

Learning to Serve Time: Troubling Spaces of Working Class Masculinities in the UK

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Abstract

This thesis is an exploration of the classed and gendered trajectories that lead to ‘revolving door’ incarceration for a group of men from working class backgrounds. Considering that men commit most crime and, in the UK, account for over 95% of the prison population, there is relatively little scholarship that explores the links between masculinity and crime and almost a dearth of ethnographic enquiry into the links between the social construction of masculinities and incarceration. In response, this study, employing qualitative in-depth life history interviews with thirty male prisoners housed in an East Yorkshire prison, examines the cyclical interrelations between cultural representations of masculinity, place, schooling, employment, crime and incarceration. Influenced by Connell’s theoretical framework, including the relational concept of protest masculinities, and by the Teesside School’s work on transitions and alternative careers, the main aim of this research is to examine if, and to what extent, significant cultural and institutional spaces were complicit in the construction and maintenance of versions of protest masculinities. The study reveals that masculinities negotiated over interconnecting sites of deprived neighbourhoods, inadequate children’s residential ‘care’ homes and failing schools better prepared most respondents to serve time in prison than to work in contemporary deindustrialised labour markets. Formative teenage years spent negotiating impoverished prison regimes and living up to extreme prison masculinities contributed to many of the respondents spending more

time inside prison than 'on the out'. The thesis concludes with recommendations for policy approaches to better facilitate crucial sites, such as schools and prisons, undoing, rather than reinforcing, troubling gender performances for young boys and men like these respondents. Reducing rising male prison populations, mainly made up of men from deprived neighbourhoods, might be more effectively tackled through innovative, gender informed policy, ensuring that institutional spaces of learning, 'care', punishment and rehabilitation work harder to open up more positive avenues to doing masculinity.

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Contents

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iv
1 Introduction	6
2 Post-industrial Protest Masculinities: A Literature Review	22
3 Background to the Study and Qualitative Methods	89
4 Local Lads and Pathways to Prison	112
5 (Non-)Working Lives	154
6 Lads to Lags: Adolescence-to-Adult Transitions in the Local Prison	185
7 Vulnerable Masculinities: Absent Men and Imagined Futures	222
8 Conclusions	264
Appendix 1 Respondents Background Information	292
Appendix 2 Post Schooling Data	294
Appendix. 3 Statement of Purpose	298
Appendix 4 Interview Guide	300
References	308

1

Introduction

Shortly after being released from what would be my last prison sentence I started my journey in higher education. It was the close of the 1990s and the beginning of the millennium, a time when an interest in masculinities and a so-called crisis in masculinity had for a number of years been fiercely debated both in the academy and popular media. The late 1990s was the height of oversimplified media and political representations of the crisis discourse that positioned boys and men as a homogenous group who were suffering as result of the success of women/girls in education and the workplace. I was in Manchester Prison with the same type of inmates I had known from previous sentences with no noticeable change to reflect this crisis among men. Mostly the men I encountered in prison came from very similar environments to me.

I was born and raised on a council estate in Greater Manchester and lived with my mother and stepfather who, after a number of redundancies before I was old enough to remember them employed, survived on welfare that was occasionally topped up with 'fiddly' cash-in-hand work. After being expelled from school, involved in low-level criminality and accumulating several convictions during my childhood and early teens, I sought out legitimate employment when I was old enough. For a number of years, as a young man without qualifications and with a criminal record, I moved

between exploitive—and in some cases abusive—employment positions and unemployment and sporadic crime. With growing disillusionment at my legitimate work prospects and a deeper emergence in local drug and criminal cultures, criminality took over as my main activity and source of income and inevitably periods of incarceration followed. I discuss in the concluding chapter the critical moment that prompted my transition from prisoner to student. The important point to emphasise here, and the reason for disclosing my personal narrative, is to highlight how central my introduction to feminist-inspired theory and research was in the early stages of my higher education career. As I explain in depth in Chapter 2, this scholarship, largely influenced through the work of Raewyn Connell (2000, 1995), challenges the idea of a singular or homogenous masculinity espoused by proponents of crisis discourses and instead recognises the intersection of class, place and other social categories in creating multiple and hierarchically positioned masculinities. Most importantly, it profoundly captures many of my experiences as a boy and then a young man negotiating the streets, education and employment. This personal identification with writing on masculinities is what nurtured and sustained my interest. It is what inspired this project and in doing so it offers me the language or capital that contributes to doing masculinity differently.

Having been out of prison for over 15 years, my studies have been punctuated and complemented through working with excluded boys and men on the streets of impoverished estates, in schools' exclusion centres and in prisons. Sadly during this time I have not seen enough of this research on gender and masculinities outside of the academy informing and improving

the lives of the men that it represents. Over the same period that academic interest in boys, men and masculinities has grown at a remarkable rate, and with it increased recognition of the cost of constructing masculinities under profound structural disadvantages, whereby the UK has witnessed some of the highest rates of academic underachievement among often 'bright, working-class boys' (see Allen et al., 2015; House of Commons Educational Committee, 2014). Over this period too, England and Wales have seen record incarceration rates of men, with the numbers almost doubling from 44,621 in 1993 to 87,749 at the close of 2011 (Berman 2013; Ministry of Justice, 2012, 2013a). As my own experiences highlight, academic and official government studies clearly indicate that the vast majority of those incarcerated in the UK are undereducated men drawn from impoverished working-class neighbourhoods (Crewe, 2009; Jewkes, 2002; McAra and McVie, 2013; Phillips, 2012). In the most recent sweep of their longitudinal study *The Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime*, Susan McVie and Lesley McAra (2013) for example, found that pupils excluded from school at the age of 12 were four times more likely to end up in prison than other children. Ewan Kennedy (2013) discovered that 900 of the 942 young male offenders he surveyed had at some point been excluded from their schooling, and that more than a third of these were aged 14 when they last attended school. Duncan Stewart (2008) found that 42 per cent of men in his study had been expelled or permanently excluded from mainstream education. The Government's 2005 Green Paper, *Reducing Re-Offending Through Skills and Employment*, highlighted that 52 per cent of all male offenders had no qualifications at all. Data released from the Ministry of

Justice's (MOJ) recent analysis of the *Surveying Prisoner Crime Reduction (SPCR)* longitudinal cohort study found that over two thirds of 1,435 newly sentenced (in 2005 and 2006) prisoners were unemployed four weeks before custody. Those who had worked reported being paid lower wages than the average for the working age population (Hopkins, 2012).

There is body of rich empirical research looking at masculinities of marginalised (young) men in education (Corrigan, 1979; Evans, 2006; Frosh et al., 2002; Mac an Ghail, 1994; O'Donnell and Sharpe, 2000; Willis, 1977), on the streets (Alexander, 2000; Bourgois, 2003; Gunter, 2010), in employment and in the workplace (McDowell, 2003a; McDowell et al., 2014a; Nayak, 2006; Roberts, 2013). Largely, this scholarship explores how the relationship between structural disadvantages and (restricted) agency generates cultures or identities that reproduce and amplify existing marginalisation and, as the data above suggests, lead to the incarceration of many. Studies of schooling in poor neighbourhoods show, for instance, that some schools are under-resourced and failing to equip many of their pupils, particularly boys, with adequate social capital to transcend poverty, instead being key sites in reproducing exclusion (Ball, 2003; Stahl, 2015). Paul Willis's (1977) and Paul Corrigan's (1979) studies in the mid to late 1970s and the surge of interest in masculinities over the last three decades have generated an impressive interdisciplinary scholarship that shows how schools are crucial sites in the making and reproduction of versions of working-class masculinities constructed through having a 'laff' (Willis, 1977) fighting, fucking and football (Connell, 1989; Evans, 2006; Frosh et al., 2002; Mac an Ghail, 1994). Whereas previously having a 'laff' and resisting the

formal curriculum was part of the working-class cultural process of learning to labour (Willis, 1977), and regardless of academic attainment most would have had little trouble finding a position on the shop floor, it is poorly educated boys who are found to be most adversely affected and most vulnerable to unemployment in neoliberal labour markets (McDowell, 2003a; McDowell et al., 2014a). In this time of economic change that has seen the shift from 'masculine' heavy manual work to a 'feminised' service sector increasingly dependent on 'doing deference' (ibid) and part-time, low paid and insecure labour, many young working-class men, still invested in out-dated macho working-class masculine culture, are struggling to adapt. Consequently 'trapped' in deindustrialised neighbourhoods they are confronted with limited legitimate routes to respectable adult masculinities (Nayak, 2006; Winlow, 2001).

A group of longitudinal and comprehensive studies by Teesside University's Youth Research Unit, referred to as the 'Teesside School', draws on the concept of (youth) transitions to show how young adults, often described as hard to reach, navigate varying youth to adult transitions under similar economic conditions in deindustrialised and disadvantaged neighbourhoods in the Northeast (see Johnston et al., 2000; MacDonald and Marsh, 2005; Webster et al., 2004). Economic developments over recent decades have had a significant impact on post-schooling trajectories for many young people including those from more affluent backgrounds; however, as the Teesside studies and other research highlighted earlier show, it is the transitions of young people at the higher end of the poverty spectrum that are most adversely affected. Tracy Shildrick and Robert

MacDonald (2007; see also MacDonald and Marsh, 2005) argue that with a diminishing youth labour market, school-to-work transitions for many young people involve competing with adults for the same low end, often short-term, low paid, precarious 'poor work'. The difficulty often, they note, was not so much obtaining 'poor' work, but keeping it. In a further study, Colin Webster et al. (2004a) show progressive workplace transitions were practically non-existent among their young participants, with many stuck still doing the same 'cyclical precarious types of poor work' (2004a, p. 10) in their early twenties as they were doing during their initial school-to-work transitions aged 16. Teesside researchers (Johnston et al., 2000) claim that experiences of education, training and employment (and housing) cannot be understood in isolation and that biographies of exclusion of some young people living in impoverished neighbourhoods are best understood, as this thesis goes on to show, through a greater consideration of how leisure, drug using and criminal careers force alternative transitions (see MacDonald and Marsh, 2002; MacDonald and Shildrick, 2007; Webster et al., 2004).

Whilst the Teesside School and others provide excellent insight into youth-to-adulthood transitions in places of extreme poverty and a vast amount of qualitative enquiry has documented gendered experiences of schooling among working-class boys, there is not the same level of academic focus that explicitly explores the gender and construction of masculinities among criminals and prisoners. Serious crime, as Cynthia Cockburn & Ann Oakley (2013) point out, is overwhelming committed by men. Walter DeKeseredy and Martin Schwartz (2005) suggest that men commit almost 100 per cent of all violent crime. It follows that in England and

Wales, the prison population at any one time during the last century has stood at over 90 per cent male (Berman, 2013, Cockburn and Oakley, 2013; Ministry of Justice 2012, 2013b). Christopher Carlsson (2013) notes that with the sheer presence of men in official figures on crime and imprisonment it is 'remarkable that so little focus has been directed on gender and masculinities' (2013, p. 662). There are some notable exceptions of where scholars centrally position gender and masculinity in their analysis of crime (see Collier, 1998; Messerschmidt, 1997, 1994, 1993; Winlow, 2004, 2001) and other work that recognises the importance of masculinity in generating street identity or cultures (Barker, 2005; Bourgois, 2003; Mullins, 2006). James Messerschmidt (1993), a leading scholar in this area and close collaborator of the major protagonist behind masculinity studies, Connell, argues that gender is situationally constructed and in the absence of legitimate avenues for constructing masculinities, such as paid work, many (young) men will use whatever resources are available, including crime and violence, as means of 'doing masculinity'.

As with the relatively low number of ethnographic studies on crime and masculinities, the dearth of empirical research exploring the gender and masculinities of prisoners is surprising considering prisons are among the last official institutions still segregated by gender or, as Terry Kupers (2005) suggests, one of the few remaining spaces that provide an 'invaluable window into male proclivities that are widespread in the community, even if not always obvious' (p. 714). Coretta Phillips (2012) argues that prisons in the UK are spaces predominantly inhabited by economically and socially marginalised young men and as such are rich sites for the investigation of

how masculinities are configured with and against other men and authoritative power. This is not to argue that there is lack of penal research, but rather a lack of focus on the gendered nature of prisoners. There is a plethora of rich classical sociological studies on prisons, either centring on debates that claim prison culture and identities are generated through adaptation to the deprivation of the prison space (Clemmer, 1940; Morris and Morris, 1963; Sykes, 2007) or, in opposition, those that are importation debates, suggesting that criminal hierarchies or street sub cultures are directly imported into prison space (Irwin and Cressey, 1962). Although gender is not explicitly drawn on as an analytical framework in this classic work, its significant relevance for this study stems from a focus on prison sub cultures that implicitly identify hierarchised masculinities and consequently recognises the role of the prison space in maintaining and reproducing prison/criminal masculinities.

Among more recent penal scholarships there is a scattering of qualitative studies and an encouraging growth in contemporary academic interest in the gendered nature of male prisoners. Writing predominately from an American penal perspective, Sabo et al. (2001) published the edited collection *Prison Masculinities* over a decade ago, in which they highlight how masculinities in the hyper violent male space of the prison have to be continuously worked and competed for, showing that they are organised around the adherence and policing of a universal prisoner/criminal code. In the UK, Yvonne Jewkes' (2005) research on men in the English prison system found that proving male credentials on the streets which, for many working-class young men often leads to criminal behaviour and consequently

incarceration, is itself a prerequisite to successful adaptation to life inside (ibid, p. 51). Other research in UK prisons shows masculinities are not so much constructed against the prison structure and authority as previous research has shown, but that prison masculinities are complex and fluid and often organized in the prison arena around faith, race and ethnicity (Phillips, 2012) and/or type of offence (Jewkes, 2005), material possessions (clothes), in-cell possessions (electrical), outside (criminal) contacts and relationships to drugs (Crewe, 2009).

This scholarship on prison and criminal masculinities, transition studies in impoverished neighbourhoods and masculinity and schooling, provides a valuable lens into classed and gendered trajectories over one or two specific sites, such as locality and employment or class and schooling. Although most of this existing research speaks closely to my own experiences in these crucial spaces and confirms that a pathway to prison was set many years before being handed my first sentence, there are few qualitative studies that explicitly employ a gender analysis to explore how these key sites interconnect in constructing and maintaining marginalised and prison masculinities (Carlsson, 2013). Jewkes (2012), in her paper, 'Autoethnography and Emotion as Intellectual Resources', argues that our subjective experiences and life histories impact every aspect of the research process, from choosing our object of enquiry to how we accumulate and analyse the data, right up to the presentation of our findings. This is certainly the case here, with an ambition to draw on my personal experiences and this existing literature to design a qualitative research project that will use partial observation and life history interviews to provide a complete picture of

(mainly) adult male prisoners' classed and gender trajectories over the multiple spaces of neighbourhood, education, employment and incarceration. Despite being based in prison, this study is not only interested in the creation and maintenance of masculinities within the prison space but, unlike a lot of prison research, it focuses on how class and gender intersect with key spaces prior to incarceration.

Largely led by Connell's (2000, 1995) hegemonic masculinity framework, particularly her relational concept of protest masculinities, and the Teesside School's work on transitions (Johnston et al., 2000; MacDonald and Marsh, 2005; Webster et al., 2004), the overarching aim of this study is to explore the classed and gendered trajectories of a group of UK male prisoners and examine if, and to what extent, significant cultural and institutional spaces are complicit in the construction and reinforcement of their versions of protest masculinities. To achieve this aim, the study's key objectives are: to investigate if and how class and gender intersect in the configuration of versions of protest masculinities; to assess the extent and ways investments in versions of protest masculinities lead informants to contribute to their own economic marginalisation, incarceration and continued disadvantage; to explore the respondents' gender trajectories across key sites including neighbourhoods, schooling/education, working lives and prison, showing how these interconnect to create and maintain pathways to incarceration.

Through life and work experiences, I know of several prisons situated in some of the hardest hit, post-industrial, northern regions that meet the aims and objectives of this study. I discuss in greater detail in Chapter 3 the

methodological issues and the advantages and disadvantages of 'insider' positionality. One significant barrier to note is that being an ex-convict, prisoner researcher means accessing penal spaces can be extremely challenging. Rather fortuitously however, time spent in this sector meant I personally knew and had the full support of the recently incoming governing governor¹ (most senior manager) of East Yorkshire's HMP Hull. This prison, an ideal research field for the study, is the local prison for the city of Kingston Upon Hull (Hull), home to one of Europe's largest expanses of local authority housing that spreads across two main council estates. Sociologist Mark Featherstone (2013), in exploring the impact of the economic downturn in Hull, describes one of these estates, Bransholm, as a 'dumping ground for society's poorest and most deviant... more like a wide open prison for the poor' (p. 187).

