked up or trapped, ganged up on, talked about negatively without being part of the conversation, offended, insulted, embarrassed, and surveilled or watched by staff.

These methods of regulation and control were in response to behaviours and identities considered to deviate from the ideal learner, and thus to the young people being viewed as risky or at-risk. Foucauldian (1979) notions informing the governmentality approach to risk, and Giddens' (1998) description of risk society (Beck, 1999) are helpful frameworks to understand the regulation and control of excluded young people in this study. Giddens (1998) and Beck (1999) underscore risk society as preoccupied with the uncertainty of the future, which generates the need to consistently attempt to safeguard against imagined risks. They argue that this works to generate the notion of risk itself, which from a governmentality perspective, justifies regulation and control of people en-masse (Foucault, 1979). These notions are applicable to the controlling reactions of adults towards young people's conduct and identities in school settings. Kareiss summarised the disempowering and silencing nature of this control in school, where 'you can't be yourself, you can't express yourself' (interview). Adult control is a reoccurring theme implicit in exclusion research with young people (Gillies, 2016; Drummond, 2018; Martin-Denham, 2020; Lamrhari et al., 2021), but not foregrounded by CDS-informed perspectives on the hegemonic discourses justifying this control. The approach of this thesis indicates the intersecting discourses used to justify adult control via the ideal learner discourse in school contexts. These discourses are exemplified in the themes presented above, which have been identified by the Faircloughian (2001) informed approach to thematic analysis. Combined with Groundwater-Smith et al.'s (2015) notion of youth

participatory capital being precluded as compliance, resistance, or struggle, this research adds a deeper dimension to understanding why adult control causes problems in adult-youth relationships in schools. Namely, that adult control leads to the preclusion of young people's participatory capital, to unheard realities and fractured relationships. As such, the comprehensive approach to the macro-micro level manifestations of hegemonic discourses in school exclusion enables us to explore the discursive effects of these upon young people. These effects are the preclusion of youth voice to communicate their realities, or to position youth voice as an alternative discourse of critique. The latter frequently serves to justify young people as risky/ at-risk, and as requiring regulation or exclusion (Foucault, 1979; Beck, 1999). How this happens in school exclusion is explained below.

The theme of unheard realities occurred the most across groups. I define it as instances when parts of an individual's experience, event, or reality are obscured, hidden, and consequently unheard or misunderstood by other parties concerned. These parties include the four groups involved in this research, and education/social policy bodies.

The concept of unheard realities comprises:

a) when individuals seek to obscure something in defence, or due to lack of trust. In the case of young people, this was sometimes an attempt to meet the ideal learner expectations, or in defence of stressful traumatic realities. Both serve to isolate young people by keeping their experiences distant from adults. These are evident in Grace's experience of being a victim of crime.

b) where one party does not see or hear the full event due to hegemonic discourse prioritising ideal learner performances. This is evident in Josh's experience of being labelled as naughty or deviant and leading him to be blamed for the subversive actions of other students.

c) Assumptions and labelling working to obscure the identity, capability, or personality of an individual. These are evident in how the girls were regulated for their deviant appearances.

d) Realities in or out of school are distant, or hard to comprehend due to hegemonic discourses positioning young people risky or 'unimaginable' circumstances (Elaine, fieldnotes). These comprise criminalisation, class, and age, and work to keep adults distant from young people. I would argue that this is strongly evident across all of the examples from the young people provided in this chapter so far.

Instances of unheard realities often involved a combination of the above factors, and all examples of realities being unheard were consequences of adult control which worked to preclude young people's participatory capital into compliance, resistance or struggle (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2015). The examples outlined above in relation to specific and intersecting hegemonic discourses of the ideal learner exemplify this, and add further evidence to Groundwater-Smith et al.'s (2015) arguments of young people being discursively incapacitated in education contexts. This manifested variably through the young people being disinclined to communicate, misinterpreted and misunderstood, or unheard by adults. The distancing, isolating and risky positions the young people were placed in due to their realities being regulated and unheard by adults led to fractured relationships. The young people described: running away or hiding, mobilising anger and aggression, feeling 'violated' (Adrian, interview), being unsupported, feeling uncared for, being lied about, and being silenced. These experiences ran deep, and Suzanne implied they had a knock-on effect for new relationships with mainstream teachers from parents and children:

> often, [at] the parental meetings - the challenge is they refuse to believe us, [we've] been accused of being racist, we've been accused of being homophobic. The full echelon of anything to detract from the behaviour really. […] you get all sorts of abuse (interview)

She elaborated that this made it challenging for teachers to be heard by parents, because of parents' negative past experiences of school, and that this led them to feel 'uncomfortable' and to label teachers as people who make 'judgments about you […] as a person'. This indicates that poor experiences of school – of discriminatory discourses, academic pressure, and of unheard realities of risk and struggle – are intergenerational for excluded young people, and that these historic negative experiences serve to distant young people and their families from teachers in schools as a necessary protective response. However, this intergenerational prior conflict reproduces conflict in the present for teachers, who may be unjustly accused of discrimination and placed in a position of mistrust by excluded young people and their families. The entrenched discourses of academic pressure, the ideal learner, and the other hegemonic discourses which cohere around them, thus reproduce themselves at the micro level of interaction when meetings about a child's behaviour are being had, and continue to reap damaging, distancing effects between teachers and young people. Each perspective (of the families, young people, or teachers) is based on different

but true lived reality to each individual, and this is where the conflict arises – none of them are wrong. The families who have experienced intergenerational negative effects of discriminatory discourses in school environments are understandably defensive when these discourses are being enacted again to punish their child. The teachers are also tasked with enacting these discourses to an extent, and to regulate behaviour that poses a risk to others in school. This very behaviour likely arises from lived realities of risk that are unheard by adults in schools. Again, this anecdote from Suzanne underscores the damaging effects (for all involved) of prioritising the ideal learner/ academic progression discourse over time for relationship development between adults and young people - everyone involved feels unheard, and misunderstood.

The examples above also demonstrate Beck and Beck Genrsheim's (2002) notion of the social structures which elicit precarious, risky situations, leading individuals to react in precarious, lesser-informed/ lesser-resourced ways, and of the consequences of individualisation being intensely significant for those with the least resources, who 'are particularly adversely affected by the structural erosion of society, and, simultaneously, have most demanded of them in terms of active management of institutional individualization.' (Kallin and Häikiö, 2020:111).

The young people's participatory capital in these examples manifests as resistance or struggling to manage the institutional demands of school, and they are reprimanded and silenced in school contexts for doing so. However, they are also alternative discourses critiquing the education system and unequal power distribution between adults and youth (Fairclough, 2001). However, mobilising alternative discourses of critique puts them at-risk of exclusion, and as such is a risky endeavour.

4.1.7 Anger and humour: alternative discourses of critique

Anger

The young people and adults in this study frequently contextualise, rather than individualise discourses of risk (Beck and Beck Gernshiem, 2002), and emphasise how the impact of dealing with consistently risky realities – of disempowerment, stress, trauma, and prejudice – facilitated the young people's exclusion from school. The young people critique these

individualising contexts as misappropriating blame upon them for situations beyond their control. The young people were individually punished for their lived risky realities of deprivation and classism; gender inequality; white hegemony; stress, trauma, and mental health challenges; pressure to perform in exams; communities dealing with risk in various, intersecting forms; stigmatising justice systems; and language discrimination. They explained these clearly, emotionally and coherently in the research process (see also, Drummond, 2018), but underscored the frustrations in attempting to communicate this in school environments where there was no time or capacity for them to be heard. Anger was referenced and demonstrated by many young people in relation to injustices in their lives, to their exclusion, and to their experiences in school.

Prior to the arts project, Declan internalised and medicalised his anger as his 'issue', where he framed himself as sometimes out of control because of how angry he was (fieldnotes). However, throughout the course of the project he contextualised injustices that had motivated the anger, and in his arts project, he demonstrated the burdening impact of individualising, medicalising discourses of anger upon him. He also contextualised the silencing effects of this, and how it created cycles of individualisation and anger (see 4.2.1 and 4.3.1). Gillies (2011) via Claxton (2005) frames anger as a powerful force that can enable excluded young people to ask hard questions about societally produced injustices, and through this lens, anger is understood as a productive form of participatory capital. The young people's mobilisation of anger was successful in communicating realities in the sense that they were heard and responded to. However, the response from adults in their previous schools was individualising and regulatory, rather than contextualising like the approach of adults in this research. For example, Rob summarised how the young people can 'revert' to 'anger' because of their frustration based on 'chaotic backgrounds, emotionally chaotic – they don't know whether to be angry or sad. They always are angry. […] And they're under pressure all the time for everything.' Rob continues that these realities can manifest in defensive performances, that further work to obscure the young people's realities, because they are not 'standard' reflections of sadness, anger, or 'low levels of confidence and belief':

> they can't speak out because they was in their house and they was up 'til midnight, […] they're trying to project themselves as some sort of invincible person that doesn't want to listen, or only do things on their terms (interview)

In the PRU context, anger expressed by young people was still managed by adults, but mostly space was made for youth and adult anger. Staff were invested in exploring the reasons behind it, and what it was communicating. In this sense, space for anger as an alternative discourse was opened by the staff's youth work-informed approach, and in doing so demonstrated a developed understanding and ability to hear the young people's realities:

> we'd built the relationships and actually listened to what was going on, and understood that this angry young man, there's an issue and there's a reason behind that. Not, oh he's being angry, well we need to get rid of him (Joe, interview)

By allowing space for anger the be included in the PRU environment, a more inclusive, understanding attitude could be taken to the issue or reason – based in young people's challenging realities – that cause the anger. The staff understood anger as a necessary function to critique the injustice of these challenging realities, and approached anger with intrigue rather than fear, or with a need to regulate and excluded it. For example, Cathy explained how she had to send a group of young people home because of damage sustained to the learning centre, and that after they had all argued and put their point forward, the young people had left and 'waved, like – see ya!', and accepted her reasoning for the exclusion (interview). Cathy said that the young people had felt like they had been heard, and involved in the decision, and that this contributed to them accepting her decision to send them home.

Humour

Humour was another alternative discourse drawn upon to navigate the silencing, isolating effects of hegemonic discourses by young people. Humour also worked as an alternative discourse to get away with critiquing and calling out injustice or to push the boundaries of acceptable behaviour and discourse without being reprimanded. This theme is defined in instances where it felt that those being humorous were doing it consciously, for example: 'I said 'do you think you could go a whole day without swearing?' Ally: 'I could never stop

fucking swearing!'' (fieldnotes). Below I outline some of the functions of humour in school exclusion research to compare its use by the staff and young people in this study.

Excluded young people drawing on humour as an alternative discourse is present in Gillies, (2016) Dray, (2017) Drummond (2018) and Thomas, (2022), specifically bantering[18] as constitutive of young men's performances of working-class masculinity (Kehily and Nayak, 1997). Kehily and Nayak (2010) argue, through observations of teenagers in UK secondary schools, that through games, storytelling, and competitive insults, humour is used to consolidate masculinity, and at times subvert ideal learner discourses (for example: teacher authority, middle-class values, and education performance). Research with excluded young people reiterates the link between humour/banter and gendered forms of socialisation. Dray (2017) comments on the collaborative, communal nature of banter, in that it was the response of the group that determined whether the person doing the bantering had succeeded. Like the young people in Kehily and Nayak's (1997) and Gillies (2016) research, banter and humour in Dray (2017) and Drummond (2018) were also competitive, either to demonstrate who could gain the most laughs, or to ascertain other forms of social capital. These used were also present in youth and youth-adult relationships in this study.

Drummond's (2018) research indicates how social class and ethnicity might intersect with masculine performances of humour to resist dominant discourses in education, and negotiate established hierarchies of power. Like the young people in in Kehily and Nayak's (1997) study, the marginal street/urban/grime language is drawn upon by the boys to subvert power relations by placing it within the context of humour. One example is when Jamal (student) is bantering with other boys in the less on, using the word 'bomba' as part of the joke. The teacher does not know what this word means (so Jamal gets away with saying it), but it has a range of possibilities (Urban Dictionary, online:2022), from sexualised connotations objectifying women, to smoking marijuana, and as a neo-African dance/music genre created by plantation slaves in the 1800s. If Jamal was using it to objectify women, this subversive discourse is also present in Labov's (1972) study of vernacular in young male ethnic minority communities in the US, and in Kehily and Nayak's (2010) study where the boys would have insult throwing competitions based around objectifying mothers,

[18] See Dray (2017) for a definition of banter provided by excluded young people.

girlfriends, and sisters to humiliate each other. Kehily and Nayak (2010:74) argue that sexualised discussions and arguments in this context reproduce 'heterosexual hierarchies between 'real' lads and those susceptible to 'feminine' sensibilities'. Instances of humour used in all of the above forms did occur in this research. For example, 'that's what she said' was used frequently by students at Heathley as an innuendo to sexualise another person's comment:

> We were digging a hole to plant the tree at the front. Ally was shovelling, but the roots still wouldn't fit. I said 'you'll have to go a bit deeper than that.'
>
> Ally: 'that's what she said!' (fieldnotes)

This could be read as indicative of the masculinised environment of the PRU/ schools, where sexualised jokes are constitutive of masculinity and thus status (Kehily and Nayak, 2010; Drummond, 2018). In a school context, doing so is also an alternative, subversive discourse as such forms of masculinity are outside of the ideal learner discourse. However, the phrase 'that's what she said' is a well-known innuendo in British/US slang, sufficiently inexplicit (no swearing), a 'groan-worthy' or cheap attempt at humour, and arguably common/expected in teenage or youth vernacular[19], that Ally knows they can get away with it in this context (Dictionary.com, 2018:online). The adult is more likely to roll their eyes and let it go (what happened here) than challenge what is frequently criticised as a degrading innuendo to women or men depending on the context (Dictionary, 2018:online) .