For some time, the city of Hull has been at the wrong end of every table measuring performance or economic success (Centre for Cities, 2014). According to a 2003 joint report by The Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and The Audit Commission, Hull's local education authority has consistently been one of the country's worst performing (Ofsted, 2003). Ofsted's recent annual reports show that Hull's schools have failed to improve with the city producing some of worst GCSE results (See Ofsted, 1993, 2013a, 2015). This is reflected in 17 per cent of the work age population having no qualifications, against a national average of 13 per cent (Centre for Cities, 2012). Centre for Cities reported that in 2014, Hull had the lowest average weekly wage (2014). Hull County Council's 'Economic

¹ The most senior operational manager responsible for the management and security of the prison.

Update Report' in 2014 highlights that benefit claimants for Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) was more than twice the national average and the highest of any local authority nationally. The same report outlines that JSA claimant rates were particularly high amongst young people and males (Hull County Council 2014). Since the 1980s, Hull has featured among the top ten cities with the highest unemployment rates (Nomis 2011a) and in 2012 it was reported as the hardest place in country to find a job, with 80 applicants chasing every vacancy (Peacock, 2012). According to the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010, Hull ranks as the tenth most deprived local authority out of 326 (Hull County Council, 2014). The police on their national website report that in the year to September 2015, Hull had a much higher than average crime rate when compared to similar local authorities (www.police.uk). In the face of these significant challenges, the Sunday Times in 2014 named Hull as one of Britain's best cities to live, just before Hull was awarded the 2017 City of Culture. For the men of this study, however, who navigate their masculinities in Hull's poorest neighbourhoods and impoverished institutions, the only city visible to them is the one that most indicators show as a 'late capitalist dystopia of poverty, worklessness and deprivation' (Featherstone, 2004 p.184).

1.1 Structure of Thesis

In chapter 2 (Post-industrial Protest Masculinities), I set out the theoretical framework underpinning the study and review existing literature on marginalised masculinities. In the opening section I introduce and critically

evaluate Connell's (2000, 1995) theory of hegemonic masculinity and relational concept of protest masculinity. Although recognising some of the limitations associated with her work, it is the principal theoretical framework for this study because it allows for the interrogation of the configurations and the hierarchal (relational) nature of dominant and subordinated masculinities across key spaces. I then set out the main debates about working-class masculinity, schooling and attainment. This is followed by an evaluation of (youth) transitions literature. In particular, I draw on the Teesside School's studies that investigate how young people navigate alternative transitions to adulthood in places of extreme poverty. The final sections explore the few studies that specifically employ a gender analysis of criminal and prison masculinities. I end the chapter by arguing that most of this literature provides valuable insights into the configuration of masculinities over one or two sites, and that this study adds to this scholarship through gendered analysis of how these key sites interconnect in creating and maintaining marginalised masculinities.

In chapter 3 (Background and Methods), I offer a sense of place and contextualise the study by briefly charting Hull's industrial legacy. I introduce Hull Local Prison, the site of research, or field, explaining its role in the prison estate and why it was chosen for this research. In the following section I focus on qualitative strategies employed for data gathering and analysis. I argue that, contrary to much scholarship that associates epistemological privilege with 'insider' positionality, my role as an ex-con prison researcher presented many challenges and often felt like a burden. Following this, I outline how data for the project were gathered through life history interviews,

why this approach was used and its limitations.

Chapter 4 (Local Lads and Pathways to Prison) documents the respondents' pre-prison backgrounds and charts their pathways to incarceration. I argue that to understand the participants' biographies of exclusion it is necessary to explore the spaces where they learn to become men. I chart how early masculinities were learned, performed, rejected or reinforced on the streets of their deprived neighbourhoods. I discuss the men's progressive offending trajectories, highlighting the transitional nature of their criminal careers. I show how many advanced from masculine posturing and adrenaline 'buzz' related crime to criminal masculinities based on being 'grafters' or big 'earners'. I finish the chapter by discussing the prevalence of violence in 'doing' street versions of protest masculinity.

Chapter 5 ((Non) Working Lives) argues that masculine investments made under the adverse conditions of childhood and adolescence not only seriously disrupted the men's entry into local labour markets, but also compromised their ability to sustain long-term employment. I suggest that criminal careers and early incarceration that fractured school-to-work transitions saw these respondents at the extreme end of the demographic of undereducated men found to be most adversely affected by widespread economic restructuring. I show that the difficulty in turning away from monetary rewards and visceral pleasure linked to criminal lifestyles meant respondents significantly furthered their own marginalisation as young adults. In the closing sections, I suggest biographical scars, including street worn bodies, long criminal records and an ex-con status, erode already limited options in a changing labour market reliant on integrity and honesty, and

'doing deference'. The chapter ends with an analysis of the role that prison education and training plays in supporting respondents to meet these challenges upon release.

Chapter 6 (Lads to Lags) maps the respondents' youth-to-adult transitions in penal spaces. I explore how street-based protest masculinities were first imported into the penal space and adapted to existing prison masculine cultures. I argue that earlier gendered experiences on the streets, 'care' and learning spaces were better preparation for serving time than for the changing workplace. I then suggest that whilst in the criminal justice system, many respondents' transitions to adulthood were institutionally imposed through uncompromising age-based markers. I show that at aged 18, most made the transition into impoverished and violent young adult penal spaces that exacerbated, rather than challenged, troubling masculine performances. I argue that reaching 'full con' status at 21 years significantly changed, with some relief among the respondents, what constituted respected prison masculinities.

In chapter 7 (Vulnerable Masculinities) I examine the significant vulnerabilities that lie behind the respondents' masculine performances and in doing so depart from the large body of academic and political debates that tend to focus solely on the rough, hard and violent, hyper masculine displays of working-class men (especially prisoners). I show how many respondents struggled or failed to sustain respected prison masculinities and were officially categorised as vulnerable. This vulnerable status, I argue, highlights both the fluidity and fragility of prison masculinities and the relational dimensions between dominant and subordinated gendered identities in the

penal space. I argue that vulnerabilities are also shown in their prolonged absences as men from the outside world and consequently their failure to live up to their own and wider culturally valued masculine obligations/ideals. A further and final vulnerability, I suggest, lies in the reliance of many on the out-dated, and thus far unattainable or unsustainable, breadwinner model as part of their imagined crime-free futures.

In chapter 8 (Conclusions), I present a closing discussion of the main themes emerging from this study and the significance of these findings for theories linking crucial spaces to the construction and maintenance of marginalised and protest masculinities. I examine the limitations of the study and avenues for future research, along with recommendations for future policy and practice.

Post-industrial Protest Masculinities:

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

My aim in this research is to explore and explain the ways in which many young white working-class men growing up on deprived estates in East Yorkshire, England, follow a trajectory that leads from petty semi-criminal activities to incarceration, for many before they reach the age of 18. By combining sets of debates from geography, sociology, criminology and penology I argue that the social construction of a particular version of masculinity, informed by and reflected in local practices in particular neighbourhoods, as well as stereotypical attitudes by teachers, social workers, the police and prison officers, reinforces the structural disadvantages of many young working-class boys and men. This leads to an alternative career path, in which consecutive prison sentences reduce their opportunities to enter the labour force.

In the sections that follow I show how recent debates about the social construction of masculinity including crime and prison masculinities, economic change and claims about youth to adult transitions, inform the research questions set out in chapter 1. The opening section of this chapter explores early debates surrounding gender, showing how in the 1980s these

culminated in more sophisticated theories of masculinity, in part fuelled by and fuelling an explosion of ethnographies of men and masculinities. The momentum, breadth and scope of this work, described by Stephen Whitehead (2002 p.2) as 'simply staggering', is what this study builds on. As part of this work I introduce and critically evaluate Raewyn Connell's (2000, 1995) theory of hegemonic masculinity and the relational concept of protest masculinity. Her work is often cited as the major driver behind the surge of interest in men and masculinity and has key relevance here as the core conceptual framework underpinning the thesis. As I document in later chapters, the informants' relationships, or often the lack of connections, to the labour market played a significant role in shaping their masculinities. In the second section of the chapter I look at debates surrounding economic change in UK, exploring how this impacts gender relations and gendered identities at national, regional and local levels.

After this, I then set out the main debates about working-class masculinity, schooling and attainment. Since the early nineties a 'panic' or 'crisis' stemming from the so-called academic 'underachievement' of boys was identified, witnessing a surge of social, political and academic interest in the schooling experiences of boys, especially those from working-class families. Following this, part four of the chapter will explore the youth transitions literature which has been a staple in the sociology of youth and other areas of youth studies for some time and which focuses on how young people navigate and construct trajectories to adulthood after leaving school. Of particular relevance to this study is some of the work from the Teesside School that investigates how young people navigate alternative transitions to

adulthood in places of extreme poverty. In the penultimate section of this chapter I outline key studies that explore some of the key debates about masculinity and crime, showing how for many young people, and for young men in particular, 'doing crime' is a means of doing masculinity. The final part of the chapter looks at key scholarship that explores the connections between men, masculinity and incarceration. I introduce some of the classical 'adaptation' and 'importation' studies that suggest that men create prison societies and construct hyper-masculinities as a means of adapting to the deprivations associated with incarceration or import their underworld identities into the prison space. I finish with a brief review of the more recent and emerging prison masculinities literature in the UK that bridges some of these older debates.

2.2 Theorising Masculinities

The major aim of this research is an exploration and analysis of the classed and gendered trajectories that lead to incarceration for some young men born into working-class families. The primary literature that inspired my research, its design and to which I hope that this thesis adds, is the burgeoning feminist-inspired interrogation of men and masculinities that began to gather pace in the last quarter of the 20th century. A leading contributor to this field is Raewyn Connell (2000, 1995). Her highly influential, but heavily contested, model of hegemonic masculinity is the primary underpinning framework I use in analysing the complex process behind the informants' gender configurations. Before unpacking the main tenets and

limitations of the concept of hegemonic masculinity, in the next section I first chart the rise of the masculinity studies, highlighting key debates.

Early scholarship on gender, especially the psychoanalytic approaches that emerged at the beginning of the 20th century and sex role theory that took off as dominant schema in the 1950s, were based on a binary model of masculinity–femininity that positioned woman as the inferior ‘emotional’ or ‘expressive’ ‘other’ against ‘rational’ or ‘instrumental’ man (Whitehead, 2002). Typically it was assumed that sex roles were deeply rooted in biological discourses and presented as the cultural elaboration of the male and female sex. Thus, from this perspective being a man or woman meant acting from a generalised set of expectations attached to a given sex and in most cultural contexts there are two roles, or scripts, of male and female (Connell, 1995). Masculinity and femininity then, according to Connell (1995), were often understood as internalised sex roles taught through the process of socialisation.

Western feminism in the later decades of last century challenged sex role theory by exposing how women were tied to roles of subordination, whilst male roles benefited from privileges inherent within patriarchy (Segal, 2007). In just a few years, from the late 1960s, male and male culture, according to Whitehead (2002), came under critical scrutiny in a way never previously seen. Influenced by the growing feminist critique of patriarchy, male writers, too, although still drawing on sex role schema in what Whitehead and Barrett (2001) term the ‘first wave’ in the sociology of masculinity, highlighted how socialisation into dominant masculine ideology was damaging to men in terms of their relationships with women, their

children and their health (Segal, 2007). This work laid the foundation for questioning the idea that masculinity was somehow a natural expression of sexed identity and that a distinctive and different sex role was in fact a burden and costly to both men and women (see Brannon, 1976; Pleck, 1981, 1976). It was not until the mid eighties during second wave masculinity scholarship and development of men's studies that a substantive critique of sex role theory emerged, leading scholars to explore alternative avenues for the critical study of men.

With a growing emphasis on the social constructionist approach to masculinity, scholarship from the late eighties onwards sought to highlight not so much the cost to men as proposed in previous male role perspectives, but the centrality of power and dominant ways of being a man (Segal, 2007; Whitehead, 2002). In this theoretical work the notion of a plurality of masculinities was introduced, in which the concept of hegemonic masculinity, according to Whitehead and Barrett (2001), emerged as a 'politically, yet contested, powerful concept' (p.15) contrasted with other versions of masculinity, as I will show in more detail later.

Still under the social constructionism label, the 'third wave' in the sociology of masculinity, according to Whitehead and Barrett, draws from post structuralism, using Foucauldian ideas to propose that that men's sense of identity is constructed and maintained through dominant discursive practices. This approach rejects commonly accepted binary divisions such as the traditional male—female, man—woman, masculine—feminine, heterosexual—homosexual, black—white distinctions, arguing that they oversimplify gender inequality and only serve to reproduce the power axis

between the sexes (see Butler, 1990; Collier, 1998; MacInnes, 1998). From this perspective 'identity' and 'self' are not given but discursively and 'reflexively' configured and the body, socially constructed through powerful discourse, is simply a site of interaction for competing political and strategic interests (Butler, 1990; Shilling, 2003). A leading theorist in this area, Judith Butler (1990) argues, based on the concept of performativity, that there is no true sex and gender only comes into being through a set of socially regulated and repeated performances that reinforce and reproduce 'heteronormativity'. Performances of gender 'imitate' dominant cultural representations of what it is to be a woman or man. These fictitious representations are not politically innocent; they fuel the illusion of a natural (hetero)sexuality and gender identity and through continuous reiteration they bring into being gendered subjects (Butler, 1990).

Connell (1995) cautions against seeing gender only as a performance and warns against privileging the symbolic dimension of social practices over all other factors. Gender, she argues, has real material meaning in childbirth/rearing, violence, the accumulation of wealth and so on. What unites constructionist approaches, however, and this is fundamental to my research design, is that masculinity is socially created and reproduced through interactions between people, language and cultural discourses. Gender is understood not as a fixed natural phenomenon but as something that is historically and culturally specific. It is something we do (West and Zimmerman, 1987), it has to be earned (Edley and Wetherell, 1997), through a set of 'performative acts' (Butler, 1990) and it is defined as much through what it is not as it is in positive terms (Jefferson, 2002). From this

perspective, masculine identities are seen as gendered practices, which are relational, contradictory and multiple. Depending on their social positions, men engage in masculinities in a plurality of fashions (Butler, 1990; Connell, 2000, 1995; Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005; Edley and Wetherell, 1997; West and Zimmerman, 1987; Whitehead, 2002).

2.3 Critical Men's Studies

Under this umbrella term of social constructionism the rapid, and continuing, growth in critical studies of men has, Whitehead notes (2002), been simply staggering and has seen the interrogation of men as men across wide-ranging experiences and sites. Much of this scholarship exposes how masculinity as a powerful, violent, controlling and destructive force is created, maintained, celebrated and legitimatised within cultural practices and the core institutions of Western societies. Michael Messner's (1995, 1990) influential research showed how organised sports, for instance, are major arenas for the creation and promotion of violent and often racialised masculinities (see also Messner and Sabo, 1990). Other researchers have looked at how living up to a dominant masculine ideal negatively impacts men's health (Courtenay, 2000; O'Brien et al., 2005; Watson, 2000). The role of the male body in the creation and performance of 'hard' masculinities has been addressed (Gill et al., 2005; Mosse, 1998). There is also a large number of studies that explore cultural representations of 'macho' masculinities in film and media (Beynon, 2002; Gilmore, 2007; Jackson, 1991) as well as work on the cultural politics of the black body in advertising

(Jackson, 1994). Other insightful explorations focus on the intersection of masculinity and race (Hooks, 2003; Majors and Billson, 1993), ethnicity (Alexander, 2000) and religion (Archer, 2001; Gerami, 2003; Hopkins, 2007).

There is also an increasing body of scholarship by geographers highlighting the role of space and place in the creation of masculinities (Berg, 1994; Berg and Longhurst, 2003; Gorman-Murray and Hopkins, 2014; Hopkins and Noble, 2009; Van Hoven and Hörschelmann, 2005). Research has unveiled how intra-male violence (Archer, 1994; DeKeseredy and Schwartz, 2005; Hall, 2002; Kenway and Fitzclarence, 1997; Messner, 1990), homophobia (Dececco and Plummer, 1999; Kimmel, 2004; D. Plummer., 2001), hate crime (Tomsen and Mason, 2001) and sometimes the murder of gay men (Kimmel and Mahler, 2003) are related to the dominant masculine ideology and strategies for performing idealised notions of manhood. Other research on men has uncovered the way in which domestic and sexual violence against women is deeply rooted in patriarchal and sexist societies where the core element of masculine identity is the domination and control of the opposite sex (Flood and Pease, 2009; Hearn, 1998; Messerschmidt, 2000; Schwartz and DeKeseredy, 1997). As I discuss in detail in a later section there is large number of studies exploring the interplay of masculinities and schooling (Corrigan, 1979; Evans, 2006; Frosh et al, 2002; Mac an Ghail, 1994; Reay, 2004, 2002; Skelton, 2001; Willis, 1977); and important research exploring masculinities in the changing workplace (Hardgrove et al., 2015; McDowell, 2003b; Nayak, 2003a, 2003b).

In this large and rapidly expanding scholarship on men there are two surprising areas of deficit. Despite most offenders and prisoners being men,

Carlsson (2013) argues, that there is only limited enquiry into the links between masculinity and crime. Other scholars, such as Sarah Pemberton (2013) and Coretta Phillips (2012), have noted the dearth of ethnographic work exploring masculinities and incarceration. As I highlight in a later section there are some notable exceptions exploring the interplay between masculinity and crime (Collier, 1998; Hood-Williams, 2001; Messerschmidt, 2004, 2001, 1997, 1993; Tomsen, 2008; Winlow, 2001) and a growing literature, especially in the UK, looking at prison masculinities (Crewe, 2014, 2009; Drake, 2011; Evans and Wallace, 2008; Jewkes, 2005, 2002; Phillips, 2012). What is important for this study, however, is not how the informants' marginalised masculinities were created in one particular site, but the cyclical interrelations between cultural representations of masculinity, place, schooling, employment, crime and incarceration. This is where my research adds to a developing literature.

2.4 Hegemonic Masculinity

As I noted above, the most prominent scholar credited with leading and instigating critical academic enquiry and debates around men and masculinities for over three decades is Raewyn Connell. The shift from static or unitary sex role theory to the focus on multiple masculinities owes a great deal to her theory of hegemonic masculinity, which as Roberts (2014) points out, is widely recognised as having unparalleled influence on studies of men's lives. Connell appropriated the concept of hegemony from Antonio Gramsci's (1971) analysis of class relations—an idea that denotes the cultural

dynamic by which one class sees subordination by the dominant class as 'natural'. She used this term in the context of masculinity and defines hegemonic masculinity as a 'configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women' (1995, p. 77). She suggests that the version of masculinity that is hegemonic in any given pattern of gender relations is concerned with maintaining hierarchically organised power relations between men and women, and between men (Beasley, 2008). In essence, she recognises that all masculinities are not created equal (Kimmel, 1997) and addresses the multiplicity of masculinities by differentiating between the hegemonic masculine ideal of the racially superior, economically successful and visibly heterosexual white men at the summit of hierarchy and, at the bottom of the hierarchy, the subordinated or marginalised masculinities of homosexual, ethnic minority and working-class men (Connell, 1995). Connell (2005) is careful to point out that most men never fully live up to the hegemonic ideal, but in their endeavour to do so are complicit in the 'hegemonic project' (Connell 1995, p. 79). Although many men may not exhibit all the characteristics of hegemonic masculinity, most will implicitly (or explicitly) endorse its core ideals and reap benefits from the patriarchal gender system that it legitimises and maintains.

The strength of Connell's theory is not only in recognising that gender relations are configured in ways that justify the positioning of men as the dominant gender, but also in capturing the plurality of masculinities and, significantly, the ways that men are hierarchically stratified within society

depending on race, class, age, sexual identity and so on (Connell, 2002). Further, an important dimension to this proposed hierarchy between men and women and hierarchy amongst men, that I draw on in later chapters, is that although it is widely accepted that men in general benefit materially, socially and politically from their position as the dominant gender—advantages described by Connell as the ‘patriarchal dividend’—these benefits are not distributed equally amongst all men. Marginalised men, as well as women, pay a price for the maintenance of an unequal gender order (Connell, 1995; McDowell, 2003b).

2.5 Protest Masculinity

Connell’s (1989, 1995) own empirical research with men from impoverished urban environments demonstrated that the marginalised masculinities experienced by many will often be expressed or resisted through what she terms protest masculinity. As I show in later chapters, this type of gender performance resonates with the men to whom I talked. As a consequence I now explore some of the ideas behind protest masculinity. Connell builds on earlier psychoanalysis and functionalist writing on gender in her use of the term. Early writing on masculine protest, for instance, is attributed to leading psychoanalyst Alfred Adler (1978) who proposed that it comes from society overvaluing masculinity. Those who engage in the masculine protest ‘attest to the subjective ‘fact’ that masculinity is ‘prized’ and ‘superior’ according to cultural standards’ (cited in Mosak and Maniacci, 2013, p. 104). These men, Adler claimed, act overly masculine, like ‘real men’, because subjectively

they want to feel superior. Those that feel deficient will either withdraw, or more often overcompensate, in their masculine performance. Leading sociologist Talcott Parsons (1964) claims that masculine protest is a result of single female-headed households that leave adolescent boys lacking the father figure from whom they would learn an appropriate gender identity. Without such guidance they invest in 'bad boy' masculinity that is positioned against everything considered feminine. Often most 'bad boys', he claimed, eventually grow out of their protest as they reach adulthood (Parsons, 1964; Walker, 2006).

Connell's (1995, 1989) use of the term protest masculinity, as Walker (2006) observes, is more centrally linked to class position. The consequences of early 'bad boy' protest and limited resources make it much more difficult for poorer men than their middle-class counterparts to alter their masculine performances upon reaching adulthood. Connell (1995) notes that in Western industrialised societies large numbers of working-class young men are growing up without any expectation of stable employment—a key marker of successful adult masculinity. As a result most of these men are shaping their identities as a response to class deprivation. A cycle of casual work with long periods of unemployment casts many men into an impoverished lifestyle and under these conditions the project of protest masculinity is cultivated into adulthood. Protest masculinity, for Connell, develops out of a situation where the claim to power that is central in hegemonic masculinity is constantly negated by economic and cultural weakness. In response to their relative powerlessness, men in this milieu, use whatever resources they have available to construct a version of

masculinity, usually involving hyper-masculine aggressive displays, violence and criminal behaviour (ibid). Often, this protest identity exhibits a 'juxtaposition of overt misogyny, compulsory heterosexuality and homophobia' (Connell, 1995, p. 115) and is concerned with 'face work' whereby a great deal of effort is put into keeping up a front. This marginalised masculine identity, therefore, both rejects and resists hegemonic masculinity on the one hand, whilst on the other picks up themes of 'hegemonic masculinity and reworks them in a context of poverty' (Connell, 1995, p: 114). An important and core feature of protest masculinity is that it 'divides the group [of workless working-class and poor men] from the rest of the working class' (Connell, 1995; Walker, 2006, p. 17). The main consequence, however, as is only too clearly demonstrated by the lives and attitudes of my informants in later chapters, is that this performance leads nowhere; protest masculinity, according to Connell, 'looks like a cul-de-sac' (ibid, p. 117).

2.6 Limitations

Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity is not without opponents and has attracted serious criticism. A major limitation according to Michael Flood (2002) and Christine Beasley (2008) is that there is too much conceptual 'slippage' or as Mike Donaldson (1993) claims it covers too much and therefore not enough. Flood (2002) notes that Connell herself in her book *Masculinities* (1995) employed the term inconsistently and 'confuses whether hegemonic masculinity is a particular configuration of gender practice related

to patriarchal authority, or describes whatever type of masculinity is dominant in a given social order' (p. 208). Connell (2000) in a later publication was clear that it is the legitimisation of patriarchy. Because of such ambiguities, inconsistent appropriation of the concept has been widespread (Beasley, 2008; Martin, 1998; Messerschmidt, 2012). According to Messerschmidt (2012), scholars have 'equated the concept with a fixed type of masculinity or with whatever type of masculinity that happened to be dominant at a particular time and place' (p. 71) (see Christine Beasley, 2008 for a comprehensive discussion). This slippage and widespread misapplication has helped fuel the major criticism that the concept reduces the complexity of nuances of what men actually do (Moller, 2007) to simplistic and static typologies that tend only to emphasise the negative traits of manhood (Collier, 1998; Martin, 1998). Similarly others have argued about who, if anyone, embodies hegemonic masculinity (Demetriou, 2001; Donaldson, 1993). With so few men actually living up to the ideal and because of the lack of substance in models of hegemonic masculinity portrayed in film and other media, it is difficult, according to Whitehead (2002) and Donaldson (1993), to know what it looks like in practice. Nevertheless, the distinction between hegemonic and protest masculinities is useful in this study.

2.6.1 Inclusive (Softer) Masculinities

Recently, scholars have questioned the contemporary relevance of hegemonic masculinity, suggesting that currently configurations of masculinities are more complex, 'softer' and more open in terms of sexuality and consequently less dependent on the subordination of homosexual

boys/men (Anderson, 2009; McCormack, 2012; Roberts, 2013). Steven Roberts (2015) notes that sexuality is the most symbolically important distinction between men in Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity, 'with subordination occurring not only in terms of oppression of homosexual boys, but in the gender policing of heterosexual boys and men' (p. 10). Eric Anderson (2009) found in his research with mainly white American middle-class university students that masculinities were not constructed or dependant on homophobia and aggressive enforcing of heterosexuality. Similarly, in the UK Mark McCormack's (2012) research with male sixth-form students in the South of England found they were openly tactile, vociferously opposed to discrimination on the grounds of sexuality and even keenly elected an openly gay student president. This demonstrates, he argues, the acceptance of the value of homosexual identity. Anderson and McCormack argue that their research documents the fruits of feminist, queer and gay movements and further, with the rise of the internet, there has been a favourable seismic shift in attitudes around sexual identity that has led to a substantial decrease in 'cultural homophobia' and 'Homohysteria' - understood as the levels at which boy and men have a cultural fear of being 'homosexualised' (Anderson, 2009; McCormack, 2012). In recognition of this change to masculine performances, they propose a theory of 'inclusive masculinity' that, unlike Connell's work, allegedly accounts for the contemporary changes that recognise young men no longer have to construct masculinities relationally through opposition to subordinated masculinity by way of homophobic performances. Other scholars, including Roberts (2013), have extended the Inclusive Masculinity Framework (IMF) to

describe other shifts in dominant masculine ideals. Against a tide of earlier research (McDowell, 2003b; McDowell et al., 2014a; Nayak, 2003a; Shildrick and MacDonald, 2007; Winlow, 2001), Roberts suggests that working-class men are learning to adopt deference and the type of 'softer' masculinities needed to work in many contemporary, service-based, feminised labour markets. I will revisit some of the issues raised by Roberts' work in a later section. In the empirical chapters that follow I show prisoner informants displayed few, if any, traits of so-called 'softer' masculinities identified mainly among university and sixth-form students.

2.6.2 Reconfiguring Hegemonic Masculinity

My interest in the marginalised or protest masculinities of men from impoverished neighbourhoods recognises the contribution of Connell's (Connell, 1995, 1989) earlier work on relational and hierarchal positioning of masculinities depending on class, sexuality, race and ethnicity. In response to some of the challenges noted above, however, Connell (2000), with her long time collaborator James Messerschmidt (2005), reconfigured the concept and clarified how it might be appropriately applied empirically (Messerschmidt, 2012), and so added to its already strong analytical potential for understanding the informants' gendered trajectories. A key aspect emphasised in the reworking of the concept, but one that has always been at the root of Connell's work, is that the subordinated and marginalised masculinities upon which hegemonic is dependant are not fixed. To base a critique on this, as 'inclusive masculinity' tends to do, fails to fully account for the 'historicity of gender and ignores the massive evidence of change in

social definitions of masculinity' (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 838). A major shift in their reappraisal is the emphasis they place on the geographies of masculinities, insisting that broader understandings of power relations between the genders and between men will come about through the analysis of 'empirically existing hegemonic masculinities' (ibid, p. 849) at the local, regional and global levels.

This thesis contributes to the study of men and masculinities through the analyses of hegemonic masculinity at a local level, which involves exploring the informants' construction of masculinity in the 'arenas of face-to-face interaction of families, organizations, and immediate communities' (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 849). The revision of the concept to include spatial difference captures variations in the forms of hegemonic and marginalised masculinities that exist in different localities, sites and spaces. In a related and important response to the conceptual 'slippage' critiques, Messerschmidt (2012) offers clarity by suggesting that a type of masculinity might be 'dominant', the most 'celebrated ... in a specific social setting [neighbourhood or locality]; ... exercising power over people and events—'calling the shots' and 'running the show'(p. 72). However, as he points out, it is not necessarily hegemonic unless it contributes to legitimising 'hierarchical gender relations between men and women, between masculinity and femininity, and among men' (p. 73).

Understanding how the informants navigated (marginalised) masculine trajectories within the confines of their regions and neighbourhoods is at the heart of this DPhil project and Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity, used with awareness of its limitations, proved a

suitable primary framework for this endeavour. It still remains, as Andrew Murray and Peter Hopkins (2014) note, among the most 'informative and powerful tools for explaining gender dynamics and power' (p. 7).

Having charted the rise of critical studies into men and highlighted some of key debates and theorising stemming from this already large and still rapidly growing body of work, I now turn to the notion of a contemporary crisis of masculinity.

2.7 Masculine Crisis

Roberts (2014) notes that although the last four decades of critical research on men has exposed the hierarchal operation of power and differences among multiple masculinities, public debates, especially in the mainstream media and political discourse, are dominated by claims of a crisis in masculinity. Lynn Segal (2007), commenting on this post-millennial scrutiny of men and masculinity, noted that the Western world was surprised to discover that it too has gender troubles of its own. Boys' low academic attainment rates coupled with men's high unemployment, crime, incarceration and suicide rates have fuelled male 'crisis-talk' since the start of the nineties. The current pervasiveness and potent political currency of this 'crisis-talk' was evident when in May 2013 Labour's shadow public health minister, Diane Abbott, delivered DEMOS' twentieth-birthday lecture under the title 'Britain's Crisis of Masculinity'. With little explicit reference to the structural forces that contribute to the challenges *some* men face, Abbott's headline grabbing lecture included sound bites that referenced poor

educational outcomes: 'Tomorrow, too many young British boys in schools will be swept a little bit further from realistic and fulfilling paths to happiness and success', she predicted. Abbott went on to forecast: 'tomorrow too many British men and boys will wake up isolated and misdirected by a boundless consumer outlook, economic instability and whirlwind social change'. In her lecture she cited British men dying unnecessarily from treatable illnesses and suicide. Britain is at risk, she claimed, of having a generation of men 'without realistic heroes, who feel like they have been set up to fail' and consequently we face having a 'nothing left to lose' generation of boys and men (Abbott, 2013)

Abbott's lecture brings into the political and public arena some of the contemporary issues or troubles faced by *some* boys and men under the banner of a 'crisis in masculinity'; it fails, however, to account for the serious criticisms of this discourse by many opponents between the mid nineties and early millennium at the height of these debates (Beynon, 2002; Segal, 2007; Whitehead, 2002). John Beynon (2002) points out that claims of masculinity being in crisis are nothing new and that periodically over the last two centuries there have been a number of occasions when politicians and commentators with their own agendas have responded to and/or generated fierce public debate and panic surrounding the troubles of men and boys. Scholars reacting to more recent debates argued that to talk of a crisis in masculinity is simply a step backwards to essentialising discourses that position men as a single, large, homogenous, ahistorical group undifferentiated by class, race, ethnicity and place (Whitehead, 2002).

These critics point out that close scrutiny of the data behind male

crisis-talk shows that it is working-class men/boys, not men *per se*, who are having difficulties as a result of seismic economic and societal changes that have occurred over recent decades. I outline in the following sections a large body of research that, with the findings of this research presented in later chapters, show it is mainly (young) men from poor neighbourhoods who are academically 'underachieving' (Stahl, 2014) and that are over three times more likely than their female counterparts to be permanently excluded from school (Stamou et al., 2014). It is these same undereducated young men who are finding themselves unemployable in an increasingly 'feminised' labour market, or if they do get work it is usually in unstable and economically exploitative positions (McDowell, 2003b; McDowell et al., 2014a; Nayak, 2006; Shildrick and MacDonald, 2007). It is men/boys from lower economic backgrounds who are considerably more likely to commit crime than their middle-class peers (DeKeseredy and Schwartz, 2005; Messerschmidt, 2001). It is these same men from poor neighbourhoods who, for example, accounted for the bulk of the 85 per cent male presence of all those indicted in UK courts in 2012 (Ministry of Justice, 2013b) and who make up the majority of the UK prison population (Crewe, 2009; Jewkes, 2005) that for the last century has been over 90 per cent male (Ministry of Justice 2012). Crime statistics and research consistently show that it is men from the poorest communities who are more likely to violently attack or be attacked and victims of homicide (Archer 1994; Cockburn and Oakley, 2013; Ministry of Justice, 2013b; Office for National Statistics 2013 a); abuse drugs (Seddon, 2006) and alcohol (Visser and Smith, 2007) and have a far higher mortality rate when compared to other men from other class backgrounds

and less deprived neighbourhoods (Segal, 2007).