There were also instances of young people referencing substance use (jokingly) to test adult reactions and assert power:

> Adrian said 'Kate I'm off to smoke a fat zoot now'. These situations can be awkward (for me) as 1) I don't think he actually is going to smoke, 2) he's testing me to see what I'll do about it, 3) I'm not an employee at the PRU so have little power to do anything about it, and 4) as an 'adult' I have to tell him that smoking weed is bad, and also as someone who works with him and follows the party line of the PRU. (fieldnotes)

[19] See for example the film *Wayne's World* or the American version of *The Office* TV series (Dictionary.com, 2018)

Like the young people in Drummond's (2018) study, Adrian's reference can be read as a subversive discourse in a school setting. The comment is outside of the ideal learner framework in its criminalised nature. Such discourses are brought up in conversations with adults to subvert power relations and call out the social positions Adrian and I are placed within. Specifically, this is due to my being an adult in a school setting, and Adrian's comment tests what I actually think about these discourses. Like Jamal, drawing on subversive discourses in a light-hearted way enables them to be articulated with limited repercussions on Adrian. Both are small examples of power being exercised in foregrounding these alternative discourses in ways that evade regulation, and challenge adults to reflect on their meaning. The power exercised by Jamal and Adrian is evident in the fact that the adult in both situations is put in a position of not knowing exactly what is meant and having to make a call (due to the structures of school where adults are the responders to young people's behaviour) based on limited information. This is why these discourses are literally subversive of standard power relations. Throughout the other sections within 4.1, hegemonic discourses place young people at risk or elicit them to make risky decisions. In both cases between Jamal and Adrian, the adults are instead placed in risky situations. Jamal's joke, if taken the wrong way by others in the PRU (like 'mandingio' in 2.4), this could cause order in the classroom to disintegrate and the teacher to be placed in a disempowered position. In this research, I am positioned by Adrian as deciding whether he has brought illegal substances into school, or plans to use them – both criminalised actions. If it was true, I was responsible for managing this, thus my deciding that it was not true was risky. If I decided to pursue a punitive action for this comment, my relationship with Adrian would be damaged (whether he had substances on his person or not), his time for the research withdrawn, and my positioning made clear to the other young people as a regulatory adult. Hence circumventing Adrian's comment in the way I chose to was the least damaging result for all involved. It is a clear example of how humour calls out the operation of discourses favouring adult-power, and their effects on youth-adult relationships. Thus, it is an alternative discourse of critique.

However, most often when young people used humour in the PRU, they brought adults into their joke rather than excluding them from it. Like the young people in Thomas's (2022) study on masculinity in PRUs, the young people and the staff drew on humour and banter to

form relationships, and to regulate moments where masculine performances appeared to be producing detrimental effects, for example, to trivialise an insulting comment as a joke, and diffuse potential aggression. This study thus develops understandings of humour in previous studies - as a collaborative alternative discourse to critique hegemonic discourses that can disempower young people. Humour is mobilised as effective participatory capital in the PRU for the way in which it can communicate potentially uncomfortable truths and bring the realities of young people closer to adult comprehension. Humour was more prevalent in what I observed in the school setting than the interviews, and used more frequently by the young people than the staff. However, there is not a division for where humour is happening, as it is used by young people and staff together as they share a conversation and context. Notably, Declan is the main source of humour, and this is drawn upon in interactions with adults more than students. Throughout, humour is used as a negotiation tool by young people and PRU staff to form relationships, speak (potentially uncomfortable or subversive) truth, check power, explore someone's reaction, and entertain. These uses are multiple within individual examples in this research, and demonstrate the power of humour as a communication tool.

The young people (Declan particularly) use humour to negotiate situations, to make them more entertaining, and to position themselves in more active, participative roles than would be common in mainstream settings.

Declan and Grace used humour to point out differences in social class:

> Grace: where's it at MMU? What does that stand for?
>
> Kate: Manchester Metropolitan University
>
> Grace: ooo look at gyal cracking out dem big words! (fieldnotes)
>
> where there was me asking questions, Declan put on a posh voice: 'ooo so do you think those dots are connected?' (fieldnotes)

When swearing occurred, it was frequently within the natural flow of speech rather than attempts to be funny. However, when its use was regulated, swearing was used humorously to challenge its regulation: 'Declan was swearing a lot at the end of the day, John was joking with him 'curb your profanity!', Declan, in a Danny Dyer accent: 'Fack off!'' (fieldnotes). Danny Dyer is a TV personality and actor from East London, known for his 'hard man'/ 'bad

boy' roles in soap operas, films and documentaries (The Telegraph, 2009:online). He speaks with a noticeable East End dialect, which is connoted with working-class speakers and utilising coded language (Britannica, 2023:online). In an interview, Dyer commented that his accent led him to be 'unfairly typecast': 'I've got this image – bad boy, hard man – I don't know where it comes from, maybe it's just the way I speak.' (The Telegraph, 2009:online). Therefore, Declan's choice of this accent to joke around resonates with the working-class/ masculine forms of humour identified as common in exclusion settings, and amongst certain groups of teenage boys (Kehily and Nayak, 1997; Dray, 2017). In asserting a 'hard man' persona humorously, Declan is again able to subvert discursive expectations of him in a school setting and resist discursive regulation by adults via banter (Thomas, 2022).

As humour was arising as a key theme, particularly at Heathley, I asked Cathy and Declan for their take on its use:

> Cathy said 'I don't actually know. Everyone does it [takes the piss] though. Kids wouldn't do it in mainstream, they'd (teachers) take it the wrong way.' […] Declan said 'I suppose it's because they know ya so you can be honest with them and it's fine.' (fieldnotes)

Jokes being taken the wrong way in a mainstream context was verified by other young people. Kareiss described how she 'tickled a teacher once and they started yelling 'sexual harassment!'' (interview). To Declan, the role of humour was a vehicle for honest communication, perhaps when the truth was a bit unpalatable or hard to express. Relationships are crucial in this – 'they know ya'. If this is essentially the function of humour – to develop relationships and communicate truths that are potentially hard to express or hear, it is significant that when space for humour is not prioritised in favour of formality and the ideal teacher-learner dynamic, the result is a destabilised context for communication: because there is less possibility of knowing them and being 'honest with them'. This is reiterated by Kareiss 'I'm not getting to know ya in those 30 minutes, I'm trying to do my maths', and Grace, where feeling unsafe led her to lie about how she felt in school: 'I don't actually feel safe with yous… so I just put 'yes'. I'm fine, I'm chillin'. I didn't really feel like I could trust 'em to tell 'em anyways', and was connected to feeling she had no one to talk to: ''nobody actually, like, spoke to me about it'.

This study thus adds to Thomas's (2022), Dray's (2017), and Drummond' (2018) investigation of humour. This research views humour as a vehicle to challenge hegemonic discourses and power relations in school exclusion settings , and thus as a successful form of participatory capital that can work to include youth purposes, projects, and perspectives by negotiating and developing relationships with adults.

4.2 Power and Participation: a CDS-informed assessment of youth participation

The previous section demonstrated that in school exclusion processes, hegemonic discourses work to silence youth realities to adults via discrimination and the power imbalance they justify. The results argue for the need to work with excluded young people in ways that foreground a reflexive awareness of these issues, and make space for developing understanding relationships between young people and adults. Through a combination of CDS and YPR approaches, the P and P model aims to achieve this. If realities are unheard partially because of precluded participatory capital, this also points to the potential of participatory approaches to centre alternative modalities of communication in the context of school exclusion to address the original issue. Namely, that youth voice is marginalised and lesser-heard/ understood.

This section outlines how the arts projects – graffiti, lyric writing, and podcast interviewing – were framed, scaffolded, developed, and enacted by the young people from their co-analysis themes in school exclusion. I use the power and participation model to assess the negotiation of power between adults and young people, the hegemonic discourses affecting this, and the different forms the young people's participation took throughout. The results reflect a mixed picture, of moments where young people's alternative discourses of critique surfaced due to the nature of the participatory process, and of moments where hegemonic discourses inescapably came to the fore and positioned both young people and adults compromised, unequal positions. The P and P model draws attention to the effects of macro level discourses, and the ways in which they are negotiated at the micro level of interaction in the participatory process. As such, the analysis below serves to develop an understanding of a) how youth voice was (or was not) centred in the research process, b) which macro level

discourses are prevalent and significant in the lives of excluded young people in the participatory process, (and whether these correlate with the thematic analysis in the previous section) and c) how young people and adults navigate or resist these in the research process. This is achieved by holding the model's guiding questions (table 1) in mind throughout analysis of the fieldnotes documenting stages 5 and 6, concerning: Power relations (macro and micro level), Positioning, Place, Purpose, Perspectives, Protection, Process, and Parallel projects.

These particular stages of data generation (5 and 6, see table 4) have been selected for evaluation with the P and P model for two reasons. Firstly, although the ethnographic fieldnotes at all stages of the research process provide insights into youth participation in the PRU, the co-analysis and arts development have the most significant examples of youth-led involvement and are thus a rich site of data to evaluate with the model. Secondly, to analyse all the ethnographic fieldnotes with the P and P model would require more space than is available in this project, but would have shown the development of relationships between young people and adults in the PRU. This insight would have developed the understanding and analysis of youth participation in stages 5 and 6 outlined below. However, focusing on stages 5 and 6 with the model supports the analysis of the artworks with multimodal CDA tools (in the next section, 4.3), and provides a crucial insight into the nuanced power dynamics young people navigated and foregrounded with their artworks.

4.2.1 Graffiti

Declan led on creating his graffiti after we had completed the co-analysis activity 1:1. However, designating a space for graffiti is adverse to the nature and purpose of graffiti as an art form (Blume, 1985), as the placement and content is often consciously subversive and reclamatory of public space by the stakeholders of that space (Drissel, 2012). The negotiation of this evidence the power of adult expectations and ownership of place over Declan's ownership and purposes in the project.

There were several moments where Declan counteracted adult control over place, by spraying equipment, a handrail, and finally a wall of the building. Considering that graffiti is usually placed where it is disallowed, and in spaces where stakeholders wish to tag these as

their own, Declan's subversive choice of non-designated space could be viewed as a parallel project, and as a challenge to the constraints of the context enacted by adults within it. My own assumptions regarding this were exemplified in my reaction to Declan spraying a wall of the building. These were based on fears of my being a visitor to an organisation who sets up the conditions for the centre to get covered with paint, and consequently, creating work for the staff having to clean it off. They are based on power relations, of myself being an adult, feeling responsible for Declan in the school/PRU setting (as underscored by other PRU students in 4.1), and making a judgement of Declan's behaviour based on my assumptions of the place:

> Declan: 'can I spray the wall?'
>
> Kate: 'I'm gonna go with no, but it's not my wall so it's not my say.'
>
> Declan: 'can I ask Cathy?'
>
> Kate: 'I would'.
>
> He went inside. They had a chat (I didn't hear because I was clearing away the other bits). He also asked John. John had a chat with him that I didn't hear, and then John turned to me and said 'the answer is no, did you hear that Kate?' I thought this was genuinely meant. It wasn't, John had said yes to Declan. Then Declan started spraying the wall and said 'I need the white now!'
>
> K: 'ah no! cos Elaine's gonna have to clean it off and I'll feel bad' and asked him to give me the paint .
>
> Declan: 'genuinely Kate, he just said yes to me, but said no to you, I promise' and put his hands up.
>
> I was really torn now and started to walk inside with the spray paints. He grabbed one from the box and I tried to stop him, but he ran off with it. I went inside and said 'I'm so sorry, he's spraying that wall.'
>
> Elaine: 'don't worry about it, we can paint over it - it's not a big deal'. I was relieved, but also felt a bit stupid now. He was telling the truth. I apologised to him, but we were both a bit embarrassed (fieldnotes).

Even though Declan had asked for permission, and it was recognised by me that I was not responsible if Declan sprayed the wall, I still assumed that Cathy, John and Elaine would not want Declan to do it, and would see me as responsible for his actions. The place of the PRU being a school had elicited a strong set of assumptions from me that Declan spraying the wall would be risky, and this assumption stopped me from believing Declan, despite knowing him for the year and having a trusting relationship with him. My view that spraying the walls

was a risky activity was reinforced when graffiti art had been mentioned in the first place. Members of staff had reiterated the challenges of supervising a large group with the spray paints. We were able to accommodate Declan's purposes because there were not many young people attending on the day, so I didn't have to supervise lots of young people. If the full number of young people had been in, the risk to the PRU (of being sprayed in non-designated places) were increased. In these examples, adults collaboratively enact a view of the young people as risky because of the place. Spraying a wall is not a risky activity but becomes so because the wall is part of a school, and not owned by the young people. Therefore, to paint a wall without adult support/consent would be inappropriate and thus regulated. This moment exemplifies the powerful hegemonic discourses outlined in 2.1 and 2.2 – of youth risk, the ideal learner, and adult-child power imbalance – operating at a micro level, despite the participatory, critical approaches taken to counteract it within a flexible education setting. However, Declan's purposes were realised in other forms. For example, after I had shared the graffiti idea with the other young people in the centre to check their interest, and the group had agreed, the arts activity was based on Declan's idea and purposes. The flexible setting and changeable attendance of the PRU enabled Declan's purposes to be realised. In a mainstream setting with 30+ young people in attendance in one class, creating arts projects tailored to individual needs in the way we did in this research would have been challenging and highly negotiable (due to time, funding, researcher expertise, and the curricula/ behavioural demands of mainstream schools).

The Heathley group's co-analysis was the basis for the development of their art across several sessions, as and when they wanted to work on it. Prior to the co-analysis discussion, the young people were told that the arts were optional, that their choice of theme for their graffiti was based on their analysis of their experiences, and that the art was 'a message' for the audiences with power over school exclusion – who they had identified throughout the research process to this point (see figure 4).

This session is to provide some ideas for the Art you create.

What you do/ say within it, is your choice.

The finished Art will be shared with people who influence how school exclusion happens to young people (teachers, policy makers, people at universities). Therefore, ***what you say with the Art has the potential to change how school exclusion happens for other students in Manchester, and the country.***

It is an additional way of putting your thoughts forward outside of interviews and field notes (if you have participated in these)

Figure 4 slide from presentation at Heathley.

It was reiterated to them that whatever they produced was fine, the quality of the art was not the concern of this activity, but rather the message. They were asked 'What needs to change? Which themes were important to you?', and to 'Draft some ideas about what could go on your canvas – quotes, images, colours.' The PowerPoint then presented some images of street art with messages, characters from comics the young people had shown an interest in, different fonts, and local street art in the city the young people may have been familiar with. The young people discussed the art from their local area (see figures 5 and 6) and recognized the role of the art in promoting a community-based response to injustice.[20]

[20] The street art in figures 5 and 6 are responses to a) the bombing of Manchester Arena, and b) Manchester-born footballer Marcus Rashford's work tackling child poverty during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure.5. Graffiti example 1

Figure. 6 Graffiti example 2

The young people participated in varying degrees, with the support of staff present. All completed a preliminary design (see figure 7 Hassan), but Declan and Hassan took theirs further, planning designs for canvas. Only Declan reached the point of using the spray paints. This was partly because he was the most invested, and the most frequent attender, but also because the others had multiple other priorities which removed them from the school day.