Political commentary and popular press coverage purporting a crisis in masculinity only serve to obscure or render invisible the structural inequalities blighting the lives of poor white and certain ethnic minority men (Segal 2007). Counter to homogenising discourses of masculinity one of the main objectives of this thesis is to explore how locality or place intersects with other social categories, such as class and gender, in the hierarchal (re)production of marginalised and protest masculinities. As McDowell and Massey noted two decades ago: 'what it means to be masculine in the Fens is not the same as what it means in Lancashire' (McDowell and Massey, 1994, p. 178). Before exploring debates about how men like the informants of this thesis navigate localised masculinities 'face to face' in their 'immediate communities', I first, following Messerschmidt & Connell (2005), briefly map some of global, national and regional forces that impact how men, like these respondents, construct their sense of self as masculine.

2.8 Economic Change

2.8.1 National Level

The onset of rapid de-industrialisation in the UK from the late sixties onwards has been well documented (see Martin and Rowthorn, 1986; Massey, 1994; Strangleman and Rhodes, 2014). However, to give a broader picture of how the national industrial landscape impacts social relations and thus the creation of marginalised identities it is worth briefly recapping the speed and extent of this process. A recent report compiled for the Government's Office

for Science, as part of their 'Futures of Manufacturing' programme, notes that since the 1960s all advanced economies saw a shift away from a manufacturing towards a service-dominated economy but highlights the UK as an 'extreme case' (Rowthorn and Coutts, 2013, p. 4). The authors of the report point out that de-industrialisation started earlier in the UK and went further than any of the other advanced economies. The UK, they assert, has experienced the 'biggest post-war deterioration in its manufacturing trade balance' (ibid, p. 5) and no other advanced economy has over the past sixty years moved from 'surplus to deficit in such a spectacular fashion' (Rowthorn and Coutts, 2013, p. 5). In the 1960s, for example, manufacturing accounted for one third of the employed workforce compared to just eight per cent in 2013 (Banks, 2014). A significant dimension to this decline in manufacturing that has directly impacted the working lives of the respondents in my study is the rise and dominance of the service economy. In 2011, services accounted for 81 per cent of those working in England and Wales (Office for National Statistics, 2013b). Figures indicate that women are more likely than men to be employed in services. In 2011, 92 per cent of workingwomen were in service-based occupations, compared with 71 per cent men for the same period (ibid).

It has been shown in a large body of multidisciplinary scholarship, and recently evident in selective political and policy discourse, that in the UK it is working-class men who are at the sharpest end of this global restructuring (Bottero, 2009; Charlesworth, 2000; McDowell, 2003b; Nayak, 2006; Reay, 2002; Winlow, 2001). Deindustrialisation, and the decimation of the youth labour market that followed, led to a significant reduction in demand for

manual, low-skill and apprenticeship-based jobs that had been seen as appropriate for young men. In 1993 UK unemployment rates for 16 to 24 year olds were at 18 per cent and this significantly diminished post-schooling options for working-class students, especially young men (MacDonald, 2011; McDowell et al., 2014b; Nayak, 2006; Shildrick et al., 2009). The New Labour Government elected in 1997, with the introduction of the New Deal for Young People (NDFYP), saw some reduction in youth unemployment, but by 2004 rates started once again to rise sharply. Since the crash of 2008 spiralling levels of youth unemployment are widespread and a significant cause for concern. Sociologist Rob MacDonald (2011) noted in 2011 that young people were then facing the harshest socio-economic conditions in which to make transitions into adulthood since the 1980s. By the start of 2015 the rates were barely improved. 16 to 24 year olds were nearly three times more likely to be unemployed than the rest of the working population (Boffey, 2015).

In contemporary UK labour markets the high rates of unemployment among (young) undereducated working-class men are in large part the consequence of this economic restructuring. The shift from conventional 'masculine' heavy manual work to a 'feminised' service sector that is increasingly dependent on a temporary, part-time, low paid and insecure labour force (McDowell, 2003b; Nayak, 2006; Shildrick and MacDonald, 2007) or 'poor work' (Brown and Scase, 1991) has badly affected these men. In austerity Britain the impact of poor work on the poor and vulnerable and the way it is restructuring gender relations is a major issue. Increasing numbers of men, McDowell (2014) argues, face unemployment or find they have to become 'women workers', expected to work at the bottom end of the

labour market in caring- and hospitality-based occupations. Illustrating the extent of this economic shift to feminised work she notes that recent estimations suggest that out of Britain's workforce of almost 26 million, three million are in occupations that involve direct contact with bodies, and another three million work in low-paid jobs that involve interactions with customers, including cafes, bar work and security: all but the last category are typically feminised jobs.

Research both in the UK and in the US shows that it is undereducated working-class men who are especially vulnerable in neoliberal labour markets characterised by this type of feminised poor work (Fine et al., 1997; McDowell, 2003b; Shildrick and MacDonald, 2007). As I show in a following section, and demonstrate through my own findings in chapter 4, the type of masculine identities that enable young men to survive in tough estates and school spaces only serve to further exclude them from labour markets reliant on feminised attributes of 'docility and deference' (McDowell, 2003a, p. 829). Not only do men from working-class backgrounds often lack the educational and social skills needed to navigate these workspaces, they add to their own disqualification from employment opportunities through gendered performances that see adhering to customer demands and (often female) managerial authority as an affront to their already well-established (protest) masculinities. (Bourgois, 2003; Charlesworth, 2000; Fine et al., 1997; McDowell, 2003a; McDowell et al., 2014a; Nayak, 2003a; Walker, 2006). Contemporary labour markets have changed from the time when, as Paul Willis (1977) vividly demonstrated, doing little else but 'havin' a laff' at school, having strong bodies and a willingness to work was sufficient for life

on the shop floor. Not only are the older forms of 'macho' behaviours, once the lifeblood of traditional industry, now a positive disadvantage, and as McDowell's quotation highlights below, these out-dated gender attributes are still being culturally and institutionally cultivated:

It is clear that earlier hegemonic versions of working-class masculinity are inappropriate in post Fordism as new types of employment and new forms of labour practice value different attributes. The attitudes and behaviour inculcated in their sons by generations of blue-collar fathers no longer map onto the sorts of behaviour expected in the workplace. At school however, low achieving working-class boys still tend to be directed into vocational or low status subjects, whose culture continues to reflect the masculine world of manual labour...[emphasising] chauvinism, toughness and machismo.. (McDowell, 2003b, p. 88)

Recent research has shown that it is not just attitudes and out-dated gender performances that contribute to (young) working-class men's exclusion from the contemporary workplace, but also how they look. Abby Hardgrove et al. (2015), for instance, found that that young men who were heavily tattooed and/or with piercings, or with a general 'transgressive' appearance, were even less attractive candidates for employers who already preferred to employ women. Women from the same class position as these young men tend to be preferred by many employers because they are regarded as having the ideal attributes for lower end service work. They are seen as less likely to resist managerial demands and to pose a risk of workplace disruption (Hardgrove et al., 2015; McDowell, 2014, 2003b; Nayak, 2006).

With both structural and personal barriers to employment, growing numbers of men from working-class and deprived backgrounds are struggling to meet both their own and socio-cultural expectations of the

acceptable attributes of masculinity on several fronts. Many young men are finding themselves increasingly reliant on their families and the more employable women, such as working mothers and partners, for food, clothes and shelter (Hardgrove et al., 2015; Shildrick and MacDonald, 2007). Conversely, the informants of this thesis, many with bodies that bear the ink and scars of years of inhabiting violent street spaces, were heavily reliant on family members, especially mothers. However, their experience of the local labour markets, as I show in chapter 5, was not simply one of exclusion. Some of the men whom I talked to had had an interesting and diverse history of employment, while others had none at all.

2.8.2 Regional

Deindustrialisation and the rise of the service sector, as already indicated above, has had a major impact on many aspects of social/gender relations throughout the UK (Massey, 1994; McDowell, 2003b), as I argue in this section and demonstrate in the later empirical chapters, the more adverse effects of economic restructuring vary significantly geographically, with many cities and towns in those northern regions that were hit the hardest are still dealing with the legacy today.

As census data collected between 1981 and 2011 highlight, cities and towns in the North East and North West that were dependent on heavy industry are currently enduring some of the highest rates of unemployment and continue to be at the top of many measures of deprivation ('Cities Outlook,' 2014). Consistently from 1981 to 2001 Manchester, Liverpool, Sunderland, Middlesbrough and Kingston Upon Hull, were among the ten

places with the highest rates of unemployment (Office for National Statistics 2015a; Nomis, 2011a). Unemployment rates in these places and over this period were not just marginally higher but often, as in 2001 in Middlesbrough (10.6%), Manchester (9%), Liverpool (11%) and Hull (10.1%), almost double the five per cent average unemployment rates for England over these years (ibid). Sustained unemployment and the associated poverty-related consequences saw life expectancy for men in the North West and North East among the lowest in the UK. Between 2008 and 2010 life expectancy rates for men were 77.0 and 77.2 years respectively, compared with 78.2 for the UK (Office for National Statistics, 2013c). In 2013 the North East had the highest male suicide rates in England; the North West was second and Yorkshire and Humber third. (Office for National Statistics, 2015b). These bleak geographical variations continue with the North East and the North West suffering the highest mortality rates for drug misuse related deaths in the five years to 2013. Drug-related mortality rates in these northern regions for this period, the ONS report shows, were more than double those for Greater London (Office for National Statistics, 2014). Depressing as these figures are, it not all grim in the North. Parts of Liverpool and Manchester, as well as the 'poster child' for the new north' Newcastle, (Short, 2015), among others, have been fighting their way back to prosperity. The Centre for Cities 2015 Outlook reported that between 2013 and 2014 Newcastle was the eighth highest city in terms of job growth. Hull, however, which I shall discuss in more detail in following chapter, was 59th out of 63 cities that were ranked on the basis of job growth (Centre for Cities 2015). Much of the growth in Liverpool, Manchester and Newcastle has come through considerable

investment in cultural sectors, including internationally renowned museums and galleries such as Manchester's *Lowry*, *Tate Liverpool*, and Newcastle's *Baltic*. Related developments in these post-industrial places has seen the rise of a strong hospitality sector, including cafes, restaurants and flourishing night-time economies of bars and clubs, albeit often offering low-wage employment (ibid). The current cuts in local authority funding, however, raise questions about the sustainability of this growth.

There are a number of notable studies that have explored the ways in which (young) men create and adapt their classed and gendered identities in post-industrial economies in the northern regions. A large part of this work has focused on the North East. Geographer Anoop Nayak's (2006, 2003a, 2003b) research centring on white working-class identity in Newcastle is a key example, sharing many parallels with McDowell's (2003b) work discussed earlier. Nayak explores how place intersects with class and ethnicity in determining varying performances of masculinities among the same class. He found that for one group of lads from his study, the 'Real Geordies', alternative routes to manhood were found in the new culturally based economy built around bars, clubs and hospitality. This new thriving cultural and night-time economy was not only a source of employment for many, but going out too, drinking, clubbing and partying played a major role in their expressions of coming-of-age masculinities. He notes the Real Geordies clung to some aspects of their white industrial masculine heritage through affiliation with the local football club, territorial loyalties, and physical humour. Not everyone, Nayak found, had the economic resources to participate in the drinking cultures and other leisure transitions that revolved around the new

cultural spaces in the city. Those who were excluded, known locally as 'Charvers', included those young men from families experiencing long-term intergenerational unemployment who, like other young men interviewed by McDowell et al. (2014a), struggled to earn a legitimate wage through serving, and turned to the streets as a space for leisure and cultural expressions. Nayak (2006) notes that for the 'Charvers' masculine performances were built around what was available in their impoverished communities. Empty or abandoned buildings, for instance, were commissioned for illegal raves, and fighting, petty crime and consumption of alcohol and drugs were daily activities. For Nayak, style played a significant role in the 'Charver's' masculine performances. He notes:

By adopting the outward manifestations of street style – baseball caps, tracksuits, trainers, heavy gold jewellery – and accompanying this apparel with a pronounced walk, Charver lads were engaged in the body-reflexive technique of 'hard' masculinity. (Nayak, 2006, p. 822)

Although, the 'Real Geordies' demonstrated a fear and anxiety of the 'Charvers' hardness, Nayak found they would overtly denigrate their style and assume that they were criminals as part of an instrumental process where the culturally inferior 'Charver' label is used as a platform by the 'Real Geordies' to express perceived superior hegemonic working-class 'respectable' masculinities. The 'Real Geordies' portrayal of the 'Charvers', he claims, says a great deal about 'class insecurities and attempts at clinging on tooth and nail to the last vestiges of white respectability in the post-industrial moment' (2006, p. 825)

Simon Winlow's (2001) research shows how some men have adapted

and maintained respectable masculinities in post-industrial Sunderland through the use of their bodies to provide security and maintain order as 'bouncers' in the night-time economy. In his research with door security staff, he found that valued working-class masculine attributes of bodily strength and the ability/willingness to physically confront violence and protect others have been packaged as a saleable and valued commodity to the leisure industry and pub landlords. He shows how economic change has provided some working-class men with entrepreneurial opportunities, mainly in selling security. However, this, as he shows and I explore in more detail in a later section, often draws from and feeds into criminal and semi-criminal networks built around drugs, violence and intimidation.

Other more comprehensive and longitudinal studies of mainly white working-class young adults in heavily deindustrialised and impoverished neighbourhoods in the North East are those undertaken by Teesside University's Youth Research Unit, the Teesside School (Johnston et al., 2000; MacDonald and Marsh, 2005; Webster et al., 2004). Part of this work provides excellent insight into varying youth-to-adult transitions among the same class group in the UK. These studies show that undereducated young people in post-industrial regions in the North East are competing with adults in their own neighbourhoods for similar types of 'poor work' discussed earlier. A concerning finding was the lack progression in this type of work. Research subjects were doing the same low-level type of employment in their late twenties as they were doing at seventeen (Webster et al., 2004a). With an endless source of willing local labour, it was clear that working lives were highly precarious. Young people who found employment often worked under

punitive managers who too often quickly followed up on continuous threats to fire their employees. The researchers report that the difficulty faced by many young people was not so much obtaining a job, but keeping it. Equally bleak, they found that even those young people who initially engaged in further education and training were years later negotiating the same 'cyclical precarious types of poor work' (Webster et al., 2004, p. 10) as the respondents with no education or little training.

The Teesside researchers show that not all young people they studied were willing or able to continuously negotiate transitions under poor work conditions, with low pay, overly authoritarian managers/supervisors, and no viable route of job progression (Johnston et al., 2000; MacDonald and Marsh., 2002; MacDonald and Shildrick., 2007; Webster et al., 2004). They found, as I discuss in more depth in a later section, that their young participants sought out alternative pathways or leisure, drug, and criminal 'careers'. Similarly, as I argue in chapter 5, the vast majority of informants in this study from a young age often found non legitimate means of earning an income that made adjusting to demands and low rewards of contemporary workplace challenging and continued alternative transitions more attractive.

What is clearly evident in these studies exploring routes into poor work is that the young men who face the biggest challenges are those who leave school as soon as possible with low or no qualifications. There is a long tradition of research that has convincingly shown that one of most powerful spaces in the onset of the construction and reproduction of early marginalised or protest masculinities is schooling. In the following section I review of some the key debates in this area.