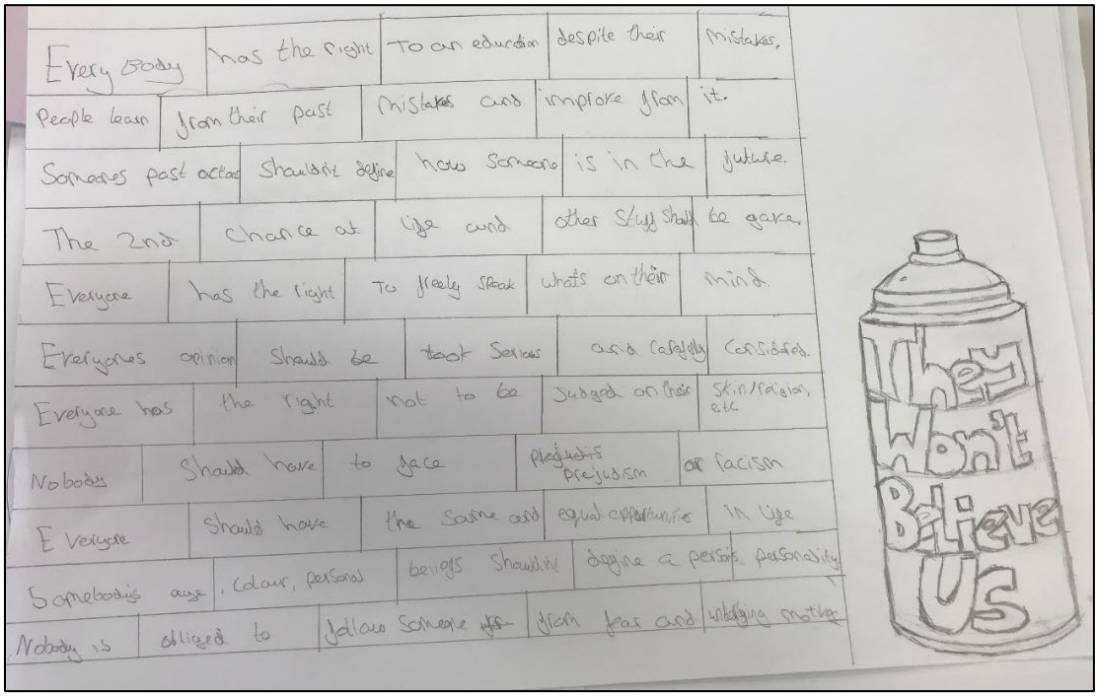

Figure 7. Hassan's draft graffiti

4.2.1.1 Declan

After the discussion, Declan said 'I don't know what to do now!' and then decided 'I think I'll just do 'Listen'', and sketched out a design in this session (see figure 9 for his reasoning). This was developed over the course of the remaining 3 weeks of the project, where Declan and I designed and made stencils for the letters and shapes, negotiated where the canvases could be made with the staff (in the sports hall and outside – weather dependent), and discussed which colours Declan felt were most effective. This was done when convenient within the school day, either in Art lessons (where it was negotiated that Declan's art could potentially go towards his GCSE), or when there was time away from formal lessons. As it became evident to Declan that the other students were not as interested in progressing to canvases as he was, he asked if he could do another design, which led to the jigsaw-effect canvases concept (figure 8). The initiative on this design was wholly Declan's idea, with me in a support role to help create stencils for the letters. He was able to negotiate ideas and decide how he wanted his finished art piece to look and why. Ultimately, the collaborative nature of the PRU meant that Declan's purposes were, in the main, realised. However, there were also moments of adult power and purpose that Declan had to negotiate. For example, I asked Declan why he'd picked these original words:

> Declan: 'it was just because Sean said it'
>
> Kate: 'well, is that relevant to what you want to say?'
>
> Declan: 'maybe not' (the first discussion began with searching for a word for 'put down') 'how about unfortunate? Because what's happened to us is unfortunate'.
>
> K: 'yeah that could work. Unfortunate might imply that it was unlucky, or a mistake. Is that what you want to say?'
>
> Declan thought for a moment: 'how about unfair?' (fieldnotes)

Declan navigates multiple purposes here, from the initial decision based on a word suggested by his teacher, to my analysis and querying, and finally to his decision. This design is reclamatory of power, as the reason for putting words in Chinese for the adult audience to read was to reposition them as young people in the exclusion process. Declan explained that the Chinese words were there because in the context of school exclusion, 'that's how it feels – like you might as well be speaking another language' (see 4.3.1 for a multimodal CDA of power in Declan's art).

Figure 8 Declan graffiti 1

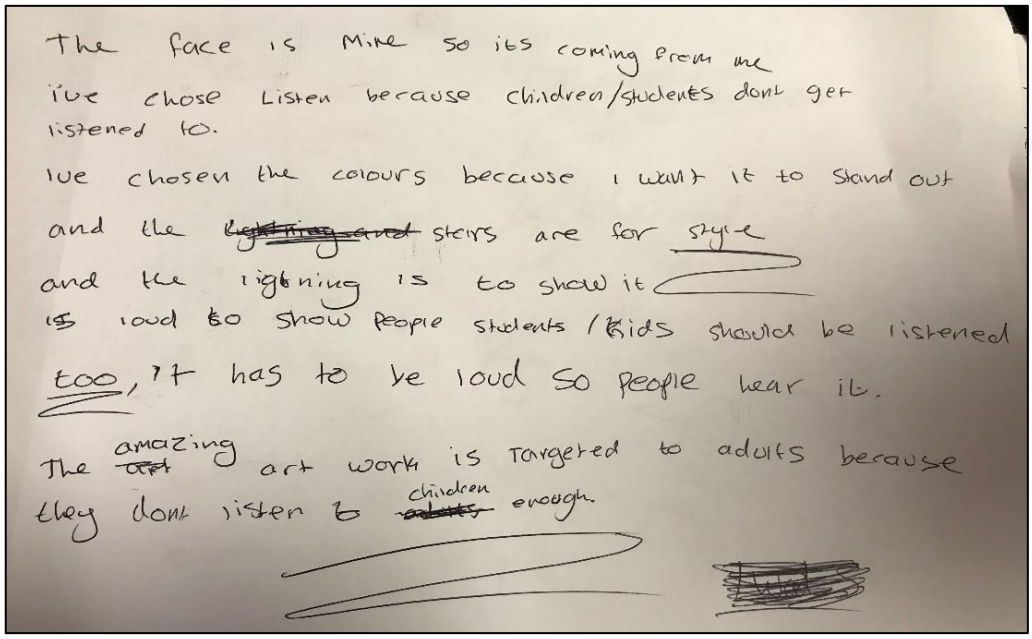

Figure 9. Declan's analysis

4.2.1.2 Adrian

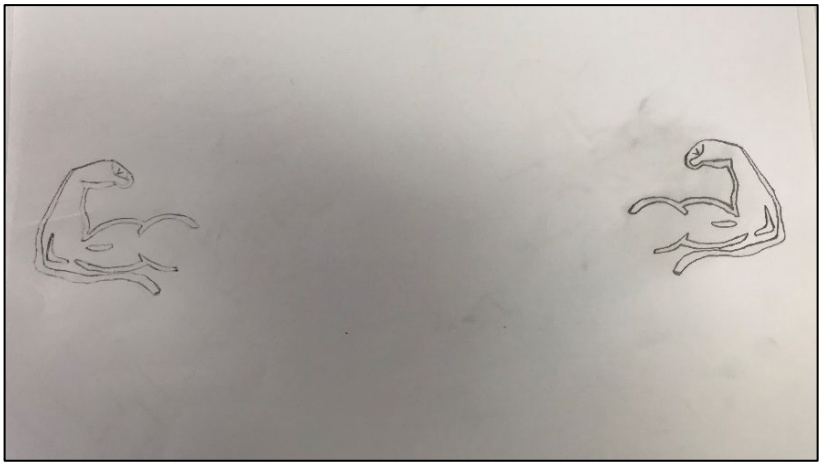

Figure 10. Adrian's graffiti 1

Adrian drew on his relationships with adults and young people to collaboratively produce his artwork, and to innovate the process, researching his concept individually:

> Adrian […] wrote power. 'Can I see yours Rob?' 'Sure, I've done some arms lifting up the word power'. 'That's cool!! Can I do that?' I said yes. 'Can I use my phone to look some stuff up?' He found the picture of the arms he wanted to use, and we printed it for him to trace. (fieldnotes)

He also drew on the co-analysis/ arts session to negotiate a parallel project of his – to avoid doing his careers interview.

However, Adrian did not add 'Power' in the end (see figure 10). This was a result of his attendance being influenced by various situations demanding his participation away from this project/PRU. His attendance was sporadic throughout the year. This was sometimes related to him missing his taxi, the taxi driver failing to pick him up, being temporarily excluded from the PRU, or to issues related to being justice involved. However, at other moments he was just not in the mood. He traced the arms with great care and attention to detail, with no support from staff.

Adrian's experienced of being put in risky or disempowered positions from the background of justice involvement manifested in this aspect of the research process, where I asked for his signature on the consent form. The context of the PRU, and the communal, student-led activity of pool here offset some of the anxiety Adrian indicated he felt towards signing the consent form. He saw Declan sign it, while translating its legalese in a clear manner, and humorously critique the form, diminishing and renegotiating its formality to render it less alien, intimidating, and to disassociate it from other similar forms he may have encountered in stressful situations. This could be viewed as an example of the macro-level hegemonic discourses positioning Adrian being negotiated at the micro-level of interaction by the participatory process, where young people being in a place they knew well and had ownership of provided opportunity for alternative discourses of critique to be voiced, and for other young people to concur and join in.

4.2.2 Lyrics

Lyric writing was an idea introduced by me (originally in Northern Vale) because the young people were often listening to music, and Dylan had an interest in music production. I developed a session where the results and quotes from the co-analysis were written around a lined space so that the young people could refer to them as they were writing their own. Sean supported this lesson with another member of staff. Dylan and Darnell completed lyrics, Dylan in collaboration with staff, and Darnell independently with some tracks playing in the background. The staff were instrumental in supporting the lyrics, with the usual rule

of no music being bypassed, and helping the young people bring their ideas to fruition. The research process repositioned staff from leaders of classes to facilitators of youth/my projects. However, this is also an example of the youth-work informed nature of adult-young person relationships in the PRU, where rules are flexibly worked around when the reasoning was agreed to be sound.

Dylan's interest in music had been highlighted to me by several members of staff prior to the arts project, and I had had conversations with Dylan about music and festivals to scope out the breadth of his interests.

Dylan's participation is reflective of Adrian's in his hesitancy around the consent form, and his collaboration with a member of staff. However, Dylan's participation in the project was dominated by adult involvement, as after he left the centre, he lost ownership of the lyrics due to adult motives:

> News of Dylan's lyrics had spread around the school (the centre manager had taken a copy and asked Dylan if it was ok that she showed people – he'd said yes). A number of staff came up to me and said how good they thought it was 'it's got a compliment from the Head via email!' I wasn't sure how he'd feel about all this fuss. (fieldnotes)

Dylan was aware of the use of his work for adults' purposes: 'I caught Dylan and said 'your lyrics went a bit viral last week didn't they! Sorry about that I didn't realise it would be circulated so fast'. He said 'it's ok. I guess it looks good for you though doesn't it'' (fieldnotes). Although Dylan may not have had a problem with his work making me look good, as young people's parallel projects can include wanting to support others (Lohmeyer, 2020), it still sat uncomfortably with me. It was not my purpose to accrue status in the PRU from the young people's art. However, this reflection on purposes demonstrates the complexity of PR processes, where researchers unavoidably accrue status through doing value-led research. For researchers taking up PR orientations, who seeks to call out and contest power imbalances (in favour of those in universities) via the research process, the unavoidable outcome is adverse to both my personal and methodological purposes.

Dylan's awareness of his working making adults look good was further emphasised when staff who were not involved in the project asked me if they could intervene:

> […] brought up how they had asked Dylan if they could turn the lyrics he wrote into a song, and Dylan had apparently said this was ok. Some of the ideas they were talking through hadn't come from Dylan. I reiterated that it was Dylan's work, and that he needed to be asked about these decisions. (fieldnotes)

Unfortunately, I was not able to ask Dylan for any further views on this, as he'd been arrested the previous week, and I left the centre at Christmas. The positioning of Dylan as a young person, a PRU student, and involved in the justice system, intersect in these examples to present barriers to his purposes in participation, and ultimately preclude his voice and means of participation. This makes the content of the lyrics even more pertinent: 'I can't supress the anger/ when you treat me like a danger […] I wasn't thinking clearly, cos you just pretend to hear me' (figure.15). The example of Dylan's participation also demonstrates the complexity of such processes in the place of the PRU, where young people's achievements are celebrated for the benefit of both the young people and staff (although in Dylan's case, as a young person who didn't like a fuss, I think celebrating his work served the latter party more than him.) This journey demonstrates how PR processes can be risky for young participants when adult purposes over-take theirs, and how macro-level discourses positioning Dylan in particular ways (via the place), intersected at the micro-level of interaction, and could not be renegotiated in the PR process.

4.2.3 Podcasts

Grace's purposes with the arts project were negotiated from the outset between the needs of the PRU and the university. Grace had wanted to make a documentary film of the PRU interspersed with her interviewing those involved. However, the complexity of gaining consent for students under 16 (particularly at the new centre, which had a higher number of mobile students and staff on a daily basis compared to Northern Vale), and monitoring who could be recorded in the background would have presented a number of issues for anonymity and significantly slowed down the production. This is why she did a podcast. Grace did not complete the co-analysis task (either in class or 1:1) as she was not at the PRU the week we were doing it. The powerful influences of Grace's context outside of school also worked to position her away from the PRU. Some days she could not get out of bed 'if I'm depressed and I was in my bed, [at mainstream] there wasn't Michaela on the

phone going c'mon […] you gotta get to school' (interview). She was frequently late, and her attendance could be sporadic: 'I did turn up at 11'o clock, 12'o clock, but I had things to deal with [at home]' (interview). Taking this into consideration, the fact that she completed three interviews, alongside her GCSE study, and without being in school to do it full time, is impressive. The same can be said for all the young people.

On the day of Grace's interviews, she planned some of the questions with me beforehand (in about 5-10 minutes within the same lesson the boys were writing their lyrics). I suggested planning some questions, and Grace was not so keen, so they were kept brief. Grace mostly ad-libbed the conversations we recorded on my phone with Sean, Dylan and Corinne. She attempted to interview other people at Brocton Park, but the centre was inevitably too busy to make time to interview the others we approached. However, a podcast still suited Grace's purpose, to capture what the PRU was 'really like' for her audience:

> I set up the mic, but an altercation was going on in the corridor next to us.
> Kate: 'did you want to go somewhere a bit more quiet?'
> Grace: 'no d'you know what, they need to hear this, this is what it's like' (fieldnotes).

The change of centre to Brocton Park, which was in Grace's words 'more like mainstream' (fieldnotes), also suited her purposes as the changes the students had gone through in the move – staff with earpieces, being scanned with metal detectors upon arrival, a significantly enlarged student and staff population, and new facilities – were a good springboard for conversation about experiences of exclusion.

Grace was proactive from the start, approaching several students and staff to recruit them into her recordings, remaining unfazed when they were too busy to help her at times. Her purpose was clear throughout, asking me if I could 'edit it' at the end. She led the interviews, planned the questions, and was assertive in asking for help. Her confidence was based on her positive relationships with staff and students, who were happy to help her. In the process of conducting a practice interview with Sean, Grace was able to develop this conversation to put forward her views on exclusion, telling Sean that she felt like 'I was just a number' in mainstream, and elicited more feedback and support from adults:

> The recording stopped and Sean said to her 'I think that's really sad that someone as intelligent as you felt like her opinions didn't matter and that you weren't heard. When you've got so many good things to say'. (fieldnotes).

Similarly, her good relationship with Dylan meant that he was willing to support her project, and felt comfortable participating on his own terms after the interview, when he 'picked up [Grace's list of] questions and said 'right I've got some for you now' and asked her about her experiences of school' (fieldnotes). Here, the process of creating interviews works to reposition Grace from the negative, deficit view of being a PRU student, to an 'intelligent' person who was unheard. Considering the context of being excluded, the process of a creative project centred Grace's voice, and works to respond to the grievance of excluded young people - of being unheard by adults. Here the participatory process created space for Grace's podcast, and thus for Grace to call out the effects of hegemonic discourses (identified by other excluded students in 4.1 and 2.4), namely that they rendered her invisible or unheard by staff. The genre of podcasting enabled Grace to subvert her original position (as voiceless), as podcasts are audio-only recordings. As such, Grace's voice is centred by the format. The genre enables her to be repositioned as powerful, authoritative, and voiced with an alternative mode of communication that critiques the effects of hegemonic discourse. However, the context of the PRU also presented some challenges. These included the doors being locked, which delayed me reaching the recording equipment; Grace not being allowed into various areas and having to wait for me/ members of staff to organise this for her; finding an appropriate time and place for the interviews that suited her participants, other students and staff; and not over-running the recording into when she was supposed to be in lesson. Grace navigated and overcame these challenges. Her emotional investment in participating, along with the supportive environment of the PRU, brought her project to fruition and appeared to be an empowering experience for her:

> Grace: 'can I listen to myself? I want to know what I sound like!' […]
> Grace jumped up from her chair and jumped around the room 'I can't believe how good it is! I'm so glad I participated!' (fieldnotes)

4.3 Multimodal CDA

This section analyses the findings generated through the arts-based approaches of graffiti, podcast interviews, and rap lyrics. This multi-modal analysis incorporates visual analysis (Machin and Meyer, 2012; Jancsary et al. 2016), genre analysis (Bhatia, 1993; 2014), and an analysis of (il)legitimate agency (van Leeuwen, 2008; Bullo, 2018; Darics and Koller, 2019) using an appraisal framework (Martin and White, 2005). Thus, it focuses on four alternative discourses of critique which were centred and clarified by the P and P model.

Fairclough's (2001) dialectical-relational model of discourse (see section 3.1.1) frames each of the analyses, i.e., the relationship between the (1) text, (2) discourse practice, and (3) social practice. This is the only stage of analysis that uses tools from SFL to analyse the text/micro level of discursive practice. The prior analyses (detailed earlier) were informed by Fairclough's (2001) model, but did not use SFL tools. Across the three data sets here, the analysis draws upon the participatory research stages 1-4 of the research process, (the ethnographic data, the interviews, and the co-analysis, and the development of the arts), to centre the voices of the young people who created them, and the voices of their discourse communities to facilitate analysis at levels 2 and 3 (Fairclough, 2001I), and explore research questions 1 and 2. As such, it is a dialogic approach to multimodal discourse: one which seeks to initiate communication between actors in the field (Jancsary et al., 2016), that draws on participatory methods to centre the voices of actors who are marginalised by powerful social discourses. In doing so, the potential of multimodal discourse to facilitate the expression of alternative or marginalised discourses is explored with, arguably, a greater critical dimension, as those who have been marginalised by powerful social discourses are the voices critiquing their effects.

4.3.1 Graffiti: visual analysis

Firstly, a brief history of graffiti and how graffiti artists, or writers, use it in public spheres is outlined to indicate some of graffiti's genre rules, purposes, traditional audiences, and level of institutionalization. Then the content of Declan's and Adrian's art is analysed - including the use of cultural symbols, size, colour, focus, foregrounding and composition. The final stage of analysis assesses the interdiscursivity of the art? – both within the discourse

community and broader social discourses, how far the genre rules are subverted/adhered to, what domains of social reality are manifested in them, and the messages of the artists.

Graffiti is characterised as illegitimate art, i.e., not governmentally or institutionally sanctioned, existing in public spaces, such as streets, parks, schools, toilets, bus shelters, bridges and over-passes (Blume, 1985; Macdonald, 2001; Drissel, 2012). Graffiti artists are frequently anonymous, because their art is viewed as being subversive in its message, and the act of graffitiing in public spaces is frequently characterised as anti-social (Drissel, 2012). The act, and message(s), of graffiti arguably demonstrate dissent from hegemonic social discourses, and as such incite controversy over whether graffiti constitutes vandalism or art.

The historical connection between graffiti and urban-living, disenfranchised, marginalised, under-resourced, ethnic-minority youth remains current (Macdonald, 2001; Drissel, 2012), and the background of such graffiti artists adds to its dissenting, subversive nature: it comes from marginalised experiences of reality. Macdonald (2001:100-101) argues that there is risk inherent in the practice of graffiti, and that the risk-element is partially constitutive of masculinities in marginalised communities, because, as some of the graffiti writers (aged 13-40) in her study commented, graffiti is 'men's work […] girls are just way too feminine', and 'there's the macho thing to it', in the sense of a toughness arising from an identity enduring strife: 'no one can do what I do, no one can go through what I've gone through'.

Drissel (2012) notes the emotional connection young people within challenged, urban neighbourhoods often have to their places and spaces, and, how the practice of tagging (repeated words or images indicative of the author's identity) were developed to reclaim these spaces from those in power. Drissel (2012) further comments that tagging practices are often unintelligible to the viewer if they are not socially connected to the author. However, this does not necessarily mean that tags are intended for familiar audiences only, as being situated in public places renders them viewable to all. Blume (1985) argues that the messages of graffiti often refer to matters in the public interest, and that their publicly viewable nature offers opportunity for reply.

As graffiti authors are often lone, anonymous creators, the messages or motives of their art are open to interpretation. The exception, Blume (1985) argues, is graffiti in prisons and schools, as the actors in the context share experiences, vocabularies, and social networks.

Figure 11 Declan graffiti 2

The emoji-style face behind the word 'LISTEN' in Figure 11 is the face Declan draws all over his centre (on tables, whiteboards, walls) when he is bored. This could be analysed as a 'tag' - constitutive of identity, power, ownership of space, and from some perspectives, associated with masculinity (Macdonald, 2001). The 'cartoon-like' lightning and stars represent 'sound waves […] like it's being shouted' (Declan, Fieldnotes). The colours - 'to make it stand out' - are a combination of all the spray paints we had available. Declan chose the word 'listen' from the array of quotes on the slides we discussed beforehand (Fieldnotes), because the audience, adults with power in the exclusion process, 'just need to start listening to us' (Declan, Fieldnotes).

Figure 12 Declan's Graffiti 3

Figure 13 Declan's Graffiti 4

The four canvases shown in in Figures 12 and 13 develop the themes of Graffiti 1. The word colours imply a contrast of emotions: 'anger' written in red symbolises power, heat, energy, and the singularity of this feeling. In contrast, 'mutual' is painted in fading blue/green and symbolises a calmer, more nuanced feeling. Within school discourse, 'mutual' is one half of the 'mutual respect' most schools cite in their behaviour policies (the PRU included), based on government discourses of 'British Values' (DfE, 2019a).

The word anger is situated in Declan's reiteration of 'his' past 'anger issues', where he repeatedly mentions how he 'used to snap at anything' and that he's 'better at managing it now' (Interview). The two words, when the canvases are situated lengthways together (figure 2a), could be read as 'mutual anger', or 'anger mutual'. However, when one word is whole the other is broken. This, within the context of the rest of the art, can be read as a critique of the reality of education, where young people are disrespected, 'put down', not listened to, treated 'unfairly' and experience a lack of support. All of these words were potential contenders for these canvases (Declan, Fieldnotes). This is reflected in the broken 'mutual' respect or collaboration, and the resulting anger. Conversely, when 'mutual' practices are whole, anger is broken down, indicating a positive message about the benefits of group support.

This message is also evident in the stencil of a person burdened by a weight, like the common metaphor 'the weight of the world on your shoulders'. This image is surrounded in orange and yellow, a common trope in adverts for pain relief, or to signify heat, fire, power, or danger; the burden of anger is painful, intense, and dangerous. As the weight-burden image comes after 'anger' and before 'mutual' (figure 2a), this could be interpreted as the weight of anger is carried mutually between those who are excluded. Following this is the image of a head in purple - signifying pressure, bruising and coldness and exploding with red/orange/yellow smoke. The associations here are with stress, pressure, war, explosive weapons, man-made disasters, and pain. Declan said both images were a literal representation of his phrase from the co-analysis as, 'carrying your anger around until you explode' (Fieldnotes). The head image is thus the dangerous consequences of burdened anger: uncontainable stress, weaponisation, conflict, and pain, particularly for those burdening the anger.

In this format (figure 2a), the mutual/anger strip is surrounded by broken Chinese words which translate as 'unfair': '不公平' and 'unsupported': '不支持'. When mutual and anger are together, 'unsupported/ 不支持' and 'unfair/ 不公平' are broken, further obscuring them from the (assumedly English speaking) audience. The decision-making process for using these words was originally 'included' while Declan was searching for a way to say 'put down', and then changed to reflect how it was 'unfortunate', which was finally changed to 'unfair' (Fieldnotes), as this implied that his exclusion could have been avoided.

When the art is organised, so the Chinese words are clear (figure 2b), they are sandwiched between the symbols for carrying the anger around until 'you' explode. The reasoning for this language was so it was 'something they won't understand', because for young people in the exclusion process, 'that's how it feels – like you're speaking another language' (Fieldnotes). The choices of speaking in a language that would be alien to most symbolises the distance Declan feels his experience is from the adults with power in the exclusion process.

Overall, this jigsaw of graffiti symbolises being trapped in a matrix of moving symbols competing to communicate, as the observer cannot piece together the whole message at any one time. All the language elements of this piece are broken in various configurations, but the images representing the burdened anger and its consequences are consistent throughout. They are centred when looking at each canvas individually, but obscured as the canvases move around when attempting to form a whole word[21]. The process makes the audience work to read and understand the message, putting them in the position of 'speaking another language' and the effort this requires in practice. The 'listen' canvas is connected to the jigsaw. Not being heard or listened to, makes Declan feel as though he is speaking another language, and this distances him from others, isolating him in his anger until he explodes (Fieldnotes). The word 'mutual' in this context could be read sarcastically,

[21] This is also reflective of van der Kolk's (2015) description of trauma being preverbal and manifesting in fight/flight/freeze behaviours, where the only intelligible symbols (consistently) here are non-lexical. The more the viewer focuses on deciphering the words rather than the symbols depicting physical struggle, the more their meaning becomes obscured.

as Declan feels isolated by not being heard, and by the lack of mutual respect, espoused in schools' behaviour policies.

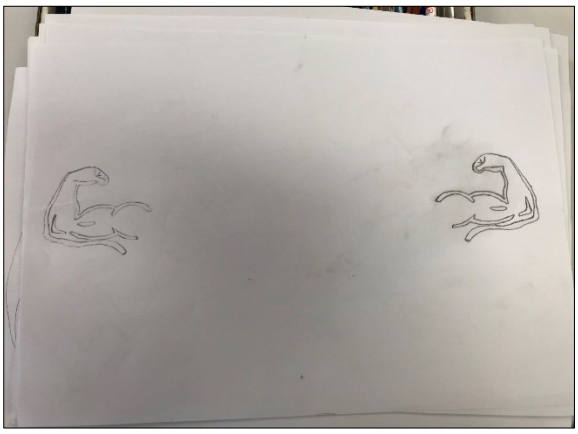

Figure 14 Adrian's graffiti 2

The arms are flexed, with a space for 'power' to fill between them. Adrian chose 'power' from the quotes on the slides, and presented it in red, because red is an 'important colour' (fieldnotes). Compared with Declan's face tag, there is no body, face or identity here. It is a physical, masculine, and anonymous image (Macdonald, 2001; Thomas, 2022). Comparing the works of Adrian and Declan, Adrian may have a graffiti tag outside of the project, and this is indicative of Adrian's involvement with youth justice systems that frequently effects his life in and out of school (interview). As such, Adrian has reason to remain anonymous - signing his name to verify his consent to create the art was met with caution (fieldnotes).

The audience for Declan's and Adrian's art are 'teachers, policy makers, people at universities' (see fig. 14), along with their peers and staff at the PRU. This is the way in which their graffiti subverts the original genre, particularly Declan, who tags his identity and was happy to be named as the author ('I'm a proper adult now – *I own things'* (fieldnotes). They are speaking to a particular group of people with an aim to change the process of school exclusion This is arguably what gives this art form further power. The students have taken a traditionally subversive artform and adhered to many of its conventions; produced from marginalised experiences of reality and using defensive masculine tropes of anger, power, and physical strength (Thomas, 2022) situated within a community the artists are emotionally embedded within and with messages that are in the public interest. However, the graffiti is sanctioned by the PRU and the university, which legitimises its practice and message. This contrasts with how Declan produces graffiti when he is bored. Blume

(1985:144) emphasises how graffiti practices by students in schools initiated from boredom suggests that they are 'not being fully involved in another process of communication', The face symbolising Declan's boredom and lack of involvement/interest in education, is mobilised and centred in the communication practice it is an artwork that shouts 'LISTEN' to those who hold power over the content and form of his educational experience.

The moveability of the graffiti is another genre subversion. Members of the public do not have access to the art, but it is directly taken to those individuals that the young people want to show it to. The avenues of institutional power are used to legitimise the young people's perspectives, and negotiate the distances between them and those in power. The subversions of the genre enable a direct challenge to the influential powers affecting the young people's realities: the young people are telling those in power that they have been 'put down', let down, and failed, and furthermore, use the genre to place the audience in their position - of trying to interpret and communicate this experience.

4.3.2 Lyrics: agency and actors

The analysis of lyrics in this section focuses on transitivity, the attitude system within an appraisal framework, and metaphorical expressions to determine varying levels of agency social actors in this text possess, and the (il)legitimacy Dylan affords them in the context of school exclusion. Appraisal frameworks, based in Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday and Mathisen, 2004), focus on positive/ negative attitudinal dispositions and evaluations of people and things. The attitude system focuses on affect (feelings and emotions), appreciation (aesthetic assessments and valuations of things), and judgement (evaluations of human behaviours) (Martin and White, 2005).

Agency

Drawing on van Leeuwen's (2008) emphasis on the need for sociological categorisations (rather than solely linguistic categorisations) of actors in texts, and Giddens' (1984) structuration theory emphasising the nuances of agency individuals have in initiating change in social structures, Darics and Koller (2019:218) underscore the importance of determining degrees of agency, as 'agency is a semantic category that refers to the meaning expressed

through language use, action is a grammatical category that refers to who or what is represented as grammatically active or passive. Agency and action may or may not coincide.' In other words, an individual can be grammatically passive, but semantically active, and looking at grammar alone can conceal degrees of agency (see Darics and Koller, 2019:218, for examples). As such, this analysis uses transitivity to explore action and degrees of agency.