2.9 Schooling and Working-Class Masculinities

2.9.1 Failing Boys

In the UK, interest in the education and schooling of working-class boys has a long tradition from Paul Willis's (1977) *Learning to Labour* and Paul Corrigan's (1979) *Schooling the Smash Street Kids*. Both these authors argue that the rejection of the formal curriculum and school authority generated high cultural value among their participants and for many was a way of being one of the 'lads'. These early studies recognised the importance of schooling in creating and reproducing respectable working-class masculinity in the sense that, regardless of attainment, they would have a role on the 'shop floor' and be fully engaged in the labour market. Towards the end of twentieth century deindustrialisation began to bite in many areas, as I argued earlier, and working-class boys started to struggle to make what was once an almost guaranteed post-schooling transition onto the shop floor. This economic shift, coupled with the introduction of school performance league tables in 1992, saw interest in the academic attainment of boys move out beyond the academy. Politicians, policy makers, journalists and social commentators expressed concern and generated 'panic' about so called academic 'underachievement' and the underemployment of boys (see Griffin, 2000 for a comprehensive review of these debates).

In the main, anxieties were built around the assumption, as outlined by the then Secretary of State for Education, David Blunkett, that boys' troubles and their low self-esteem were a result of schools encouraging 'too much equality' and 'assertive aggressiveness' in girls' (cited in Segal, 2007,

p.XX). The implication in these debates was that feminism and equal opportunities had gone too far, that 'males were the new disadvantaged' (Francis, 1999, p. 357) and that the focus should now turn to addressing the needs of boys (Whitehead, 2002). Anxieties about boys' academic attainment and schooling stemmed from and contributed to the broader commentary around masculine 'crisis' discourse outlined earlier. As Willis (1977) and Corrigan (1979) revealed nearly four decades earlier, and many others have demonstrated since, however, there is nothing new in the educational 'underachievement' of many working-class and certain ethnic minority boys (Arnot, 1999; Evans, 2006; Gilbert, 1998; Mac an Ghail, 1994; Reay, 2002; Stahl, 2014), whose 'alienation from study in school has always accompanied the assertion of a reactive form of rebellious bravado' (Segal, 2007, p. XX).

2.9.2 Schooling Masculinity

In what Marcus Weaver-Hightower (2003) terms the 'boy turn' many Western industrialised countries, especially those dealing with discourses around failing boys and masculine crises, saw during the nineties and early millennium an outpouring of research and publications about masculinity and schooling. As Martin Mac an Gail and Chris Haywood (2012) suggest, this research identified schools as cultural arenas where masculinity becomes an important concept to describe issues such as underachievement, sex education, peer group cultures, language use, sexual violence and pedagogy (Mac an Ghail and Haywood, 2012). For Connell (1989) this research lens into school is vital because the school is one of, if not the most, potent

influences in the formation of masculinities. Schools are, she argues, 'masculinity making' sites that do not just adapt to existing gender configurations, but are active in constructing particular forms of masculinity and femininity. The largest corpus of this early research in the area of masculinity and schooling came from Australia (Gilbert, 1998; see Mills and Mills, 2001) and the UK (Arnot, 1999; Epstein, 1998; Francis and Skelton, 2001; Frosh et al., 2002; Mac an Ghail, 1994; O'Donnell and Sharpe, 2000; Renold, 2001; Skelton, 2001). Although aspects of these studies explored the schooling of masculinities and the intersection of ethnicity (Archer, 2007; Evans, 2006; Gillborn, 1997) and race (Archer, 2003; Sewell, 1997), the core uniting consensus was that social class and gender are the most potent forces determining levels of educational attainment.

Much of this early research centred on the construction of working-class masculinities and in doing so brought to the fore the structural forces creating the 'crisis' behind the failing boys discourse. It showed how working-class masculine culture, and the gender identities that many of their respondents aspired to, had changed little from the 1970s. Like earlier research, most of these studies revealed that working-class masculinity continues to be formed through 'battering against the school's authority' (Connell, 1989, p. 301), while in contrast the hegemonic masculinity of middle-class pupils is constructed through rationality and academic achievement (Frosh et al, 2002). Consistently, in these studies, working-class masculinities were described as both dominating and aggressive, with difference being perceived as a weakness and a target for ridicule. A macho image based on rebellion against school authority and a belief is that

schoolwork is for 'wimps' and effeminate boys (Evans, 2006; Francis, 2006; Mac an Ghail, 1994; Reay, 2002) was evident.

Mac an Ghail (1994) argues that the 'laddish' or 'macho' characteristics of working-class masculinity cannot simply be understood in terms of individual choice. Rather it is a collective project 'operating at the level of the institution and the organisation of peer group relations' (p. 53). He found that male peer groups within schools are usually organised around class, sexual identities, sporting prowess and antagonistic attitudes to the school's authority and academic work. In his empirical work the group he named 'macho lads' were drawn to each other through their negative outlook towards the school and its teachers. Masculine currency was gained through the three F's of fighting, fucking and football. This group, as in many other studies, associated academic work with an inferior effeminacy, referring to boys who chose to do school work as 'dickhead achievers' (ibid, p. 59).

Much of this research on masculinity and education has been criticised for the assumption that all working-class boys are hyper masculine thugs with no desire to learn (Delamont, 2000). What is often not recognised is that even within some of this work, many working-class boys do engage with schooling and learning (see Stahl, 2014; Stahl and Dale, 2013). Early research, for instance, identified 'earholes' (Willis, 1977) 'achievers' (Mac an Ghail, 1994) and more recently 'boffins' (Francis, 2009) and 'geeks' (Ward, 2014). Consistently acknowledged in many of these studies is the extremely difficult environment and many barriers that face working-class boys who want to engage in the learning process. Diane Reay (2002) found that Shaun, a working-class boy in her case study, displayed impressive

enthusiasm and overriding determination to be schooled. She highlights how, in the context of a poorly resourced 'sink' school that serves the catchment for Shaun's tough neighbourhood, he invested 'super human effort' (p. 228) to realise his own, and his single parent mother's, desire to learn. Being a highly skilled footballer and demonstrating a willingness to stand up for himself, whilst openly engaging in learning, Shaun fought hard and found an 'immense amount of psychic and intellectual work' (p. 224) to win the respect of both his peers and teachers. Reay argues Shaun's story is by no means unique, but his background, his single parent mother, his respect for the authority of school and (black) female teacher and girls, disrupt dominant discourses and emphasise the diversity among white working classes.

Gillian Evans (2006) in her research with white working-class students in London highlights the challenges many of her young male pupils faced in reconciling their identities over multiple sites, including their homes, the streets and their school. Finely refined hard masculinities needed for navigating the streets of their estates and informal school spaces would be in constant conflict with the formal structures of the school and the institutional setting of the classroom. This estate culture of masculinity eventually led to the removal, for many, from mainstream schooling; but equally concerning, she notes, is that the masculine performances of the few had a detrimental impact on the majority and took up a great deal of school time and limited resources. Exploring how the informants from my own study used the informal spaces in schools in reinforcing existing street masculinities and the rejection or refusal to adapt to the more formal disciplined space of schooling proved, as I outline in chapter 4, an interesting and, for many, a defining

period in their marginalised gendered trajectories.

This resistance to schooling and the poor academic attainment of white working-class boys identified in scholarship over recent decades is currently subject to widespread political and policy concern. In June 2013 Ofsted highlighted in their report, *Unseen Children: Access and Achievement 20 Years On*, that white British children eligible for free school meals were the lowest performing group at the age of 16, with less than a third (31%) gaining five or more GCSEs at A*–C (Ofsted 2013a). White British pupils account for two thirds of formal school students and so this lowest performing group was large. The sheer magnitude of this issue made it difficult not to acknowledge the relationship between social class, ethnicity and educational attainment. Just a month after Ofsted published concerns around ‘real and persistent’ underachievement of white working-class boys, the Select Committee for Education launched an enquiry and documented the outcome in the 2014 report, *Underachievement in Education by White Working-Class Children* (House of Commons Education Committee, 2014). Confirming earlier findings it was identified that white British boys are the lowest performing cohort in the country and that the difference in attainment between them and their ‘less deprived’ peers is wider than for any other group. Both these reports recognised that although some of the widest gaps in attainment are between white British boys and everyone else, girls from this group are also significantly ‘underachieving’ (ibid, see also Allen et al., 2015)

2.9.3 Low Aspiration: ‘Poverty of Expectation’

A number of prolific scholars (Evans, 2006; Francis, 2009; Reay, 2002) who have contributed widely to the debates on working-class identity, masculinity and schooling gave evidence to the select committee, highlighting some of tensions between working-class masculinity and schooling discussed earlier. However, a dominant theme emerging from these latest official reports is that although evidence suggests the causes behind working-class underachievement are complex and various, official policy discourse positions home life and low aspiration as the main causes. In giving evidence to the select committee, the head of Ofsted, Sir Michael Wilshaw, noted that the ‘poverty of expectation’, in particular the low expectations of others, has a greater impact on educational achievement than material poverty (House of Commons Education Committee, 2014, p. 29). He believes that a child is likely to succeed and schooling is made easy or more difficult depending on the expectations of the family. Garth Stahl (2014) points out that policymakers like to cite low aspiration as the cause behind most of the challenges faced by working-class communities, including antisocial behaviour and underachievement. He urges policymakers to look at what is behind the low aspiration discourse and how it links to neoliberal ideology that equates ‘good qualifications with a good job’. Within the currently dominant neoliberal perspective, he argues, students are judged as having ‘bought in’ or ‘bought out’ of the meritocratic educational system vital to economic success (p. 3). Stahl notes that as long as aspiration remains so tightly linked to education and occupation, working-class students will always be defined as having low aspirations. Becky Francis (2006) posits that there

is much evidence of high aspiration in working-class families. What they lack, she argues, is knowledge of how to operationalise that aspiration effectively to get the best outcomes for their children. Money makes the difference but so does, she claims, knowing the rules of game.

2.9.4 Underperforming Schools

To focus on the 'lacking' individuals from homes without aspirational attitudes distracts from a major dimension of the underachievement debate—the role that schools play in reproducing low attainment among working-class students. Garth Stahl (2013) suggests that a significant reason for why white working-class males underperform is because the majority of them attend comprehensive schools that are simply inadequate: often considerably under-resourced to meet the learning needs of students from poor backgrounds. It has been long established in the sociology of education, for instance, that young people's educational experiences and outcomes are profoundly shaped by the place or localities of schools and their pupils (Ball, 2003; Blokland and Savage, 2001; Corrigan, 1979; Reay and Lucey, 2000; Savage, 1988; Willis, 1977).

Ofsted's recent annual reports highlight that the location of the worst performing local education authorities (LEA) are mainly in the northern regions. Many schools under these LEAs are failing to offer a high standard of education to some UK's poorest communities (Ofsted, 2013b, 2015). The same reports confirmed that pupils in some of the most heavily deindustrialised towns, cities or regions were significantly less likely to attend 'good' or 'outstanding' schools than children living elsewhere (Ofsted, 2015).

In 2013, for example, only 35 per cent of secondary students in Hartlepool, 35 per cent in St Helens and 36 per cent in Doncaster were attending 'good' or 'outstanding' schools according to Ofsted ratings, compared to 96 per cent in Bath and Somerset, 99 per cent in Wokingham and 93 per cent in Surrey (Ofsted, 2013b). As I show in chapter 3, the informants in this study come from one of poorest areas in the UK and Hull's LEA, responsible for the catchment where most of them lived, has for some years consistently been among the worst performing. In 2013 it was ranked 129th out 150 authorities (Ofsted, 2013b).

Debates about working-class boys and their resistance to compulsory education have emphasised the importance of local schools and social relations in the wider neighbourhood in the construction of young marginalised masculinities. These debates raise questions, which I explored with the informants, of what immediate and longer-term post-schooling options exist in deeply impoverished and deindustrialised regions for young men with little or no educational credentials. In the next section I review some of the existing scholarship in this area. I introduce the concept of 'transition' and show how it has been applied, mainly by those working in the sociology of youth, to offer a lens into how young adults from similar economic landscapes to those in my study negotiate post-schooling routes to adulthood. Much of the current transition literature resonates with aspects of my informants' routes to adulthood but fails to fully capture their experiences of criminality and incarceration. However, the work I discuss in the next section helped shape this thesis by responding to the call by Johnston et al. (2000; see also MacDonald and Marsh, 2002; MacDonald and Shildrick,

2007) for a greater understanding of the role alternative (leisure, criminal and drug) 'careers' play in transitions to adulthood.

2.10 Youth Transitions

The Teesside School's key studies (Johnston et al., 2000; MacDonald and Marsh, 2005; Webster et al., 2004), introduced in an earlier section, employ the concept of transition to explore how young respondents, often described as 'hard to reach', navigate pathways to adulthood in the context of severe socio-economic deprivation. For Tracy Shildrick and Robert MacDonald (2007), transitions are the pathways young people take after compulsory schooling as they enter the labour market. They also include the housing and family situations they negotiate as part of this journey to adulthood. In studying youth transitions, they claim, they are not only 'observing the snakes and ladders' of individual biographies but they are also exposing the way in which similar divisions and hierarchies in society are reproduced and maintained' (MacDonald et al., 2001).

Shildrick et al. (2009; 2007) and others accept economic developments over recent decades have had a significant impact on post-schooling trajectories for many young people, not just those at the higher end of the poverty spectrum (Roberts, 2011). This has led to transitions being described as 'long', 'broken', 'extended', 'protracted', 'uneasy' and 'fractured' (Shildrick and MacDonald, 2007, p. 590). Young people's increased reliance on parents for longer periods, for example, and delays in attaining other signifiers of adulthood, such as having an income that sustains independent

living and housing tenancy/ownership, are less accessible for many in austerity Britain than in previous generations (Hardgrove et al., 2015). For many low-income young people leaving the parental/family home, the main housing transition that demarcates adult status is increasingly difficult due to a profound lack of appropriate social housing and allocation policies that exclude the young (Clapham et al., 2012; Crane et al., 2014). As I write, independent living via housing for poorer people under the age of 21 has just been made substantially more difficult. The current Conservative administration plans to disqualify this group from housing benefit payments that historically have covered out-of-reach rent rates and council tax payments (Chakelian, 2015).

Educated young adults, too, are finding that transitions to adulthood are becoming less predicable (Calvert, 2010; Heath and Calvert, 2013). In 2010, graduate unemployment was at its highest for 15 years at 20 per cent (Nomis, 2011b) and many young professionals who do find employment face uncertainty in a growing knowledge-based economy built on temporary/short-term contracts. It has been suggested that this recent precarious professional group, with the longer standing precarious poor, are an emerging new class, the 'precariat' (McDowell, 2014; Standing, 2011). If not a class, what does unite many of these young people in the UK is that temporary contracts, erratic income streams and periods without work, coupled with increasingly limited independent housing options, suggest a widespread struggle across the spectrum, albeit under different conditions, in meeting traditional markers of adulthood.

The relevance of highlighting challenges in navigating standard routes

to adulthood for those with existing work experiences and educated young people serves to make even more significant the question of what then for undereducated men, perhaps with long criminal records, little or no legitimate work experience and many of whom carrying the visible scars of their time in institutions and on the streets. As I show in later chapters, alternative transitions from school to unemployment and/or prison are all too easy and increasingly common in the austere world of insecure work and neoliberal governments. This is not to dismiss or detract from the point that across class divides there are significant barriers limiting avenues to adulthood. However, I argue in the following sections it is the poorest at the sharpest end of economic change for whom the cost is the greatest and transitions most prolonged or ultimately unsuccessful.

2.10.1 Challenging Transitions

It is some of the issues indicated relating to the limited scope of a large amount of existing and older transition research that MacDonald (2001) and Shildrick and MacDonald (2007) accept have 'partly' contributed to 'multiple and strong criticism' (2007, p. 591) of the concept itself. A consistent criticism is that too much of this research overemphasises school-to-work trajectories at the cost of capturing young people's more variable and longer term experiences of growing up (Cohen and Ainley, 2000; Fergusson et al., 2000; Miles, 2000). Steven Roberts (2011) notes that the transition discourse is too dualistic. Young people are either seen as unemployed 'sinkers' or employed 'swimmers', 'fast track' (those leaving education with few or no credentials)

or 'slow track' (those gaining qualifications, staying on or into FE/training), and too little focus, he argues is given to those that fall between these 'lines of dualism': the 'missing middle' (p. 22). A major charge is that in post-industrial societies the transition model fails to account for the complex, multiple and individualised paths young people take.