Transitivity, based on Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday and Matthiesen, 2004), allows for a focused analysis of how realities are constructed in texts through their selected verbal processes, and how these position the participants involved as active or passive, and with varying degrees of agency – to determine who, or what, holds power over whom (Bullo, 2018; Darcis and Koller, 2019). These processes are: material, for literal actions, e.g. 'Dylan wrote the lyrics in the lesson'; mental, for feelings and emotions, e.g. 'Dylan hates that he is excluded', or 'I don't understand'; relational, for possessing or determining a cause-effect relationship, e.g. 'Education has the answer', or, 'Education leads to wisdom'; behavioural, for requiring some input of energy, e.g. 'everyone was waiting for the results'; and verbal, for where participants are communicating, e.g. 'Sean told Dylan not to speak' (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004).

Along with transitivity, appraisal allows for an analysis of who Dylan believes to have (il)legitimate agency in the process of school exclusion, and the impact of this agency upon excluded young people. The attitude system allows for the analysis of individual evaluations of realities. These are categorised in terms of: affect, related to emotions of individuals (un/happiness, in/security, dis/pleasure); appreciation, related to values of objects (aesthetic, quality, complexity/simplicity); and judgement, related to human behaviour - degrees of normality, capability, and resoluteness of individuals, and to judgements of compliance with ethical or moral standards (Bullo, 2018). Metaphorical expressions which conceptualise abstract ideas in more concrete terms, allow an insight into the intensity with which the actions and agency of adults affected Dylan emotionally/mentally, and facilitate his arguments of (il)legitimate agency.

Analysis

1) You can't relay the message
2) When you don't know the language
3) Arguments are plenty
4) But your messages are empty
5) Relationships are never one way
6) You need to hear what we say
7) It's not about curriculum
8) It's about what makes us human.

9) Excluded over mood swings
10) When I needed space to process things
11) You had all these **blows** to inflict
12) and reduced my life to conflict
13) You're supposed to **be the adult**
14) I felt each and every insult
15) I can't supress the **anger**
16) When you treat me **like a danger**.

17) I wasn't thinking clearly
18) '**cos you just pretend to hear me**
19) And if you look inside my soul
20) You'll see I'm alright, that I'm whole.[22]

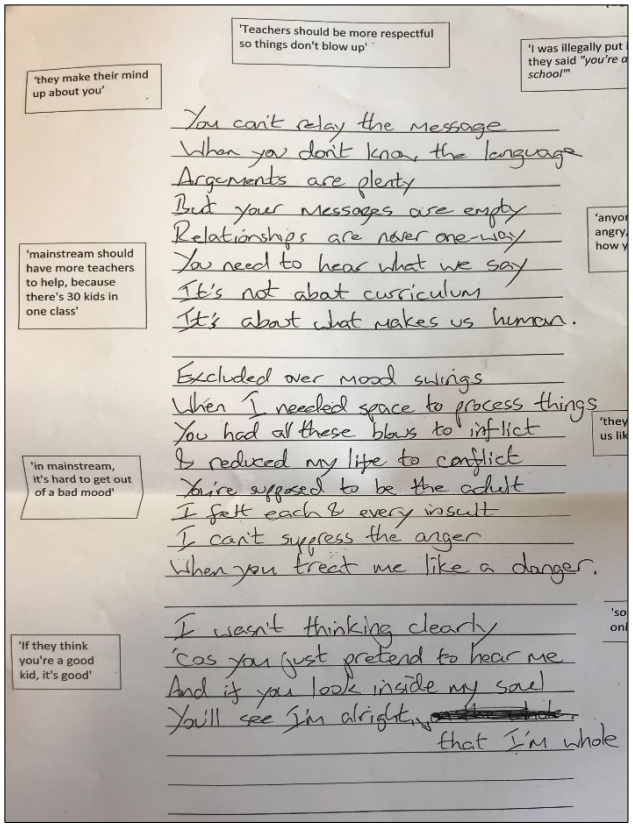

Figure 15 Dylan's lyrics

Of the 20 lines Dylan wrote (see figure 15), there are 9 construing adults as agentive, 2 where the young person/ people are agentive, and 5 where the young people are passivated.

The opening line in Figure 15 is a verbal process initiated by an unnamed adult[23], who lacks the capability to do this, as they 'don't know the language'. The same adult is agentive in creating arguments and messages, that Dylan evaluates the quality of to be 'empty'. Following on, the line 'relationships are never one way' implies that the 'empty' messages of the adult are the cause of this (they do not 'hear what we say'), and judges this relationship to be abnormal, as the standard of relationships is defined as 'never one way'.

[22] Lines in bold indicate where direct quotes from the discourse community (see boxed quotations in image) have been recontextualised in the lyrics.
[23] An adult with power in the exclusion process (defined in the co-analysis stage).

The verbal process in line 6 is the opposite of what is happening, again critiquing the adult's lack of capability to 'hear what we say'. The students are grammatical actors here, the ones doing the saying, but they lack semantic agency as their words are having little effect. Lines 7-8 imply a diminished quality of educational provision, and within the context of lines 1-6, resulting from a lack of adult-capability in managing this provision: the over-focus on curriculum serves to dehumanise students, cause arguments, and create distances in the relationships between adults and young people.

Dylan is passivated by the adult's decision to exclude him over 'mood swings', and passivated again by the 'things' he needed to process that caused the mood swings initially. The phrase 'mood swings' is situated within broad social/policy discourses of Dylan's life-stage that serve to medicalise and individualise teenage emotions as part of puberty (NHS 111 Wales, 2021:online). Mood swings are problematised as initiating conflict, and in need of regulation, particularly in education settings where they are not within the discourse of the Ideal Learner (2.2). However, Dylan's use of the phrase is a recontextualization from his discourse community, 'in mainstream, it's hard to get out of a bad mood', that situates the emotions as context-, not individual-related, to legitimise their expression.

Dylan's contextualisation of the emotions he was excluded over further serves to delegitimise the agency of the adult, who metaphorically inflicts material 'blows' upon him, and diminishes Dylan's agency and the value of his life ('reduced […] to conflict'). The phrase 'blows to inflict' is situated within discourses of English Literature study[24], rather than Dylan's everyday language use, and serves to heighten the war-like, dramatic intensity of his disempowerment in the face of adult actions. It is also situated within the student discourse community (his class), who commented 'teachers should be more respectful so things don't blow up.' This alternative reading also implies metaphors of war, explosions, and dramatic intensity. It sets up a parallel for the line 'I felt each and every insult', which could be read as mental (feeling), or material - like the 'blows' inflicted, which would render it an extended metaphor. The dual use of these lines underscores the potential emotional and physical impact of the insults, compounding Dylan's disempowered, passivated position in the face of

[24] Dylan's class were studying *Macbeth* for their GCSE. See *Macbeth* (Shakespeare, 2005:38) 'but this blow/ Might be the be-all and the end-all here'.

someone who is 'supposed to be the adult'. The behaviour of the adult is evaluated as lacking in comparison to normative discourses of age, and is positioned relationally as the cause of Dylan's disempowerment against 'every insult'. Lines 15-16 articulate how the actions of the adult further passivate him literally in the sense that he is treated 'like a danger'[25], and that the emotions he feels as a result of this treatment passivate him again, as he 'can't suppress the anger': the anger has more agency than Dylan, overwhelming his attempts to supress it.

Finally, the adult's agency in pretending to hear Dylan causes the capacity of Dylan's thinking to diminish (17-18). Dylan ends by highlighting the required agency of the adult, framing himself as agentless/ the goal 'if you look inside my soul'. However, the normative/moral value judgement in line 20 justifies the lack of agency required by Dylan: 'I'm alright […] I'm whole'.

Overall, the text constructs Dylan/excluded students as significantly less agentive social actors in comparison to the adults who exercise power and agency over their lives. The illegitimacy of adult agency is frequently appraised through their lack of knowledge, language capabilities, and distance from the young people's realities, and Dylan is positioned as the explainer of this in the text. The illegitimacy of adult agency is highlighted through juxtaposing adult actions with normative discourses of age 'you're supposed to be the adult/ I felt each and every insult'. This line indicates the overall effect of how Dylan views the adult: as a child with power. Within the context of school exclusion, the actions of the adult are akin to bullying, and the critique of adult behaviour being deficient (or childlike) is even more pertinent in the context of exclusion, where Dylan and other young people have been labelled, punished and excluded 'in response to a serious breach or persistent breaches of the school's behaviour policy' (DfE, 2019a:5). The effects of the illegitimate exercise of power are mentally, emotionally, and literally challenging and detrimental to students, who in comparison, are evaluated as more legitimate agents. The final line justifies why adults should listen/show respect towards young people, and their comparable capability to assert agency without adult intervention because 'I'm alright, I'm whole'.

[25] This is also a recontextualization from Dylan, who said 'I was illegally put into isolation. They said "you're a danger to the school"' (see image).

4.3.3 Podcasts: genre analysis

This analysis explains how Grace used the genre of podcast interview to reposition herself as an expert in her discourse community and context, and how it enabled her to bring in multi-voiced perspectives of excluded young people.

To Bhatia (1993:13), 'genre' is a 'recognizable communicative event characterised by a communicative purpose identified and understood by members of the community in which it regularly occurs.' Genre analysis seeks to explore the social functions of particular genres,- for example, newspaper articles, political speeches, job applications, and television dramas,- by assessing how the 'highly structured and conventionalised' aspects constrain allowable contributions in the text, 'in terms of their intent, positioning, form and functional value', and, how these are exploited by expert members of 'discourse communities' to 'achieve private intentions within the framework of the socially recognised purpose(s)' (Bhatia, 1993:13). These aspects, within the generic framework, are particular sets and orders of steps the author follows in order to adhere to generic conventions.

This analysis is based on Bhatia's (2014) multidimensional perspective, which focuses on the interrelationship between textual, ethnographic, and socio-critical aspects of discourse to determine the functions of genre for authors and discourse communities. Bhatia's (2014) framework is informed by Fairclough's (2001) three-dimensional model and seeks to develop pure linguistic analyses of genre in order to attain a comprehensive understanding of the discursive practices of communities, how genres are used by experts in their community, and, of the social conditions under which genres are constructed to position members of discourse communities in particular roles.

The 7 steps of Bhatia's (2014:164-67) multi-perspective model have been adapted to analyse how Grace's use of podcast interviewing enabled her to communicate a particular message from within her discourse community, these seek to define:

> 1) the genre in the context; 2) the genre as it is used in broad social discourse 3) situational/contextual analysis, defining: the speaker/writer of the text, the audience, their relationship and their goals; the [historical, socio-cultural] placement of the community in which the discourse takes place; the network linguistic traditions that form the podcast; and the reality that the text is trying to represent, change or use; 4) the corpus; […] 5) Textual, intertextual and interdiscursive

> perspectives in the linguistic form of the text; 6) the critical moments of engagement or interaction between the discourse community; (7) the institutional context, in order to ascertain the disciplinary conventions that govern the use of language in such settings.

As Bhatia's (1993; 2014) approach analyses the use of genre by assumedly expert users in discourse communities (for example, a Headteacher's use of a school behaviour policy), the analysis here is different, as Grace is not a professional podcaster, and podcasts are not typical genres in school environments/ discourse communities. As such, this analysis focuses upon how the recontextualization of the podcast genre enables Grace to subvert traditional power dynamics by using a genre that positions her and other PRU students as authors, narrators, critics, and decision makers in education contexts.

Podcasts are audio-only media, broadcast online. Previously known as 'audio-blogs', with connections to amateur radio, podcasts are typically conversational, narrative-led, or reported by the podcaster (Masterclass, 2022:online). The audience can be broad or niche to the topic. Unlike television and radio channels, podcasts are not subject to as much institutional regulation, and were developed (partially) to circumvent established hegemonic media (Berry, 2018). The advent of mobile phones with internet access and audio-recording facilities enabled 'anyone' to make or access podcasts – they are free (Hammersley, 2004). They can be viewed as a potentially disruptive medium because of their grass-roots nature, accessibility, and wide-ranging formats/topic focuses (Ciccarelli, 2022:online). Podcast interview moves (Swales, 1990) consist of: identifying a topic/goal; decision on format (interview, fiction, etc); scripting; recording; editing (adding music/ sound effects); distribution and marketing.

Grace said 'let's go here' and walked into the entrance hall (where the sign-in screen and reception were) with Corinne. I walked through and set up the mic, but an altercation was going on in the corridor next to us. I said 'did you want to go somewhere a bit more quiet?' [Grace:] 'no d'you know what, they need to hear this, this is the context. This is what it's like' (Fieldnotes)

Interview transcript:

Kate: Good morning, [intro to podcast] Grace is gonna be leading a little bit of a discussion with Corrine about her experiences of school and education, so I'll pass her over to you now.

Grace: Hi guys, Grace here – wonderful, amazing, as you all know. So Corrine's [C: hey girl!] here in year 9. So I was quite taken aback when I first started this podcast, because I think the different perspectives of different year groups and age groups will really impact the information that we do collect. So we have got some of the same similar questions. But yeah. We'll just start. So what is your opinion on education? Or school?

Corinne: I think we should get an education, but I don't think it should be mandatory every day, because it does become quite draining. […] especially when you're in a PRU because I think people just look at you as like you're just naughty and there's nothing else to it

Grace: yeah definitely I can definitely agree with that hun, cos I feel like, some of the things that you experience in PRU, it's all unexpected, [Corinne: Yeah] and just, you never know what's gonna be round the corner… [noise in background]

Kate: Speaking of which [indicates commotion and arguments going on in the corridor behind them]
[…]

Grace: exactly, I think the fact that you never know what it's gonna be, that's what people love about it here. And even though it's given its connotations it's given, or the names of it, I think it is overall, I do agree it's a wonderful place. How do you feel towards mainstream?

Corinne: I feel like mainstream's just one of them like, mainstream - they don't give you enough like enough respect that PRU give ya. I feel like PRU staff have got a lot more time [Grace: yeah] to like actually try and grasp what's going on in a child's head, rather than labelling it as they're just a naughty child. [Grace: thank you!] Yeah like PRUs really try and get, like try and find out why they're acting like [Grace: exactly] that whereas mainstream are just like, they're acting like that.

Grace: D'you know, that's exactly what I said. I've even said it in a couple of these interviews. In mainstream I felt like I was just a number, nobody respected my opinion.

Corinne: I felt like I was in Squid Games.[1] [C and G laugh] As soon as I lost the game I got sent here!

Kate: what is Squid Game? [Grace: oh my god!] People have gone on to me about it but I don't actually know what it is. And you might want to explain to the listeners who might also not know what Squid Game is.

Grace: Yeah go on girl!

Corinne: OK, so Squid Game is like when people who are like in debt and stuff like that, and a guy comes along like d'you wanna win some money? And they all just think it's a little cute game – which was like me in year 7 literally thinking it's a cute game, [Grace: laughs] right, but basically, then they play games and if like they lose the game they get shot. [Grace: just death. Instantly.] But if you lose the game in mainstream you get sent here. But it's better anyway'.

Grace said 'so I thought about the music for the intro, you know that programme 'Arthur'[1] ['Believe in Yourself']?' I was aware 'the one with 'hey! What a wonderful kind of day!'' 'yeah! That for about 30 seconds, and then launch into the interviews'. (fieldnotes)

Figure 16 Fieldnote extract and interview transcript

Grace's formal tone when speaking to the audience indicates that she is speaking to policy makers, academics, and teachers. Phrases such as 'the information we do collect', and 'its connotations' are present in the discourse of GCSE English lessons, and in the initial interview she participated in (fieldnotes).

The moves of the text are adhered to in the planning stage, where Grace decides that the audience 'need to hear this […] this is what it's like' and comes to life as the podcast starts '[commotion and arguments going on in the corridor]'. Grace in the position as podcaster makes this editorial decision to introduce the audience to the reality of being excluded. It can be unpredictable, conflict-ridden, and crucially, disruptive to what you might be doing. She communicates this message through the voices of her discourse community i.e. PRU students and staff in the corridor behind us, rather than narrating it herself. The audio-based nature of the podcast allows Grace to show the audience her reality, without compromising the anonymity of her discourse community. The genre allows her to include a range of voices, and in doing so, to add contributors to her point, that 'you never know what's [literally] round the corner'.

Being situated within her discourse community also supports her to speak in a register that is informal, and distinctly 'Manchester-youth' (see Drummond, 2018). She aligns herself with Corinne's register as she encourages her to speak: 'I can definitely agree with that hun'. This is evident in Corinne's response to, 'how do you feel towards mainstream?', when Grace interjects in agreement and empathy. Furthermore, she empathises with Corinne's position in the genre, 'I've even said it in a couple of these interviews' (interview), to reiterate her reality of being excluded, 'I felt like I was just a number, nobody respected my opinion'. Situating herself in the role of podcaster and PRU-student allows Grace to facilitate Corinne's perspectives with authority and empathy, and to show these to her desired audience. The conversational tone of the interview allows for this to come to the fore, and establish the message being from a distinctly youth-based perspective. This is evident in Corinne referencing Squid Game, Netflix's dystopian Korean death-game show which is popular amongst young audiences, as a metaphor for how she felt in mainstream education (Williams, 2021:online). Grace's position as podcaster reiterates this when she encourages Corinne to explain to me (an adult) and the audience (of adults), what Squid Game is, and

why it is a relevant comparison to school exclusion: 'they all just think it's a little cute game – which was like me in year 7 literally thinking it's a cute game, [Grace: laughs] right, but basically, then they play games and if like they lose the game they get shot. [Grace: just death. Instantly]'. The shock at the severity of playing the game in mainstream, and the irrevocable outcome, is another shared reality of school exclusion that Grace's positioning as podcaster brings to the fore.

Finally, the addition of 'Believe in Yourself', the reggae theme tune to the widely distributed children's television series 'Arthur', allows for Grace to re-position the PRU students in a positive light to the audience, some of whom may 'just look at you as like you're just naughty and there's nothing else to it'. This song is likely to be familiar to adults and young people, both within and outside of Grace's discourse community and encapsulates a positive, inclusive message. The genre allows Grace to position the appeal of her message with the wider discourse community of adults and young people, and to persuade the listeners to 'open up your eyes/ open up your ears' with the aim of 'working together' 'to make things better' with 'everybody that you meet' (AZ Lyrics, online:2022).

Fundamentally, the use of podcast genre in the context of the PRU allowed Grace to subvert and manipulate her role as PRU-student to expert speaker, she is an authority on her subject. Podcasting allowed Grace to depict herself in conversation with her discourse community, and provides her with the ability to show the audience the lived experiences of excluded young people. The format also allows her authorial control to portray PRU students in a positive light, whilst critiquing the negative assumptions they have faced from adults in mainstream contexts. The collaborative, communal, accessible nature of the genre allows for a situated, reinforced challenge to power that invites a broader audience to hear her message. This is powerful, considering the overarching theme excluded young people reiterate as contributing to their exclusion, not being listened to or heard, because 'I was just a number […] nobody respected my opinion'.

4.4 Power, participation and creative methods

I have assessed the validity of the data and the limitations of the methods in each discrete section, and this final reflection focuses on the combination of the methods. It focuses on

how the Power and Participation model has brought into focus the nuanced ways in which power dynamics between young people and adults operate and shift in the PRU. I consider the guiding questions in Table 1, regarding the intersection of Purpose, Positioning, Parallel Projects, Perspectives, Protection, and Place within the research Process, to reflect upon how micro and macro level Power relations inform one another at each methodological stage. Through this reflexive assessment, the potential of critiquing, addressing, and changing established power imbalance can be realised from the voices of all those involved, with the aim of improving the relationships and experiences of adults and young people in these contexts.

The main themes surfacing throughout each methodological stage are firstly the (sometimes illegitimate or ill-informed) power afforded to adults by education contexts, both in being supportive of youth, and in working to curtail their participation and purposes. Secondly, the power of youth voice in critiquing these power structures when positioning and place are negotiated for youth voice to be centred.

The power of adults became clear in relation to my role and the staff in the PRU. The positioning I actively sought to take did have a significant influence upon youth participation and positions young people took in relation to the research. In certain aspects, my position as the researcher also held power over the young people, particularly when considering that the research was focused on experiences of exclusion and marginalisation, and these were evidently harmful for the young people to recall at times. The power and influence of place i.e., of the PRU being a school context, also instigated instances of power struggles between me and the young people.

Simultaneously, the power of the PRU staff to either support or curtail the young people's purposes in the school day, and in the context of the research, was evident. This arose across their participation in interviews, the ethnographic and consent process, and the arts projects with young people. The arts projects demonstrated the most varied forms of adult intervention in youth projects, where staff variably supported young people's purposes and used them to suit adult purposes.

The pervasive influence of the place upon the participants, the relationships they develop between each other and with me, and on the research process as a whole, was evident in the unequal power dynamics. The needs and constraints of the PRU - as an underfunded, dynamic educational setting, with a youth work-led, child-centred approach, served to define the positionality I took within it from the outset. The longevity of the research required the development of trusting supportive relationships through a familiarisation process, the informal approach of the semi-structured interviews, and the opportunistic timings of the co-analysis and art sessions. It was also required to navigate the positioning of the young people in categories arising from hegemonic discourse - as children requiring adult intervention, or as risky. It was the place of the PRU as a school that these hegemonic discourses cohered and made sense within, and in the instances of the co-analysis and the art participation, were the evident driving force in disempowering youth voice (for example, in Dylan's case). By using the Power and Participation model to reflect on the role of adults in these methods, it is evident that the young people's critiques of the unequal distribution of power between youth and adults in education contexts are valid.

However, what these methods also show is the potential contributions to the richness of the data produced by the young people, when the methods work to re-position their voices as expert critics through drawing on their experiences of exclusion. The young people's voices throughout the research process, in the interviews, the thematic analysis, the co-analysis, and the arts projects, consistently demonstrate their validity as experts in school exclusion. This is true of youth voice across various forms that participation took throughout the project, from leading their own purposes, to removing their participation and showing us, with their absence, the realities of excluded young people.

The co-analysis and arts project processes worked to counteract hegemonic 'deficit' discoursal constructions of young people and reposition them in more empowered spaces. Firstly, by repositioning adults in support roles for the young people's purposes, projects, and participation choices, and secondly, by repositioning the young people in ways that enabled them to take the lead in participation and in the narration of their experiences. This is not only true of Grace and Declan's participation, where the message of wanting to be listened to and feeling unheard was ultimately heard by adults through the project, but it is also true of Adrian and Dylan's journey through the stages of the research, where the nature

of these processes elicited stories of exclusion, youth justice involvement, and the various forms of adult interference that characterised their realities historically.

These processes for all four young people to various degrees, arguably worked to support them in several areas sought in YPR projects. These included expressing and legitimising marginal knowledges (Freire, 1996), calling out oppression (Finley, 2005), trying on new selves, and exploring important aspects of their lives which the paradigm of their education context did not formally allow for (Holloway and Lecompte, 2001; Nind et al., 2012; DeJonckheere et al., 2014; Goessling, 2017). The young people also developed alternative spaces through which to critically inquire into their contexts and expressed developing identities in relation to these (Nind et al., 2012; Goessling, 2017). The data produced from these alternative spaces was unanticipated, as the young people were partially freed of the expectations of their situated contexts in the PRU (Leavy, 2017). Finally, I would argue that all of the artworks can be viewed as the young people beginning a process of 'performing social change […] with artful ways of seeing and knowing ourselves and the world in which we live.' (Finley, 2005:692)

4.5 Summary

Combined, the three analytical approaches and corresponding results provide a macro-micro level view of the language of school exclusion. Specifically, of the operation of hegemonic discourses and their impact upon those involved, and the alternative contextualising discourses of critique that arise to navigate the former. Thus, the results overall indicate the different realities of those involved in school exclusion, the discursive power relations influencing these, and the interdisciplinary possibilities for CDS and PR that can advance methodological practice for those working with young people in similar settings and contexts.

The Faircloughian (2001) informed approach to thematic analysis identified some of the hegemonic discourses working intersectionally to exclude groups of young people with identities perceived as deviant from the ideal learner. Specifically, this study emphasises the controlling, silencing, and discursively incapacitating effects of these hegemonic discourses on young people in education settings via pervasive perceptions of excluded young people

as risky (or at-risk) (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2015). The micro level effects of this were identified by the young people, where their relationships with adults suffered. These relationships were characterised as fractious, distanced or challenging, due to the discrimination and labelling processes hegemonic discourses incite, via powerful discourses in education of idealised learners. The young people in this study identified how these hegemonic discourses and the resulting challenging relationships with adults served to curtail their voices and to reinforce adult control over their behaviour and identities outside of the ideal learner discourse.

The results contribute to the argument that the consequences of curtailed youth voice work to incite school exclusion itself. As such, these results illustrate the need for participatory approaches to working with young people in mainstream and alternative education settings, and for the Power and Participation approach. This approach worked to identify some of the hegemonic discourses working to curtail youth voice at the micro level of interaction in the participatory process, and to identify where young people discursively resisted or critiqued these in an education context. The final stage of multimodal CDA used tools from SFL to critically analyse the latter at a text level, and demonstrated the ways in which young people subvert traditional power dynamics in creative processes to re position themselves as expert knowers and actors in the field of school exclusion.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

5.1 Key arguments

This thesis has argued that young people are positioned as risky, at risk and deficient by powerful macro level discourses in education. These discourses work to exclude young people who experience marginalisation, challenging life circumstances, and adverse childhood experiences, by individualising these experiences as the fault or choice of the young people. Via a Faircloughian-informed approach (2001), the thesis presented these discourses across the micro-meso-macro levels (figure 1), and identified how discourses of youth risk, deficiency, and the ideal learner work through broad social discourses (of gender,

class, ethnicity, and medicalisation), to individualise particular groups of young people as disruptive, and thus as warranting exclusion. The CDS approach framed the literature review to present the workings of these discourses in existing research on exclusion, and to identify where research documented young people's disruptive behaviour as resistance to or critique of these hegemonic discourses and their effects. The literature review also drew on Groundwater-Smith et al.'s (2015) argument that young people's participation in education frequently takes the forms of compliance, resistance, or struggle in order to frame how youth responses to macro level hegemonic discourses are frequently cornered into these specific forms of participation.

The thematic analysis of the research data (section 4.1) drew on the same Faircloughian (2001) informed organization of macro-meso-micro level discourses (in figure 1) to foreground where the young people identified the operation of these hegemonic discourses, their effects upon youth-adult relationships, and the ways these discourses incited exclusion. Specifically, the young people in this study identified that discourses of class, academic pressure, gender, ethnicity, and criminalisation worked to justify adult control over their behaviour, identities, and relationships in school. They also emphasised how the control these discourses justified curtailed their participation in education into compliance, resistance, or struggle (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2015), and ultimately veiled the risky realities motivating behaviours cast as disruptive. The young people's realities were silenced or obscured in the following ways:

a) Young people sought to obscure something in defence, or due to lack of trust of adults. These behaviours served to isolate young people by keeping their experiences distant from others.

b) Simultaneously, young people's realities in or out of school were distant, or hard to comprehend due to hegemonic discourses. These comprised criminalisation, class, and age, and worked to keep adults distant from young people because these experiences were not familiar to adults working with them.

c) Hegemonic discourses coalescing around the notion of the ideal learner served to obscure the reality of events in school. These discourses reproduced labels of 'good', 'naughty', 'smart' and 'stupid' to categorise young people and justify adult responses to their behaviour and identities.

d) The labels in c) also worked to obscure the identity, capability, or personality of individual young people from adults via the assumptions they produced of young people.

Fairclough's (2001) notion of alternative discourses of critique framed how the young people in this study discursively resisted the power of hegemonic discourses through anger and humour. These were social tools the young people drew upon (which in some contexts would further justify the 'disruptive behaviour' label) to negotiate power dynamics with adults in the PRU, and to enable their voices and purposes to be better heard. This analysis contributed to research concerned with exclusion that highlights the ways in which young people navigate these discourses in-situ, and presents ways in which they draw on expertise by experience to do so. These results also show how youth voice was an alternative discourse of critique, and how the young people had often experienced the struggle against hegemonic discourse Fairclough (2001) references as necessary in consciousness-raising of its effects. This struggle is conceptualised as the preclusion of participatory capital (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2015).

The results from the Power and Participation analysis of young people's projects in the PRU also provided examples of such struggles when navigating some of the same hegemonic discourses in developing their arts projects. The intersecting approaches from YPR and CDS enabled a nuanced articulation of the macro-micro level operation of powerful discourses, and the ways in which consciousness of these discourses could work in youth-adult relationships to call them out, mitigate their impact, and to open up opportunities for critique and alternatives to surface.

For excluded young people and PRU staff, the use of the model also served to emphasise how macro level discourses were critiqued and navigated by alternative discourses, ways of knowing, and experiences, thus centring marginalised knowledges as expert. The analysis via the Power and Participation model also foregrounds the alternative educational perspective of the PRU, in which such a collaborative, flexible and youth-centred approach was inherent in much of the staff's professional practice. The results here also provided an insight into whose voices were present in the process of the young people's arts development (and in whose interests), and contextualised the multimodal CDA of the artworks. The P and P analysis additionally highlights the intersecting opportunities for YPR and CDS, in some of their shared theoretical outlooks, and in the ways in which they can offer contributions to

detailing macro and micro level discourses (of concern to both approaches) practically in the research process (Finley, 2005; Nartley, 2022).

These results inform another argument of the thesis: that young people are experts by experience of the effects of these discourses, and as such should be able to work with adults involved in education in two related ways. Firstly, to increase youth participation and youth voice in education. Secondly, to draw on young people's expertise to inform how education settings can be reformed for the benefit of young people and adults alike. The multimodal CDA of the young people's artworks demonstrates messages of critique and hope in this regard, where the young people wanted to:

- be listened to
- work with adults
- have their behaviour understood as a communication of challenging circumstances, not as a reflection of their individual 'deficiency' or 'riskiness'
- be supported by adults who made time to understand their challenging circumstances, so that they were not shouldering the effects of discriminatory or adverse life contexts alone, and
- a reduction in punitive responses to disruptive behaviour, as these responses exacerbated stressful circumstances, and thus the disruptive behaviour itself.