Some of these challenges to the transitions perspective are part of a much broader debate throughout the social sciences stemming from theories of individualisation and reflexivity. Ulrich Beck (2000, 1992) one of the leading thinkers in these discussions, suggests that in late modernity, or what he terms 'risk' societies, categories such as class, gender and ethnicity have lost much of their analytical purchase and are now 'zombie categories' no longer up to the task of explaining youth trajectories in the 21st century (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2001). Highly contested in youth studies his concept of 'choice biographies' posits that in late capitalist societies greater access to knowledge means individuals are much more reflective and this contributes to creating more choice in shaping futures (Beck, 2000, 1992). Consequently, routes to adulthood are significantly less structurally constrained and less predictable (ibid). This loosening from structure and emphasis on agency in explaining young people's biographies has been fiercely opposed in youth studies (for an overview and contrasting exchange on Beck's individualisation theory or 'choice biographies' and its application in youth studies see Roberts, 2010; Woodman, 2010, 2009); indeed, in much social science research as well as in what follows in this thesis has convincingly shown how so-called 'zombie' categories are very much alive in the real world and continue to play a significant role in the informants'

disadvantaged biographies.

Despite some difficulties associated with the concept of 'transition' if used reflexively it can, Shildrick and MacDonald (2007) argue, be a powerful tool and reveal, in contrast to individualised or 'choice' discourse, structural barriers shaping youth transitions. The limitations of some earlier transition studies, they agree, were too great a focus on school-to-work careers and failing to show other important aspects of youth experience. In fully understanding disadvantaged biographies, account needs to be taken of the 'local peer networks, of the cultures and identities of 'the street', and of the value placed on becoming/being a young man with a particular style of resilient, 'hard' masculinity' (MacDonald et al., 2001 paragraph 4.16). To capture their research subjects' full exclusionary biographies, then, they expand the concept of transitions to include alternative routes of criminal, drug using and leisure 'careers', along with the more traditional school-to-work, family and housing pathways (Johnston et al., 2000; MacDonald and Marsh, 2005, 2002; MacDonald and Shildrick, 2007; Webster et al., 2004).

2.10.2 'Alternative Careers'

In focusing on the interrelationships between these well-established and 'alternative careers' in youth transitions, MacDonald et al. (2005) and Tracy Shildrick et al. (2009) found that many of their young research subjects were highly dependant on and locked into their communities (also see McDowell, 2003b; Sayer, 2005). Their local and family connections, for example, meant that they often qualified for and sought social housing in the same areas in which they had lived as children. They found, too, that for many of their

research subjects, living close to other family members once transitioning to independent living, was part of a strategy of survival. There was often a mutual dependency between family and friends in navigating the challenges of being poor in impoverished neighbourhoods.

Of notable relevance to this thesis, and highlighting many similarities with my informants, as I show in chapter 5, is the work looking at the links between leisure, drug and criminal careers (MacDonald and Marsh, 2002; MacDonald and Shildrick, 2007; also see Webster et al., 2004a). MacDonald and Shildrick (2007) discovered that a large majority of their research subjects during their early teens spent a great deal of spare time 'in the company of peers in the public spaces of their home estates' (ibid, p. 342). So much street leisure time, they highlight, was due to a lack of financial resources for other activities such as the cinema or bowling. However, for their research subjects, spending time on the streets was often spoken about in positive terms and for many, they note, once they reached young adulthood and found jobs and training, their leisure transitions shifted from street-based to commercialised alcohol-based leisure pursuits.

Sharing parallels with Nayak's (2006) 'Charvers' as discussed earlier, MacDonald and Shildrick (2007) highlight that many of the young unemployed men in their sample deviated from this main pattern of leisure career. This group lacked funds and therefore were excluded from the clubs' and pubs' leisure activities that most other young men of their age were enjoying. From a young age the main issue for these men, they note, was filling 'tedious' time. Most of this group had avoided formal education and spent days when they should have been in school on the streets of their

neighbourhoods. This street space leisure time continued post school and past their teens. MacDonald and Shildrick (2007) are careful to point out that widespread street socialising was not synonymous with delinquency. However for several of their unemployed men, it provided a space for early drug exploration and delinquency and provided an alternative to regular employment or training. They found that those with sustained criminal careers suggested that street-based youth culture facilitated transitions into crime although even then the authors are careful to suggest that this is not inevitable and that some who displayed high risk factors earlier stuck 'stubbornly' to conventional transitions. They note:

...long-term commitment to local, street-based peer groups did emerge as one of the key factors associated with the development of sustained criminal and drug-using careers, some that displayed this sort of leisure lifestyle did not become embroiled in serial offending and persistent, problematic drug use (MacDonald and Shildrick, 2007, p. 349)

In later years criminal careers or networks, for some, the authors report, provided a sense of security and income and even those not directly affiliated with criminal networks knew who was and where to go for cheap stolen goods or illegal substances.

Other work exploring street spaces and their connection to transitions into education, work and/or crime includes Anthony Gunter and Paul Watt's (2009) study of a small multi-ethnic East London neighbourhood. They found varying transitions were created through the interaction of paid employment and leisure cultures and identified three divergent, but by no means fixed, routes: grafting (manual dirty work); college (prepare for 'clean' service-

based employment) and alternative 'working on road' (low level criminal conduct). Grafter culture they claim takes over from 'road culture' in some of the mainly white men's post-schooling routes. London's relatively buoyant construction sector facilitates, albeit increasingly insecure, 'traditional 'learning to labour' masculine transitions' (p. 526) for those with access to neighbourhood employment networks and who 'possess positive attitude to dirty, hard graft' (p. 526). The construction sector for these men offered no job security. Those pursuing the 'grafter' transitions were regularly between jobs and got by, the authors note, by 'ducking and diving' around the estate. The large majority of young people in their study, especially young black men, took up college, the second transition. Those following this route bought into neoliberal discourses of 'opting in' (Stahl, 2013) and enrolled in full time education hoping to gain credentials for 'clean' service work. For these young men, they note, this transition was fraught with pitfalls, similar to those experienced in compulsory education and many ended up dropping out. For this group to successfully engage in the 'alien' spaces of further/higher education and 'clean' service sector work they would, they argue, have to learn to distance from familiar 'road culture and its attendant bodily 'habitus' of speech and style' (p. 527). Like MacDonald and Shildrick (2007), Gunter and Watt (2009) found that all their young research subjects were consumers of road cultural life, and only a small number of men, who they describe as the 'Arm House Crew', pursued day in–day out alternative transitions of 'life on road' (p. 525), involving 'badness' 'characterised by 'spectacular' hyper-aggressive/hyper-masculine modes of behaviour, incorporating violent and petty crime, fraud or personal identity theft, and

low-level drug dealing' (p. 525). The 'Arm House Crew' resisted discourse of 'equality and opportunity through learning and earned respect on their 'own terms' (p. 527)

Consistently recognised in much of this work on transitions is the paradoxical situation where strategies employed in navigating impoverished neighbourhoods, and the social capital earned in this process, only serve to further isolate young people from already limited opportunities, perpetuating marginalisation and reproducing class-based inequalities (Gunter and Watt, 2009; MacDonald et al., 2005; MacDonald and Shildrick, 2007). However, as I have shown in the discussion above of transition scholarship, some men brought up and living in these poor neighbourhoods may to some extent contribute to their own exclusion. Their marginalisation, however, is exacerbated through the neoliberal agenda that has created considerable structural challenges in finding and maintaining legitimate routes to manhood.

Simon Winlow (2004) warns that young men in marginal neighbourhoods who are not in education, who face exclusion from the formal economy and who are without the material means to have and support a family, consequently lack the core bounds of social control and as such are less constrained by societal norms. Under these conditions crime and violence will, for many, be an accessible and attractive route to achieving and maintaining respected 'underclass' masculine identities. A small but growing body of scholarship has shown that a masculinities framework is useful for exploring how undereducated and underemployed working-class men, coming from the same type of 'estates' as the informants

in this study, continue to be significantly overrepresented in all crime and criminal justice data (Cockburn and Oakley, 2013; Jewkes, 2005). It is to some of these key debates that I now turn.

2.11 Masculinities and Crime

Notwithstanding criminal justice agencies' over-focus on detecting and prosecuting poor and minority males, it is statistically evident from high levels of recorded and reported offences that there exists a real and pervasive social phenomenon of disproportionate male criminality (Tomsen, 2008). International data over several decades indicate that throughout industrialised societies, men account for almost 100 per cent of all recorded crime (DeKeseredy and Schwartz, 2005b). With sex, youth is presented as the strongest predictor of offending (Collier, 1998; Messerschmidt, 2001). Richard Collier (1998) notes the 'spectacular' flaw of criminology since its origins in the 19th century is shown in the discipline's failure to explore this core fact through an analysis of gender. It is widely recognised that men commit most crime, but the failure to explicitly explore this through a gendered analysis opened up fertile ground for regressive and unopposed essentialising discourses that attribute male crime as inherent and pre-social drive of all men (Collier, 1998; Winlow, 2004). Until quite recently some of the more established scholarship explaining male violence, including robbery, homicide, and spouse violence, came from essentialist biological and evolutionary approaches that viewed offending as a consequence of defective male (female) identities (see Anderson and Bushman, 2002;

Archer, 1994; Daly et al., 1982; Daly and Wilson, 1988).

2.11.1 Masculine Turn

Analyses of the links between masculinity and crime started to emerge in some of the early feminist scholarship in disciplines other than criminology which followed later (Collier, 1998). Sharing some parallels with the evolutionary work above, however, masculinity was viewed as one coherent gender and men's crime and (domestic-, sexual and intra-male-) violence was understood as being determined by position in the class structure and/or other structural systems of dominance, characterised as patriarchy (see Daly and Chesney-Lind, 1988; Gelsthorpe and Morris, 1990; Hood-Williams, 2001; Smart, 1977 for an overview of this early criminological feminist scholarship). Largely this traditional criminological scholarship was concerned with the study and control of 'dangerous' forms of masculinity, especially working-class male delinquency, but failed to account for the link between criminality and socially varied strategies men employ to attain power and status (Collier, 1998; Tomsen, 2008). It was not until the start of the 1990s that researchers, building on earlier feminist work and drawing on the more sophisticated theoretical approaches developed in critical men's studies, began to explicitly address masculinities and crime. In what Collier (2004) hails as the 'masculine turn', criminology key texts emerged that emphasised relations between different masculinities and identified causes and patterns of most crime as well as critically highlighting the broader workings of policing, courts and prisons (Messerschmidt, 1993; Newburn and Stanko, 1994; Tomsen, 2008).

James Messerschmidt (1993), a key contributor to this scholarship, examined the connection between gender, violence and crime through a structured action approach that recognises differences according to class, race, ethnicity, sexuality and age. Masculinities for Messerschmidt are linked to struggles of power that occur between men and women and with other men. Within this framework he developed the idea of gender as a 'situational accomplishment' and of crime (and violence) as a means of 'doing gender'. For Messerschmidt, men will 'situationally accomplish masculinity in response to their social structured circumstances ... and crime can serve as a suitable resource for doing masculinity within the specific context of the street' (ibid, p. 113) when conventional or legitimate avenues to masculinity are in short supply. Following Messerschmidt, Heath Copes and Andy Hochstetler (2003), in a study exploring the situational construction of masculinity among American street thieves, found acquisitive crimes such as robbery and burglary help to accumulate the material resources needed to present a respected street masculinity. Many of these men, they claim, use the proceeds from their crimes to build street credibility via the purchase of clothes, cars, drugs, and the pursuit of sexual conquest.

In the UK, Beatrix Campbell (1993) linked the decline of car manufacturing in Oxford, where the industry used to employ large numbers of working-class male school leavers, to the crime and anti-social behaviour of many of the white men living on the surrounding estates. She highlights how stealing cars and driving them at high speeds around their local housing estates, together with intimidation of those who objected, was important for the young men's sense of themselves as daring risk takers, enforcers and

real men (also see Corbett, 2003). Similarly, research on young working-class men in Australia (Cunneen, 1995) and Canada (O'Connor and Kelly, 2006) identified similar patterns of economic and vehicle crime where risk and driving prowess were used as means of performing protest masculinity.

Other studies exploring the interplay of masculinity and crime in post-industrial regions in the UK have focused on the 'night-time economy'. The night time formal economy offers legitimate income for hard masculine bodies providing security as already discussed (Monaghan, 2002; Winlow, 2001). However, for the 'badfellas' in Winlow's (2001) study of door staff in the North East or the 'hardmen' in Lee Monaghan's (2002) study of private security workers in Wales and the South East, this type of work is often a platform where feared and respected masculinities are reproduced through a cyclical system of excessive violence (Winlow, 2001) and entrepreneurship centred on protection, drug dealing and stolen goods.

2.11.2 Masculinity and Violent Crime

The many manifestations of violence and the role it plays in legitimating constructions of masculinity has been convincingly established throughout the social sciences over recent decades (see 2009; Kimmel and Mahler, 2003; Polk, 1994; Segal, 2007; Toch, 1992; Tomsen and Mason, 2001). However, because of its close resonance with the informants' gendered trajectories, it is worth reiterating Messerschmidt's (1997) claim that intrapersonal male violence serves as a direct and potent situational resource for the construction of masculinity among marginalised men because of its strong association with hegemonic masculinity. This echoes

Connell's (1995) empirical findings on protest masculinity, characterised by hyper masculine aggressive displays and violent crime as responses to economic and cultural weakness, as discussed in detail in the opening section of this chapter. Gary Barker's (2005) comparative study of young males in the Caribbean, Nigeria, Africa, America and Brazil suggest this is the case across many cultures. He shows how young men who have limited or no access to work, which in the societies he explored was the defining feature of masculinity, invested heavily in protest masculinity where cultural expectations of machismo found expression, often through serious gang violence, on the streets.

Similarly, Christopher Mullins's (2006) research with young criminals shows how violence was readily employed as a resource to prove masculinity. Interestingly, he found that after proving they were capable of doing gender this way, many felt committed and tied into it as a resource in maintaining future gender identities. Jack Katz (1988) highlighted that once violent or criminal identities are established they must be continually backed up or risk losing credibility in the few places, like the street or prison, where it is most needed. It is in these spaces, Copes and Hochstetler (2003) observe, that 'pretenders' who provoke situations they cannot handle face serious denigration (p. 288), usually with insults loaded with feminine connotations. In some cases this may even lead to homicide (Polk, 1994). Kenneth Polk's (1994) influential study of men who kill, for example, highlighted typical 'masculine scenarios' that lead to homicide often evolved from minor disputes relating to perceived acts of disrespect and an affront to personal honour.

Winlow (2004), posits that although this work on multiple masculinities adds to a gendered analysis of men, violence and crime, it inadvertently overshadows the critical focus on the ways in which the men in his UK study generated 'visceral pleasure' (p. 18) through violent offending (see also Ferrell, 1992; Katz, 1988; Lyng, 1990). The pleasure, adrenaline, nervous energy and gratification that some experience through violence (and crime) tend to, he suggests, appeal to aspects of masculinities within certain harsh social, economic and cultural backdrops (Winlow, 2004). Winlow is careful to point out that men who lack social and economic resources are not all prone to violence, and many across the class spectrum, too, will experience the thrill that comes with successfully transgressing some aspects of the law. However, the thrill and respect that comes with (violent) offending appeals to lower class men in the UK and other countries for many of the reasons already discussed. Importantly, for Winlow, this means that the likelihood of perpetrating or being a victim of violence is much greater for lower class men and consequently this likelihood pervades many aspects of their daily lives. Under these conditions, he argues, 'lower working-class boys' learn early on the 'emotive nature of physical combat' and learn a 'variety scripts enabling successful negotiation of potentially violent situations' (p. 18). Or as Gunter (2008) found in his research with young black men from an impoverished estate in London, the safest way of avoiding being a victim of adrenalin-based violence or an attack from those seeking masculine capital by way of violence, is ironically through successful performances of the same aggressive masculinity.

2.11.3 Criminalising and Policing White Masculinity

Another important consideration or pitfall of a gender-centric analysis of crime is that if used uncritically it may reinforce and justify the criminalisation process that 'targets, criminalises and punishes men and boys from disadvantaged and marginal social settings' (Tomsen, 2008, p. 94). A way of partly tackling this conundrum is in highlighting the processes through which criminalised masculinities are reproduced in tension with official forms of masculinities inscribed in policing and other criminal justice systems (Newburn and Stanko, 1994). Scholarship on police culture, for instance, highlights the contradictory relations between the state deploying and endorsing highly aggressive and sexist masculinities to police and regulate the criminalised protest masculinities of poor males (Fielding, 1994; Smith and Gray, 1985; Westmarland, 2001). It has been shown that it is these same police who are usually the first agency to come into contact with suspects, consequently have significant influence on who enters the criminal justice system (McConville et al., 1993; Reiner, 2010). Research exploring the informal side of policing reveals, too, that often officers have a great deal of discretionary power and often substantial amount of autonomy in what crimes to pay attention to, usually driven by collective and individual values and norms (Reiner, 2010).