The multimodal CDA approach presented a granular critical discourse analysis of youth voice arising from the YPR project. These analyses variably expose the ways in which hegemonic discourses work to silence excluded young people, and how young people mobilise anger, and expertise by experience to challenge discriminatory discourses of risk and deficit. The participatory creative process enabled the micro-level discourses operating between young people and adults in the PRU to be viewed and documented for analysis with a multimodal CDA approach. The multimodal CDA and the Faircloughian three-dimensional approach to discourse, explored the micro level meanings of the artworks, and as such the nuanced meanings in the young people's alternative discourses of critique. The multimodal CDA of the artworks was contextualised by the preceding results from the thematic analysis and the P and P analysis. The co-analysis process also augmented the multimodal CDA, along with the data developed in the interviews and ethnographic fieldnotes, which all supported centring youth voice in the researcher's final interpretations. Overall, the artworks showed the constraints of education on young people, significantly the power of being labelled as

risky, the anger and disruptive behaviour arising from these misappropriated labelling practices, and the lived realities of risk and exclusion these discourses initiated. The artworks also demonstrated young people's resistance to these labelling discourses, in arguing that they were already 'whole' people, with worthwhile skills and expertise to contribute to (illegitimately) adult-led education contexts. Throughout all stages of the research, the young people emphasised the ways in which their life contexts were individualised via a focus on their behaviour. Their alternative discourses work to contextualise these behaviours and life circumstances and call out the discriminatory hegemonic discourses cohering around the ideal learner.

Finally, the thesis has argued that a comprehensive approach to understanding the power of language across the micro-macro level of discourses can enable us to (1) understand behaviour as communication, and (2) ascertain the operation of hegemonic discourses working to exacerbate challenging life experiences, and understand how disruptive behaviour is often a communication of these experiences. Drawing together CDS and YPR approaches has enabled this comprehensive understanding. The YPR approach worked to effectively centre youth voice at the micro level to ascertain the hegemonic discourses operating at the macro level. The P and P model brought a CDS-informed perspective on macro level social discourses to Cahill and Dadvand's (2018) YPAR model to synthesize a more comprehensive approach to understanding the operation of power at macro-micro levels in youth participatory contexts. The utilization of arts-based methods enabled young people to produce alternative multimodal discourses critiquing the education system. This arguably supported the expression and legitimization of marginal knowledges (Freire, 1996), the calling out oppression and transformation of praxis (Finley, 2005), the provision of alternative spaces which enable young people to critically inquire into their contexts, and to express developing identities in relation to these (Nind et al., 2012; Goessling, 2017). These were evident in all the research processes the young people participated in, and beyond their involvement in the project (see 5.3).

5.2 Contributions to school exclusion research and to CDS and YPR

5.2.1 Contributions to school exclusion research

The thesis has contributed to and developed research which argues that disruptive behaviour is a means of communication of (1) youth dissatisfaction with education, and (2) life challenges arising from lived contexts of discrimination and adverse childhood experiences (Gillies, 2016; Drummond, 2018; Martin-Denham, 2020). The results from this project's interdisciplinary approach from Linguistics and Sociology (outlined below) contribute a different perspective to those traditionally offered in school exclusion research, which is typically situated in Education. The thesis situates disruptive behaviour as a communication of resistance against the unjust effects of hegemonic discourse, and thus to education in its current form. This research is also set apart from a significant body of literature in school exclusion that focuses on SEND or SEBD. Mostly, such research argues that the invisible or undiagnosed SEND of excluded young people contributes to misinterpretations of behaviour, and works to contribute to their exclusion (Martin-Denham, 2020). There is a focus too in policy on the prevalence of SEND in AP schools (DfE, 2024). This implicitly justifies renewed policy entitled the 'Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Improvement Plan' (DfE, 2023:online). Although SEND was brought up occasionally by the young people and staff, it was not a dominant theme arising from the data. Interestingly, when it was commented upon, it was noted by the young people as a label which was used to justify adult control over them.

Kareiss and Mia felt that young people with a diagnosis of something 'on paper' were treated differently, and sometimes more leniently, by adults in comparison to them (interview). Grace elaborated that she felt that 'them kids [in the inclusion unit] weren't facing the issues that I was facing', and that these issues were not heard by adults in comparison to having a diagnosis 'on paper' (interview). Considering the stressful life experiences of Mia and Grace related to their/their families' proximity to crime and violence, and hidden mental health challenges, there is significant resentment that these circumstances were not heard or understood in comparison to those who had a reason for their (at times more disruptive) behaviour 'on paper'. This points to a wider issue of the hidden nature of ACEs, which, when presenting as 'fight' (rather than 'flight or freeze') can mislead those observing the behaviour that the person is strong, coping with their

circumstances, or resistant to help (van der Kolk, 2015; Gray et al., 2023). As such, the thesis also argues for further trauma-informed practice in mainstream and AP settings that can work to define 'on paper' issues outside of SEND.

The thesis has also foregrounded the young people as experts by experience of these discursive effects and added credence to these experiences. The thesis also contributes to research in AP settings noting the positive effects of a youth-work informed, relationships centred approach to education (Malcolm, 2021). It offers an insight into how education paradigms could be informed by AP, and suggests that there is further insight to be gained through knowledge exchange between AP and mainstream schools.

5.2.2 Contributions to CDS and YPR

Alternative education settings are under-researched in CDS/ discourse studies, and this thesis has shown that our understanding of AP can be augmented with a CDS approach. This is due to the way in which CDS seeks to reveal power dynamics through discursive struggle, as the process of school exclusion is a site of power struggle between adults and young people. A CDS-informed perspective has allowed for a dual focus on hegemonic discourses, and the alternative or marginalised discourses challenging them. It has also foregrounded how the discursive practices in the context of school exclusion 'have major ideological effects […] through the ways in which they represent things and position people.' (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997:258). Specifically for the young people, these positionings were in disempowerment, exclusion, disciplinary spaces, and responsibilisation.

The CDS-informed approach to thematic analysis, and to the literature review, provides new insights into these hegemonic discourses and their effects to exclude young people in a wide variety of ways from their education. Via identifying the intersectional operation of macro level discourses of class, gender, ethnicity, medicalisation and criminalisation in the literature, the same intersectional understanding was brought to the analysis of these discourses in for the young people and staff in this research. This intersectional understanding contributes to CDS research in alternative education spaces, and demonstrates the usefulness of CDS in this context of complex and significant power imbalance between young people and adults. The CDS approach to thematic analysis has

also contributed developments to the field of CDS with the inclusion of a PR approach to foreground the alternative discourses of young people, and by drawing on their voices to call out the existence and effects of macro level hegemonic discourses that position them in education. In this way, the CDS analysis of macro level discourses and the alternative discourses struggling against them, is bolstered, and the macro level discourses are identified by participants and the researcher in the co-analysis stage. This bolsters the legitimacy of CDA-informed arguments of the existence/operation of hegemonic discourses, as the analysis is in the hands of participants, not just the researcher. As such, the potential bias and limited perspective of the researcher is partially checked by those living the effects of the discourses being identified.

The co-analysis of my thematic analysis worked to hone youth voices in the creative data generation, which in turn became powerful messages for adults working in education and in policy. The co-analysis approach and process is a contribution to YPR (and other PR contexts with communities who are discursively marginalised), as there remains a tendency for analysis to be done only by academics in PR. As with the augmentation the co-analysis process provides to CDA by checking the researcher's perspective, this is also true here, where the unequal power dynamics sought to be challenged by participatory researchers are dually noted by participants in their analysis. Therefore, the results of the co-analysis and the co-analysis process itself support PR aims to develop critical consciousness of power dynamics, as the researchers' assumptions are checked and the voices of participants are included across more than the data generation stage of the research. The situated ethnographic approach, and the youth-work/ PR informed approach to positionality throughout the research enabled flexible space for the co-analysis to happen in different forms with different groups of young people in the research. It offered the opportunity for the young people to reflect on their own/ their peers' contributions to the research along with my initial analysis of it. Their analytical voices thus checked my understandings and informed the arts development. As such, the co-analysis approach connected and embedded youth perspectives throughout the research process until the completion of data generation.

The thesis has shown the possibilities of creative, participatory approaches to create space for young people's expertise in education and alternative knowledges to come to the fore in

alternative education settings. As outlined in the literature review, there are some PR informed projects in AP settings, but these did not have the same range of methods married with a long-term situated ethnographic approach (or CDS approach) of this research. For YPR, the thesis has demonstrated how young people can be worked with conscientiously, kindly, and effectively in these settings by drawing on YPR approaches. These formed the basis of imagining 'a life lived otherwise' (Finley, 2005:692), and contribute to ideas of how education settings can be reformed. Specifically, the P and P model contributed to focusing on how youth voice can be curtailed by hegemonic discourses or be included and embedded in education settings. Via Cahill and Dadvand's (2018) model, the results contribute to addressing the aims of wider youth participatory research, namely in challenging deficit discourses of youth by centring youth voice *as* the critics of this discourse (Wright, 2020). The augmentation of Cahill and Dadvand's (2018) model with a CDS approach added clarity and distinction to the social structures / discourses reproducing inequalities, tensions, and miscommunications between adults and young people in the PRU. Thus, the P and P model worked to situate an understanding of how macro level deficit discourses of youth operate at the micro level of interaction in the participatory process. The model served as a framework to connect the micro and macro levels deficit discourses of youth are embedded in, as it named the macro level discourses the young people and staff were negotiating at the micro level. The CDS view of power as surfacing through social and discursive struggle via alternative discourses of critique (Fairclough, 2001), further empowers youth voices and choices in participatory projects to be part of a consciousness-raising process (Fairclough, 2001; Freire, 2001) in their refusal to consent, naturalise, or accept hegemonic ideologies across sites of social interaction. I added these CDS-informed perspectives on power and discourse to Cahill and Dadvand's (2018) model, and as such sharpened the focus on powerful social structures that may elicit inequalities in youth research contexts, and centred youth voice as expert critics of hegemonic discourses in these contexts. The use of Lohmeyer's (2020) notion of parallel projects in Cahill and Dadvand's (2018) model drew attention to how young people's aims external to the project were brought in alongside adult designs in the PRU. This supported aims in YPR to highlight the alternative, and potentially negative aspects of the participatory research process (Cahill and Dadvand, 2018; Lenette et al., 2019). As such, it also helped to surface ways in which power relations operated outside of the project, and provided greater nuance to our understanding of other

micro, meso, and macro power relations the young people in the PRU were navigating (un)related to the project. As such, the model provides a comprehensive understanding of the language operation in the participatory research context, and the impact of discourse on adults and young people.

The PR approach centred young people's voices and experiences to explain the circumstances behind their disruptive behaviour, and what it communicated. The young people consistently reiterated how they were positioned by powerful social discourses of youth risk and deficiency, and of other macro level discourses related to gender, ethnicity, class, medicalisation and criminalisation. They explained how these circumstances were individualised to them, and they were intervened upon by adults via surveillance, punishment, and exclusion. Furthermore, young people demonstrated how their participatory capital in education was precluded in the forms of compliance, resistance, and struggle against education paradigms that did not work to support them. Ultimately, their message was how these discourses and the punitive outcomes arising from them, worked to silence their voices and circumstances, and to control them. Adult control is a reoccurring theme implicit in exclusion research with young people (Gillies, 2016; Drummond, 2018; Martin-Denham, 2020; Lamrhari et al., 2021), but not foregrounded by CDS-informed perspectives on the hegemonic discourses justifying this control. The approach of this thesis indicates the intersecting discourses used to justify adult control via the ideal learner discourse in school contexts, and thus adds a deeper dimension to understanding why adult control causes problems in adult-youth relationships in schools. Namely, that adult control leads to the preclusion of young people's participatory capital, to unheard realities and fractured relationships.

The results of this research were developed via a long-term, situated, participatory approach, and here is where the study contributes to wider PR work in championing the benefits of this (such as relationships, alternative knowledge generation etc.), and not shying away from the challenges of conducting PR in a setting where adult and young people's roles are defined and regulated. Lenette et al. (2019) underscore the multiple ways in which unequal power relations manifest inescapably between researchers and discursively marginalised communities in participatory contexts, and how researchers can feel the need to conceal these outcomes due to them being adverse to the aims of PR. However, the P and

P model in this study, with its focus on macro level discourses and how they position adults and young people in unequal ways, enabled the consequences of these discourses to be scrutinized with additional clarity to the P7 model (Cahill and Dadvand, 2018). In situating the consequences of these discourses in broader socially reproduced inequality, the model supports researcher in YPR/ PR contexts to call these out in the multiple, complex, and challenging forms they can surface in the PR process. Thus, the model encourages the up-front identification of complex power relations by drawing on the voices of participants in-dialogue with the researcher, thus focusing on how critical consciousness can be collaboratively raised and identified in PR processes.

The thesis has also contributed to understandings of how arts methods can work in Alternative Provision settings. Existing work utilising arts-based methods in such settings is sparse, but includes a large project by Martin-Denham (2020:online) where excluded young people developed creative responses to their school experiences, Martin-Denham's (2022) book for education practitioners on co-producing targets for various groups of young people in education, and Dean's (2018) thesis which offered photography as a method for excluded young people to reflect on their engagement in education. They all demonstrate the power and interest of excluded young people to engage with research in creative multimodal forms, and the ways in which these methods can foster greater interest and engagement with the research process. However, there is little discussion or commitment to participatory approaches in these works. Martin-Denham and Thorley (2022) discuss creative approaches to co-producing targets with children in education, but it is not Co-Production in the PR sense (see Bell and Pahl, 2018, for example). Dean's (2018) thesis is informed by a participatory approach but underscores that the study did not have the scope or resources to be, in Dean's words, 'fully participatory'. As such this thesis contributes to these previous works in the committed youth participatory approach taken to the data generation and analysis via the P and P model, and in its commitment to YPR throughout data production and analysis. The above works are also in the field of Education, not Linguistics or Sociology, which as explained earlier, contributes a specific language-based, participatory-led perspective on school exclusion. Finally, by bringing multimodal CDA to the creative outputs of the young people, this study has demonstrated how the artworks can be better understood through a robust multimodal approach to analysis, which also differentiates this

study from those above in its expansive approach to the effects of language in school exclusion. The development of the artworks being informed by PABR approaches make methodological contributions to multimodal CDA, as the arts process undertaken by the young people in this research shows how multimodal texts (podcasts, lyrics and graffiti here) can be produced and analysed by participants to augment multimodal critical discourse analyses.

5.3 Limitations of the study

Arguably, the main limitation of the research was the lack of situated research in a mainstream school – where exclusions are sourced from in the first place. By nature of speaking to young people who were already excluded, the understanding of this thesis is based on retrospective accounts. To gain an insight into the operation of the language of exclusion, the same methodology could be usefully applied in a mainstream primary and/or secondary setting to view the timeline of events leading up to the exclusion, and the role of language and discourse in these events. Such a study would provide further insight from mainstream staff into the mechanisms and pressures on schools, and from young people with experiences of unofficial exclusion. The latter is gaining attention in the press and in policy because of the invisible injustice it exemplifies and is currently under-researched (see chapter 1). Ultimately, this research approach applied to a mainstream setting could provide further evidence and insights into how exclusion could be prevented with language-based interventions suited to mainstream environments.

This project has demonstrated a number of possible ways in which CDS and PR approaches can be brought together to productively explore power imbalances and the workings of discourse in school exclusion. However, the dual disciplinarity also caused restrictions and limitations to the study when compared with a study design sitting within a single discipline such as Linguistics or Sociology.

If the study were pure CDA, there would have been an analysis of all data (not just the multimodal art works) with a suitable CDA approach using tools from Halliday (1978), rather than just a CDS-informed approach to thematic analysis. The data generated through the ethnographic research and the interviews lends itself to a number of these, for example van

Leuuewen's (2008) social actor approach. The results from such analysis would have more robustly informed discourses operating in school exclusion, and potentially noted less obvious ones. These results would have informed a through-line analysis to support a comprehensive CDS understanding of discourses in school exclusion from all stages of the data, and further inform the meanings behind the artworks. On possible CDA critique of the way this study has used Fairclough's framework to inform the thematic analysis would be that it potentially encourages the analyst to 'read off' discourses in texts, rather than letting the texts speak to the analyst. Another may be that in only being informed by CDA rather than using SFL tools, the results are less distinct and robust. However, CDA is about having 'a rebellious attitude of dissent to symbolic power elites' (van Dijk, 2013:online), and as such the critical discourse analyst's position is arguably to hold a pre-existing understanding of the existence of macro level discourses and their social effects. It is potentially what brings analysts to the field of CDS in the first place. Therefore, no CDA is value free, and an understanding that these discourses exist and operate will underly any analytical approach to some extent. It is explicit in this thesis because of the literature drawn upon that indicates the presence of these discourses and their effects.

If the study were weighted more in Sociological perspectives, there would have been more space for the development of and reflection upon the P and P model. The model was only applied in the later stages of the research to understand the process of youth participation primarily in the creation of the art works – a small snapshot of the research process. The model could have been fruitfully applied from the projects' inception to completion to provide a nuanced insight into enablers and barriers to participatory processes with young people and adults in alternative education settings. With the CDS-informed focus on hegemonic discourse, applying the model across all stages of research would have provided further insight into the influences of these discourses on micro level power relations between young people, adults in the PRU, and the researcher, and how we all navigated these in context. There would also have been more space to engage with the potential of arts-based methods as communicative of alternative realities in alternative education settings, the potential appropriateness of arts in AP spaces, and how they can be introduced to young people to effectively centre youth voice.

Finally, if there was more time available for the study, I could have created more opportunity for the young people to be involved in activities aligned with Youth Participatory Action Research. Elements of this research process align with YPAR, but the areas of action for social change were initiated by the young people, but mostly taken up by me. For instance, the thesis has been presented to the following groups: the ACEs and Trauma Informed Practice staff in Manchester City Council's Public Health Team; the Vulnerable Children and Educational Engagement, SEND and Alternative Provision, and Educational Engagement and Serious Violence directorates of the DfE; Manchester Secondary Pupil Referral Unit staff team; and national/international academics in the fields of Youth Studies and Linguistics. I presented the young people's recommendations and perspectives, but no young people attended the conferences with me. The thesis is also due to be converted into a monograph, but again the young people will not be available to support the writing of this. The restrictions presented by the format of adult-designed spaces in which young people seldom intervene are evident here and demonstrate a reduced youth-influence in the outcomes of the thesis. YPAR projects often exemplify direct interventions young people begin to make in their contexts, and this project demonstrates youth critique and voice, but did not have the scope to lead active interventions in the process of exclusion.

The young people were invited to visit the university, and other projects were explored that may be of interest to them. Declan visited MCYS with his parent to discuss his artworks and their meaning with other researchers in MCYS. Grace participated in another project with MCYS, for which she was financially reimbursed and developed new skills in the process. Considering 17 young people took part, two gaining future benefits from the connection with the university appears meagre. But the chaotic contexts of excluded young lives, the PRU itself (in terms of being under-resourced, under-staffed, and unpredictable), the fluctuating demands of university terms, and the nature of spaces in the university being so alien to many of the young people in the PRU, meant that such an offer was not always easy to arrange or appealing to the young people. This speaks to the wider field on the complexities of delivering research (PR or otherwise) with young people with complex lives, where the power imbalance between the institution of the university and the young people in this research is stark (Drummond, 2018). Specifically considering the critique of the university as the site of PR development, delivery, and dissemination that holds its own

barriers to the equitable engagement of young people from discursively marginalised backgrounds.

5.4 Language based policy interventions to reduce school exclusion

School exclusion is a language issue. Firstly, it's an issue of how young people are talked about and talked to by adults in schools and other social institutions. The regurgitation of invisible hegemonic discourses inciting negative labelling practices and stereotypes of youth based on age, ethnicity, gender, social class, and neurodiversity, coalesce in school settings to reproduce the exclusion of young people who are ethnically minoritised, masculine, working-class and neurodiverse. Powerful discourses in schools also work to prioritise white, middle-class pedagogical approaches, high stakes academic performance measures, and rigid expectations of behavioural conformity, encouraging adults to label children who do not fit the expectations of these discourses as disruptive. These discourses serve to position young people as deficient, risky, and at-risk. This positioning exemplifies the 'major ideological effects' of discursive practices in 'the ways in which they represent things and position people' (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997:258). The ideological effects in school exclusion position young people in lived realities of risk via silencing and punitive response from adults towards individualised contexts of risk. Thus, lived realities of risk, and the arising discourses of deficiency and risk, are self-perpetuating in school exclusion, as these manifest in unstable relationships with adults, exclusive attitudes, silencing of youth voice, and the preclusion of young people's participatory capital. The young people's alterative discourses tell us this. Secondly, school exclusion is an issue of how young people communicate adverse experiences, that are sometimes beyond comprehension in words, to adults in school settings. This communication frequently manifests inescapably in behaviours viewed as requiring regulation in school behaviour policies. When young people's adverse experiences and the behaviours arising from them are placed in a context with extreme pressure to perform in writing-intensive subjects, and a zero-tolerance approach to disruptive behaviour, punitive exclusionary practices are the result.

A CDS approach understands the embeddedness and power of hegemonic discourse in society, and the context of school exclusion is a powerful example of the ways in which these discourses position young people, their parents, and school staff in particular ways that

reproduce conflict and misunderstanding. Many of these discourses are so entrenched and taken-for-granted that their operation is hidden at the micro level of interaction, but this thesis has also shown the potential of alternative discourses of critique to simultaneously raise consciousness of hegemonic discourse, and offer new ways of knowing, conceptualising and understanding school exclusion.

As such, the following recommendations for policy are based on these critical understandings, which also frame a vision of hope from the participants in this study as to how education can be changed to align more closely with the needs of young people, their families, and school staff. These recommendations are:

1. **Enable schools to incorporate more youth voice to advise on how they could better support young people.** Participatory research approaches can inform practical ways to do this.
2. **Review zero tolerance behaviour policies, Ofsted criteria and inspection processes, and performance measures related to progress in writing-intensive subjects, to alleviate the adverse effects arising from them**. These policies can make school environments challenging, unpleasant, and pedagogically narrow for students and staff. Policy makers also need to be aware of how discriminatory discourses can operate through the expectations demanded of schools and young people via these policies.
3. **Support student communication via situating adults who are experienced in youth-work informed approaches. If possible, all adults in student-facing roles should be trained in such approaches, as these approaches understand behaviour as communication.** School can be incredibly stressful and can compound other adverse experiences. This places undue pressure on students to communicate these experiences to adults, and they are not always able to, due to the nature of ACEs.
4. **Provide more time for adults to develop trusting supportive relationships with young people**, so that young people are not isolated in dealing with multiple adverse experiences in and out of school. This is linked to a review of policy reform in recommendation 2, where **curricula reform could work to free up more time for relationship development.** This would also reduce behaviour management pressures on staff through the reduction of friction in the classroom arising from distant or untrusting relationships.
5. **Develop a framework that enables ACEs to be defined 'on paper'** so that young people can access appropriate support in a similar way to SEND diagnoses. ***It is imperative that youth voice is included in such a framework and it's use, firstly in ascertaining ACEs they may have experienced, and secondly in identifying the kind of support they want/ need. Such a framework should not be an intervention that labels young people without their say.*** Trauma-informed approaches would enable a nuanced understanding of what disruptive behaviour communicates.

6. **Recognise exclusion as an ACE**. For those concerned with ACEs and Public Health, exclusion is arguably an adverse childhood experience due to the stress and disruption it frequently causes for young people and their families. Exclusion can contribute to polytrauma in the lives of excluded young people and their families.
7. **Reduce other punitive responses to disruptive behaviour, that lead to justifying exclusion.** Punitive responses to any behaviour, whether as the communication of ACEs or of dissatisfaction with education, are not supportive or helpful for young people's engagement with school. This is because punitive responses work to silence youth voice on these issues, and facilitate labelling practices of young people as disruptive, risky, and deviant. This is not to say that young people shouldn't be led to understand the consequences of their behaviour on others and themselves, but that this understanding should be developed through a relationship with an adult who knows them well whom they trust. This increases the likelihood of the behaviour being critiqued and changed by the young person.
8. **Alter schools' environments and curricula priorities to suit young people's interests and needs from education**. There needs to be a school structure that enables a calmer, more relaxed learning environment, and a curriculum that is useful, appropriate and interesting for young people. **This means reducing exam pressures on young people and teachers, and reducing the emphasis on particular subjects over others**.
9. **Develop further research into the ways in which knowledge exchange can be developed between AP and mainstream settings** to explore possibilities for reform and how this could manifest.

5.5 The urgency of centring youth voice in education

Several of the above suggestions are not new to those working in participatory contexts with young people, critical linguistics, or Foucauldian/Freirean informed calls for education reform. They are also made variably by those in policy, activist groups, young people, their families, and education staff (Children's Commissioner, 2012; Perraudin, 2018:online; DfE, 2019b; No More Exclusions, 2023:online). However, with the financial decimation of public services designed to support those in challenging contexts, and the compounding effects of COVID-19 on the same communities, we urgently need to review how our schools can best support young people (Martin-Denham, 2020).

Young people need the support of adults more than ever. As the PRU staff in this study frequently note, young people have 'a lot going on'. Moore et al. (2021:423) argue that

> intersecting crises, including precarity, criminalisation, Black Lives Matter, austerity, and the climate crisis, are disproportionately affecting young people. The intersection

> of such crises is profoundly transforming contemporary young peoples' lived experiences and imagined trajectories in diverse, contextual ways. Critically, they are exacerbating and extending persistent structural inequalities associated with class, race/ethnicity, gender, sexuality, (dis)ability, and age.

Recent UK statistics for young people in the UK elucidate Moore et al.'s (2021) argument. There are ongoing crises in child poverty, mental health, and youth violence. The Child Poverty Action Group (2023:online) calculated that in 2020-21 '4.2 million (29% of all UK children) were in poverty - up from 3.6 million in 2010-11', and that children from racially minoritised backgrounds were still disproportionately represented in impoverished households. The NHS (2023) report that one in six children aged 7-16 years had a probable mental health disorder in 2020, and one in four 17-19 year olds had a probable mental health disorder in 2022, representing significant increases from 2017. The impact of social media pressures (on girls particularly regarding appearance), bullying and violence (in person and virtually), and school exam pressures, are well documented negative influences on children's mental health (The Children's Society, 2022). The Youth Endowment Fund (2023) estimate that nationally, young people's experiences of violence are becoming more commonplace. The percentage of teenagers who witnessed violence – either in real life or on social media - rose from 35% in 2022 to 44% in 2023. Again, young people from financially disadvantaged and racially minoritised background were disproportionately represented in the populations of those experiencing violence. These contexts were lived by Jaden Moodie, Ayoub Majdouline, and Osime Brown (see chapter 1), and arguably accelerated their exclusion from school and the 'downhill turn' their lives took after (Dodd, 2019:online). These contexts are not just experienced by excluded young people, but considering the demographics of the excluded population, these intersecting crises and the polytraumas arising from them are much more likely to be faced by those who are excluded. And polytrauma has silencing, isolating effects on young people via the distancing or disruptive behaviours they can initiate, placing them at further risk. Pressures on young people and teachers to attain particular standards in assessment and standards of young people's behaviour in schools has increased. These pressures remove the time and attention of adults to observe, listen to, or support young people with the multiple social crises they face. With the undercurrent of multiple social crises affecting young people, it is unsurprising that in 2023 10% of children in the UK aged 10 to 17 had low wellbeing scores,

and almost a third were unhappy with at least aspect of their lives – and school was the most frequently occurring aspect that made young people unhappy (The Children's Society, 2022).

However, as Moore et al. (2021:423) also note, 'in grappling with these intersecting crises and troubled transitions, young people are giving rise to new spaces, practices, and conversations that challenge the status quo and create possibilities for more hopeful futures', and the excluded young people contributing to this research exemplify such critical hope. They underscore the huge opportunity schools have to offer young people respite from, and support in the face of, these multiple, intersecting crises. At their best, the young people said that their schools or PRU offered a consistent, trusted, stable source of supportive relationships focused around a curricula designed in their interests, as they navigate their way to age 18. They, and the adults in this study, also critique the impact of hegemonic discourses inciting discrimination in current policies forced on schools, and show how challenging realising these ideals of education can be, particularly for young people represented in the excluded population.

The language-focused recommendations above cohere around one theme: youth voice. By taking a critical eye to the ways in which language (at the macro level of hegemonic discourses and the micro level of interaction) can work to preclude youth voice, and by actively pursuing approaches and methods that work to create opportunity and space for youth voice in education, the need for exclusion would be significantly reduced. By actively seeking to centre, include and embed youth voice across practices in education, the nature of school becomes more apt, useful, interesting, and pleasant for young people and adults alike. Conflicts and misunderstandings would reduce in number, as there would be more space for young people to be themselves and less onus on adults to regulate them. As a result, exclusions and discipline would reduce, because schools would become more like places where young people want to be. Such an approach would not eradicate disruptive behaviour, particularly considering the likelihood of youth facing intersecting adverse experiences arising from multiple social crises. But it would give adults and young people more space to address and support these issues, which otherwise work to preclude youth voice and participation in education and life pursuits young people find fulfilling. This thesis has explored the possibilities of CDS and YPR in a PRU to understand the language of

exclusion, its effects on those involved, and to explore alternative discourses which serve to critique these effects and ultimately offer new ways of seeing how education could be.

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