An important dimension to this research on policing cultures relevant to this study is that although racist and sexist language is becoming more taboo in official police discourse (Webster, 2008), overt class contempt, usually attached to a particular type of white ethnicity, is, as Colin Webster (2008) notes, an increasingly significant issue that impacts on approaches to

policing. Class has always been major determinant of policing (Loader, 2006; Morgan, 2002), but widespread political, policy and media representations have seen a powerful discursive shift that renders invisible harsh structural inequalities. Instead, poor whites are portrayed as somehow suffering from a deepening 'moral crisis' (Tyler, 2015) or positioned as 'illegitimate subjects' (Haylett, 2001). In the context of policing and crime, gender, too, plays a key role in this denigration, for in many places it is poor white males who are constructed as the embodiment of disorder and distaste (Loftus, 2009; McDowell, 2003b).

Bethan Loftus (2009) and Webster (2008) both argue that for officers coming from so-called hard working-class backgrounds, the relentless policing of criminal 'white trash' is a way of distancing themselves from the 'white other' and reinforcing their own respectability and success. Webster (2008) and Loftus (2009) cite evidence that shows in some areas white working-class men are significantly overrepresented in stop and search statistics. Loftus (2009), in her recent research on UK contemporary police culture, found at every rank high incidences of class contempt towards white working-class men. Known as 'scrotes', these men were seen as legitimate and safe targets for denigration and over-policing because of their assumed, but wasted, 'privilege' of white ethnicity. Loftus (2009) and Webster (2008) both conclude that classism and racism towards low status white males have led to their criminalisation in ways not too dissimilar from the criminalization of other minorities.

I have highlighted debates surrounding masculinity and crime, and how the policing side of the criminal justice intervention contributes to

criminalising and the reproduction of criminal masculinities. The inevitable outcome of these processes are the excessive rates of incarceration of poor working-class males (Morgan, 2002), like respondents in this study. I want to use the following final section of this chapter to look at key scholarship exploring how another part of the system, prison, assists in creating and maintaining, or indeed challenging, masculinities of exclusion. I now turn to these debates under prison masculinities.

2.12 Prison Masculinities

Considering men commit most crime and account for over 90 per cent of the prison population at any one time in the UK, there is a surprising dearth of research exploring the 'doing' of masculinity in the UK prison space (Carlsson, 2013; Earle and Phillips, 2012; Pemberton, 2013). This is not to argue that there is lack research on prison, but rather, as Joe Sim (1994) points out, existing research concentrates too much on 'men as prisoners rather than prisoners as men' (p. 101). Before going on to highlight recent scholarship that focuses more explicitly on masculinity and incarceration, I want to take some space to introduce a number of early and widely cited sociological studies on men in prison. Although in this classic work gender is not explicitly drawn on as an analytical framework, significant relevance for this study stems from a focus on prison sub cultures that implicitly identified hierarchised masculinities and consequently recognises the role of the prison space in creating and maintaining dominate and subordinated masculinities.

2.12.1 Early Sociology of Prisons

Early key studies mainly took place in the US and posited that prison culture or prison societies, that in turn shape and influence masculine identities/hierarchies, were created and maintained through adaptation strategies to the conditions of the carceral space. One of the earliest and more influential of these prison studies is Donald Clemmer's (1940) *The Prison Community*. Although over 70 years old this work still, as I show in chapters 6 and 7, has interesting insights relevant to my informants' prisoner identity. Working in an American penitentiary during the late 1930s he was primarily interested in the culture of prison and how structural and social relationships generated class stratification or what might be understood today as prison masculine hierarchies. Using the dominant functionalist framework of the time he introduced the concept of prisonization, which he explained as the assimilation process that occurs when inmates accept the 'folkways, mores, and customs, and general culture of the penitentiary' (Clemmer, 1940, p. 299). For him, every prisoner, depending on length of sentence and outside support/contact etc., will internalise and accept prison culture to some extent and experience varying degrees of prisonization. As part of this process inmates adjust to their environment and to 'survive' they practice expected modes of behaviour, understood by them as the 'inmate code'. Having evolved over many years and known to every prisoner, this collective code is mainly centred on inmate loyalty when dealing with each other, policing of taboo (sex) crimes, and being forbidden from colluding with officers or volunteering information about other criminals. In practice he found many breaches of this code, but despite this it is effective in controlling and organising prisoners.

Clemmer, in his exploration of prison culture, found that although aspects of the penitentiary were extremely atomised, it was also highly stratified. Inmates were positioned or classed depending on their adherence to the code, how they carried themselves and how others saw them, including officers. He listed three distinct typologies or classes based on the informally dominant and the dominated. The most revered masculinity—what he termed the ‘elite’ class—was made up of intelligent, sophisticated urbanised prisoners. Close to bottom of the hierarchy was the type of denigrated or subordinated masculinity associated with a ‘hoosier’, the ‘objectionable’, encompassing the stupid person, officer or ‘stool pigeon’ (informer). The lowest prisoners of all were the sex offenders.

Clemmer’s work, although highly regarded, has been criticised on several fronts. The main criticism is that he failed to explain the origins of the prison culture that structured prisoner society and on which his concept of prisonization is based (Wheeler, 1961). These challenges gave rise to two of the most prominent theories in penology known as the deprivation model and the importation thesis. Sociologist Gresham Sykes (2007) in his landmark study, *Society of Captives*, proposed the deprivation model and, like Clemmer, he accepted that culture originates behind the prison walls. However where he departs from Clemmer is that that he explained that the process of prisonization originates from the ‘pains of imprisonment’ born out of the deprivations that inmates have to cope with upon incarceration. Sykes proposed five deprivations: deprivation of liberty, deprivation of autonomy, deprivation of goods and services, deprivation of heterosexual relations, and deprivation of security. Each prisoner responds and negotiates the

depravations and pains of their incarceration in different ways and Sykes, like Clemmer, shows how this leads to 'argot roles' or hierarchal identities/masculinities. The 'rats' for instance, ease the pain of incarceration through informing and 'gorillas' exert control through violence. He claims the social cohesion of prison is maintained by a particular type of revered masculinity, the 'real man, however. This is the prisoner who 'pulls his own time', 'confronts his captors with neither subservience or aggression' 'embodies the inmates version of decorum' (p. 102) and has the respect of both prisoners and staff.

The influential work of Clemmer and Sykes offered a lens into the American penal system, but very little was known at the time of their work about the inhabitants of prisons in the UK. Drawing heavily on the work of Clemmer and Sykes, Terence & Pauline Morris' (1963) study *Pentonville* offered one of the first sociological perspectives on the UK prison system. Their study uncritically adopts the adaption/deprivation thesis, troublingly only finding negligible differences between American and British inmate cultures. Like Sykes they found that the deprivation of liberty impacts prisoners in different ways and that inmates adopted similar hierarchised 'argot roles'. Incarceration being harmful is the uniting consensus among proponents of 'prisonisation' and deprivation; inmates not only become more criminal but are more susceptible to suffering psychological and emotional deterioration (Viggiani, 2003).

Dennis Irwin and Donald Cressy's (1962) importation thesis challenges the idea that behaviour classified as part of prison culture was solely created as a response to incarceration and instead argue that

identities are imported into the institution by the criminal sentenced to a jail term. They suggest that much more consideration needs to be given to the environmental values from where prisoners originate and that the prison populations can be better understood as falling under three types of cultures: 'convict culture', 'thieves' and 'legitimate culture'. The most respected prisoners are the 'thieves' who, they argue, bring their status from connections outside of the prison. They note that the thieves are well aware of the rules of conduct and how to behave in prison a long time before they actually ever receive a sentence. Once inside the thieves are seen as loyal adherents to a strict criminal code and they hold significant influence over the other prisoners.

2.12.2 'Prisoners as Men'

Sarah Pemberton (2013) argues that despite the implied importance surrounding masculine identities in early sociological work, much of penal empirical enquiry/theorising that followed still failed to explicitly explore the gendered nature of male prisoners. She highlights that prisons, as one of the last bastions of official gender segregation, are obvious sites for the investigation of how masculinities are constituted in and against authoritative power. Similarly, Rod Earl and Coretta Phillips (2012) in their work looking at the organisation of ethnicities (and masculinities) in UK prisons raise this omission when noting that it is still relatively unusual for penal landscapes to feature within the surging field of masculinity studies. They go further and note: 'ever since Foucault, penal scholars have excelled in 'big picture' theorizing—but Foucault's 'docile bodies' have no gender; they have no

faces and no places. ... [Prisoners] must be revealed from the shadows into which they have most literally been thrown' (p. 153).

In a less pessimistic tone than Pemberton or Earl and Philips I suggest that there is a scattering of existing research and an encouragingly growing contemporary academic interest in the gendered nature of male prisoners. Although writing predominately from an American penal perspective, Sabo et al. (2001) published an edited collection on 'prison masculinities' over a decade ago in which they highlighted how masculinities in the overwhelming male space of the prisons have to be continuously worked and competed for, showing that they are organised around the adherence and policing of a universal prisoner/criminal code. Other interesting contributions to this collection centre on the interplay between sexuality, masculinity and incarceration. Stephen Donaldson (2001), for example, highlights how the 'queens' and 'punks' fuse masculinity and femininity in a particular performance based around passive homosexuality. He notes the 'other' role or denigration of this homosexual identity is part of the strategy for the construction of 'daddy' or manly prison masculinities. Terry Kupers (2005), an American psychologist, draws on his wide experience interviewing male prisoners to develop his idea of a 'toxic masculinity', which he claims is the most revered by inmates and can be understood as a combination of all the socially destructive aspects of Connell's hegemonic masculinity, such as 'misogyny, homophobia, greed, and violent domination' (2005, p. 716).

In the UK Yvonne Jewkes' (2005) research on men in the English prison system found that proving male credentials on the streets which, for

many working-class young men often leads to criminal behaviour and consequently incarceration, is itself a prerequisite to successful adaptation to life inside (2005, p. 51). She notes that once inside masculinity is positioned not only in accordance with the crime committed, but how prisoners carry themselves in the prison domain. Young male offenders enter the prison and attempt to adhere to a particular type of protest 'hard' masculinity but most, she claims, are quickly dismissed as 'wannabe gangsters' by the long termers, often lifers and armed robbers who are equally keen to maintain the revered and hyper masculine identity of the proper 'villain'. She found that men unable to live up to these masculine performances adopt alternative types of masculinity—the skilled tradesman, scholar, or legal adviser—to counter their potential marginalisation. However, she posits that an extreme construction of protest or hyper-masculinity is the almost universal response to adapting to the lower working-class prison culture. This exaggerated version of manliness, she suggests, is both a response to the pains of imprisonment identified by Sykes (2007) earlier, and the related resistance to the connotations of powerlessness associated with prisoner label.

Ben Crew (2009), another scholar working in the UK, shows how shifting power and social relations in the 'neoliberal prison' has resulted in changing prison masculine identities. He argues that the modern prison governed on managerialist principles means that power over prisoners has become more diffused and difficult for the inmates to identify. The move away from officers arbitrarily imposing power over inmates to a centralised system based on formalised procedures for sanctioning and privileges means prison masculinity is much less collectively constructed in opposition

to the staff and prison authority as was documented in classic penology work. This shift, coupled with what many of Crew's respondents believed was the changing culture of prison—as result of drug use and its related offending—has seen the significant erosion of the prisoner/criminal code that was core to older expressions of prison masculinities. These changes, he argues, meant inmates were less inclined to express their masculinities through overt hyper masculine violent displays documented in other prison research. Instead, less collectively driven inmates sought out individual pathways and respectable prison masculinities were expressed through doing easy time and cleverly working the system, within the remaining core prisoners' values, to secure their earliest possible release. Like in other research he found that material possession (clothes), in-cell possessions (electrical items/toiletries) and outside criminal conduct/contacts and relationship to drugs (user or dealer) were still significant forms of masculine currency and that this generated hierarchies that determined easy or hard time.

Coretta Phillips's (2012) work in English prisons focuses more on how gender intersects with other social categories in the construction of masculinities and how they are formally and informally organised in the prison space. In what she terms the 'multicultural prison' she suggests that prison masculinities are much more complex than portrayed in a lot of UK penal research. She argues that the growing incarceration of black and minority men has significantly dislodged the once dominant position of white masculinity and that race, ethnicity and religion play major roles in changing prison masculine identities and hierarchies. 'Blackness', she found, was a

highly revered masculine identity among inmates of all ethnicities in her research. Inmates were attracted to how masculinities associated with 'blackness' were expressed through a particular style, music, food, loyalty and belonging. Phillips is careful to point out that despite obvious strains, the prisons she studied were in no way as violent or anywhere near as racially divided as the American system and that over the years a good deal of progress has been made in recognising diversity throughout the prison body.

The common theme uniting debates on prison masculinities is their hierarchal organisation of the prison space. Counterpoised to the respected hyper masculine and violent inmate are the informers, 'poor copers' and, even lower down, the deviant 'beast' masculinities. I discovered similar masculine identities; however, as I show in chapter 6 and 7, informants' prison masculinities were much more multifaceted and complex than is suggested in the binary of dominant and inferior gender performances. Furthermore, a great deal of research exploring prison masculinities focuses on the men whilst in the institution and fails to fully account for how locality or place is implicated in prison identities/hierarchies. In Phillips' (2012) study, for example, the organisation of masculinities around multiple ethnicities and the reverence of black masculinities is indicative of the city catchments which the prison serves. In chapter 6 I show that, in contrast to her 'blackness', the 'local' prison in my study housed those taken from surrounding white working-class neighbourhoods and as such 'white hegemony' remained a revered masculinity.

2.13 Conclusion

Drawing from key debates across the social sciences this chapter has set out the core theoretical framework and the major themes that set the foundation for the subsequent empirical part of this study. In these empirical chapters I endeavour to present the informants' voices, as much as possible, to explore their classed and gendered trajectories over the key site discussed above. Before presenting these findings in the following chapter I first outline the background to study and the epistemological and methodological challenges it raised.

3

Background to the Study and Qualitative Methods

3.1 Introduction

The vast majority of the informants who participated in this study were born in Hull and had spent all of their lives in and around local authority housing estates. As I show in chapter 5 their ability to earn a living, legitimate or otherwise, was tightly linked to their localities, and this was one of the main factors ‘trapping’ them in place (McDowell, 2003b). It is important, therefore, to firmly position this study in its geographical context and to give a real sense of the place in which the respondents constructed and navigated their gendered identities. In the first section of the chapter that follows I briefly outline Hull’s industrial heritage as a city that went from a thriving industrial ‘golden age’ when it was UK’s third largest port (Gillett and MacMahon, 1989) to, at the time of the research, languishing at the bottom of almost every UK indicator of wealth (Centre for Cities, 2014). The second section of this chapter introduces the main site for the research, Hull ‘Local Prison’. I briefly outline the history of the prison and its institutional role within the England and Wales prison estate and why it was chosen as the research site.

Having outlined the background to the study, in the next section of this

chapter I focus on the qualitative methods employed for data gathering and analysis. I first discuss and qualify my role as an ‘insider’ researcher. I argue that contrary to scholarship on this subject which associates insider positionality with epistemological privilege (Griffith, 1998), my position as an ex-con researcher presented many challenges and often felt like a burden. I then show how and why the participants were selected. Following this I outline how data for the project were gathered through life history interviews, why this approach was used and its limitations.

3.2 Place of Research: Kingston-Upon-Hull

Hull’s advantageous geographical position stems from its rivers and estuary systems that allow easy access to North Sea and Northern Europe’s lucrative trade routes. It is this that led to its ascendancy as one of Europe’s biggest and busiest ports (Gillett and MacMahon, 1989). The city’s prospered through industries related to its port, like shipbuilding and importing timber; but because of relatively close proximity to the ‘Silver Pits’ (fish rich parts of the North Sea), fishing and associated industries are what generated most of the wealth (ibid). The city’s prosperity as a result of fishing and auxiliary industries came at considerable human cost, as Alan Johnson the local labour MP notes in a recent article for the Guardian:

[Fishing] took a terrible toll. There were 6,000 men lost in 150 years of trawling out of Hull. Nine hundred ships didn’t come back. It’s an amazing carnage ... an industry that had mortality rate 17 times higher than coal mining. But it was a way of life and it employed thousands of people and thousands in the fish processing industry.’ (cited in English, 2014).

Michael Ulyatt (1985) in his book *Trawler Men of Hull*, suggests that the apparent danger and risk, and the higher rewards that became later associated with the fishing industry, is what informed local ideals of masculinity and led to it being a highly attractive option for the local young men. Working away on fishing trawlers and returning with sums of money to spend in short periods whilst on shore was the highly respectable and desirable way of 'doing masculinity' as well as earning a decent living. Ulyatt reports that many of the young fishermen when they were away at sea had little to spend their wages on and so on their return they would invest in hand-made expensive suits, ride taxis between local bars and clubs and enjoy attention from adoring local girls or at the least the heterosexual majority. The ultimate goal of many would be to eventually save enough and go on to own purchase their own trawler.

3.2.1 Dark Days of Industrial Decline

Following the Second World War that saw commandeering and the loss of most of the city's best trawlers, and the ongoing Iceland 'cod wars' of the seventies (see Jonsson, 1982), the Hull fishing industry spiralled into rapid decline. Eventually as result of 'unrealistic quotas' and 'unreasonable' coastal boundaries the death blow to a dying industry eventually came in 1976 when British trawlers were obliged to leave the white-fish-rich coastal shelves of Iceland for good (ibid). This disappearing fishing industry inevitably had a devastating impact on surrounding fishing ancillary trades such as processing, packing and smoking plants and specialist haulage and transport companies.

Whilst reeling from the collapse of deep-water trawler industry, the seventies saw the onset of soaring unemployment in other areas and sectors. Hull's dockers, for instance, were losing their jobs in significant numbers as a result of automation that saw the introduction of heavy lifting machinery and more sophisticated storage and shipping systems (Gillett and MacMahon, 1989). By the eighties, like almost everywhere else in the UK, Hull's modest manufacturing sector profoundly suffered under Thatcher's neo-liberal agenda and the city experienced exceptionally high unemployment during that decade's recession and the following one in the early nineties. Jamie Jenkins (2010) points out that both recessions of the eighties and nineties lasted five consecutive quarters, but importantly employment continued to plummet for around three and half years after the start of both recessions.

Census data from 1981 to 2001 show Hull suffered disproportionately post recessions and has featured almost consistently in the top ten places with the highest unemployment rates (Nomis, 2011a). This is partly explained through decades of neglect from central government and the city's failure to adequately diversify to benefit from its geographical assets that include the deep water of the Humber and proximity to North Sea (Lee, 2010). As a result Hull never fully recovered from loss of its major industries and the successive recessions in the last decades of the twentieth century. This meant the city was especially vulnerable in the 2008 crash and was one of the hardest hit places in England (Dolphin, 2009). The consequences, as I outlined in the opening chapter, are still reverberating and trapping the likes of the respondents in this study in structural poverty.

As the research drew to close in 2015, however, there was evidence that Hull was finding ways of diversifying and I noted an air of optimism from probation staff and others involved in the employability of prisoners, believing that the city was on the cusp of a new industrial era. 'Green Port Hull' captures how billions are being invested to tap into Hull's (and East Riding of Yorkshire) advantageous geography for offshore energy and sees how the city is being hailed as a future 'world class centre' for renewable energy (see greenporthull.co.uk). Leading the way, Siemens has chosen Hull as the location for over £300 million of investment for the manufacture, assembly and servicing of wind turbine blades. How respondents fit in with this industrial shift will be explored in the closing chapter of this study. Having documented the structural and social forces that contributed to creating the particular place where most of the informants were 'born and bred', the next section describes and contextualises the site of research: Hull Local Prison.

3.3 Field: Local Prison

Hull prison was an appropriate location for meeting the core aim of this research because as a 'local'² its catchment covers some of the heaviest deindustrialised northern regions and also includes one of Europe's largest expanses of council housing. A Victorian prison, Hull is situated relatively central to the city and first opened in 1870 housing both men and women. At the time of the research its official function as a category B local meant, as with other locals, it accepted criminals within a particular

² A local prison holds offenders on remand who have been sent to them by their local courts. Once sentenced, and depending on categorisation and sentence plan, the offender may serve their sentence at the local or high security, training or open prison.

catchment detained before or directly after conviction. In this local capacity the prison is responsible for sentenced and remand adult males and young offenders from Crown Court catchment areas of Hull, York and Grimsby and various magistrates courts across the region. It has an operational capacity of nearly 976 and deals with a highly transient population of remand and short-sentenced prisoners.

Hull prison, like others with a similar allocation of prisoners, manages a large turnover of men. About a third of those held are serving a sentence of four years or more for serious offences. On average this prison receives anywhere between 3200 and 3600 new receptions a year. A 2009 report jointly compiled by National Treatment Agency (National Treatment Agency, 2009) and Hull prison highlights that during this period over 80 per cent of their inmates came from within a 50 mile radius of the prison and that over 50 per cent of those released in this time were released into the city of Hull. Hull's role as the main city feeding the prison is certainly reflected in this study as over two thirds of the 30 men interviewed all lived in the city before their incarceration and nearly all of them proudly declared that they were 'born and bred' in and around the two main local authority housing estates.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons for England and Wales (HMI Prisons) in October 2014 noted that '[t]he overall management of violence reduction [throughout the prison] was weak and vulnerable prisoners were subject to unacceptable abuse and threats which staff did too little to challenge' (HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, 2014). The inspectorate went onto to describe what they witnessed: 'The vulnerable prisoner section of the wing was gated off but we saw prisoners crawling under the gates in an attempt to

get to the doors of vulnerable prisoners' (ibid, p. 5). Despite these worrying scenes the same report claims that that 'hard data' about the safety of Hull were generally better or comparable to other prisons. Compared to most other institutions like it there were fewer incidents involving the use of force from staff. Notwithstanding its turbulent past and some reported violence the inspectors concluded that '[t]he prison was calm, the regime was predictable, and prisoners had appropriate freedom to move around' (HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, 2014 p. 5). An earlier inspectorate report compiled during the time of research in 2012 rated the prison's performance as exceptional (HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, 2012). Inspectorate reports indicate Hull, shifting from high incidences of violence and intimidation to periods of calm, is fairly typical for a local prison. It is the prison's archetypal status, with a high turnover of males from surrounding deprived estates, serving sentences for all nature of offences, that qualifies Hull local as a suitable site for the purposes of this research.

I have outlined the reason behind choosing Hull and the local prison, where, as I show in chapter 4, many respondents spent their formative years and consequently transitioned from boys to men. Starting with positionality and how my role as 'insider' impacted on the research process, I want to use the remaining sections of the chapter to discuss methodological concerns and introduce the qualitative strategies that I adopted in collecting the data.

3.4 Qualitative Methods

3.4.1 'Insider': Challenging Epistemological Privilege

In qualitative research the importance of the social characteristics of the researcher and their relationship to those they study is the essence of the 'insider/outsider' debate (see Berger, 2013; Chavez, 2008; Griffith, 1998; Merton, 1972; Phillips, 2010). Alison Griffith (1998) in a paper on 'Mothering Work' notes an 'insider' is someone whose biography (gender, race, class, sexual orientation and lived experiences etc.) gives them a lived familiarity with the group being researched and this tacit knowledge supposedly informs the research process in a way that is not available to the 'outsider'. This claim of 'epistemological privilege' for the 'insider' permeates emancipatory scholarship and rests on common-sense notions that a biography provides sufficient grounds for shared knowledge (Griffith, 1998). Alternatively, the 'outsider' doctrine, which is the traditional perspective of objectivist sociology, focuses not on the advantages of a common identity but on 'the corrupting influence of group loyalties on human understanding' (Merton cited in Griffin 1998 p. 362). Feminist scholar Christine Chavez (2008) argues that insider/outsider positionality is better understood as operating on a spectrum rather than in opposition. At one end of the continuum is the 'total insider', a researcher sharing with their informants multiple characteristics of ethnicity, class and knowledge of the same institutions, social environments and social groups. Secondly, she suggests the 'partial insider', a researcher who might share a single or few characteristics and who is relatively detached from their participants.

Robert Merton (1972), in his often-cited analysis of the sociology of knowledge, argues that outsider or insider both have their distinct assets and liabilities. The 'detachment' of the outsider allows them to see what others take for granted. Too much social distance, however, may mean that misunderstandings are likely to occur (Miller and Glassner, 1997). The extensive and tacit knowledge the insider brings to the research produces a different understanding of the experiences of the group being studied. However, too strong a claim to insiderism would inherently limit sociological research as the researcher would only be able to attempt to understand the groups to which he or she belongs (Merton, 1972). Griffith (1998), paralleling Chavez's (2008) claim of a full or partial insider, is careful to note that while the researcher and participant might share one identity, there will always be other aspects that differ. For me it not as straightforward as Chavez (2008) and Griffith (1998) suggest. While some aspects of the author's identity would have, at one stage, been strikingly similar to the informants (growing up on a deprived estate, exclusion from schooling, criminality and incarceration), a university education, career, age, locality and current long period at liberty are just some of the structural differences that now exist between the informants and me.

Perhaps more importantly, as I argue in the next section, far from being privileged I suggest that for an ex-con researcher the prison as field is unique in that it imposes limitations that will not be experienced by others, insiders or outsiders, in other research contexts. For reasons indicated above and that will become clearer as this discussion progresses, I decided that my history held a greater potential to hinder rather than benefit the

research process and I hoped to carry out the study as an academic first and covert ex-prisoner (insider) second. I soon found it was naive to think I had autonomy in this decision, at least with officials. I was, however, able to retain some control over my positionality with the informants.

3.4.2 Breaking In: Access

Reviewing the literature on insider positionality, it is widely accepted that because of the advantages or, as Griffith (1998) claims, privileges, it is almost a given that researchers who share similar lived experiences with their participants embrace, with reflexivity, this position (see Berger, 2013; Chavez, 2008; Griffith, 1998). A key advantage often highlighted is that 'insiders' will have smoother access to the field and that they will have more legitimacy and enjoy easier assimilation (Berger, 2013; Chavez, 2008). Although initially access was granted informally as a result of a relationship I had already established with the governing governor stemming from my time as a prisoner, I, like all other researchers, still had to follow bureaucratic procedures and apply to the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) for security clearance. This presented the first major difficulty because the security officers attached to the prison are the ones who process the first stage of application and I was forced to disclose my criminal history and periods of incarceration to this department. Prison staff, as in any other institution, have learned to be curious as part their role and it was later evident that a 'friend of the boss' attempting to enter the establishment with a long list of criminal convictions was the subject of intrigue and gossip. Perhaps this increased when MoJ deemed me too high risk to give clearance for the research. Fortunately after

some delay and much correspondence the governor was able to negotiate my access with some limitations that I will highlight later. It is important to note that challenges and power struggles entering prison for research purposes for researchers of both genders and various backgrounds are well documented, and not unique to me. Prison scholars have suggested that because of their perceived middle-class status, suspected left wing liberal political views and gender, they have faced resentment and often sexist and misogynous ridicule from prison staff whilst studying men and women in prisons (Cowburn, 2007; Drake, 2010; Evans and Wallace, 2008; Liebling, 2001).

The important point, however, is that from the moment of having to disclose my history, I quickly became an ex-con first and a researcher second and it was this imposition of insider status that presented some of the biggest challenges in the early days of the project. A significant limitation of being an ex-convict researcher was that, despite having the support of an influential gatekeeper, I was not, like many other 'outsider' prison researchers/visitors, trusted with a set of keys or 'unfettered' access to the prison. Rather I was allocated a senior, long-serving principal officer (PO) as an escort. Although as I show in later chapters this would later turn out to be a fortuitous arrangement, the early days of this relationship and how best to manage this imposed insider status was exhausting and distracting. The first day being shown around the prison, for example, I had to answer questions put to me including: 'Have you ever been in a prison before?' 'This is a segregation unit; do you know what happens here?' 'You know you can't trust any of these lot, they will have one over you the moment your turn your

back?’ In the reception area where men from the courts are received, an officer opened the file of the prisoner standing at the desk being processed and pointing to the official court papers listing his offence of buggery of his seven year old child, exclaimed: ‘this the kind we deal with daily’! Soon afterwards, my PO escort spoke at length of his experiences of outwitting prisoners in order catch them out with drugs and other contraband and for reasons I am still unsure of he took me to the visiting area of prison where I was left standing in close proximity to the resident drug sniffer dog and his handler, while he excused himself and left for a cigarette.

In dealing with these and other issues I felt, after much turmoil, that there are situations where it was best to disclose my history. It transpired that I only had to explain this to the PO escort, who told me he was already aware of it, and to one other officer who was his close colleague. I can only suspect that the security team leaked my details but, despite these early difficulties, we went on to establish a great relationship and I later learned he was a highly respected officer by both the inmates and colleagues, which of course was helpful in establishing trust. Unfortunately, this was not the case with all disciplinary staff and there were extremely challenging times in the field. I had to be constantly alert, for instance, of how to respond to the open and widespread denigration of prisoners and their families by officers who regularly referred to them as ‘scum of the earth’ and coming from ‘drug addled filthy estates’.

3.4.3 Building Rapport

Another major privilege associated with insider status documented

throughout the literature is the assumption that it facilitates good rapport (Berger, 2013; Griffith, 1998). Chavez (2008) suggests that shared experience allows, in many cases, the respondent to feel more at ease and be more likely to 'open up'. From my experience of working with prisoners and ex-offenders, I understood that it takes time and investment to build up trust and rapport, especially from those with similar experiences. I felt that this would take much more time than the limited time I had with respondents and this was partly why I decided I would not share my history of crime and incarceration. This decision was soon vindicated when I asked a respondent what he thought about an ex-prisoner coming back into the establishment. His response was in stark contrast to insider claims about easy rapport. He told me that during his time in prison he had 'seen loads of ex-prisoners come back in to do inspirational talks and stuff and they are either god nutters or fucking grasses'. He went on to say that when you get talking to them, you can't trust them, 'they are not like proper prisoners. They might have done a silly sentence for fraud or drink driving or some crazy twat who murdered his wife, but they have not really done jail in the same way'. This of course is one view and I would argue could be changed over time.

Another important point is that, as I discussed in the second chapter, prisons are highly masculinised and hierarchal spaces. Male researchers, insiders or outsiders, entering the prison will be positioned in this masculine hierarchy. Middle-class academics, who on the outside hold more cultural, social and economic capital, find themselves in a space where their masculinity is much less openly valued and even a source of humour or ridicule (see Crewe, 2014). It is interesting to think about the power

dynamics. The sheltered middle-class researcher is reliant on the informants to educate them about their world and way of life. Arguably, the unknowing middle-class researcher is of little threat and this might perhaps encourage a feeling of safety for openness and honesty. In contrast, ex-convict researchers disclosing inside credentials have to think carefully where they might fit into this masculine hierarchy and how this might impact the data generated. Will the researcher's offending history, for instance, overshadow that of their respondents or get their approval? Will they have done enough or too little prison? When and where did they serve? How did I do jail?

3.4.4 Equalised Power Relations

This previous point is also important in challenging another widespread claim of the advantage afforded to insider positionality, and this is that the common characteristics of researcher and research subjects allegedly lead to a more equal and legitimate relationship (Berger, 2013; Chavez, 2008; Griffith, 1998). I found that a prison holding incarcerated informants significantly challenges this claim. Unequal power relations could not have been more profoundly evident than when at the end of an interview the informants were escorted back to their cell, while I either went for lunch in the staff mess or, as an ex-prisoner, celebrated my release at the end each day.

3.4.5 Covert Insider

It is difficult to fully document or even grasp what my history brought to the research process. It would be misleading to highlight just the challenges and fail to acknowledge that my insider status may have benefited the study at

certain points. It is impossible to fully dismiss my shared history with the respondents and difficult, therefore, to deny that an insider's tacit knowledge has not in some way added advantages, perhaps more so during interviews, data analysis and the writing-up stages. Despite attempts as a covert insider trying to 'blend in' (May, 2001), class and elements of life history are worn or embodied (Reay, 2005; Skeggs, 2004). Research participants, according to Sally Holland & Jonathan Scourfield (2000), will make assumptions about the rhetoric on masculinity that the interviewer requires based purely on overt characteristics (class, ethnicity, gender, accent etc.). This in itself may well have enhanced the study as it reveals something about the participant's dominant ideas of masculinity. I would strongly argue, however, that this does not amount to a position of privilege; the role of covert insider was extremely hardwearing and emotionally costly. One of more difficult aspects was stripping the respondents of their experiences without offering anything in return, especially given my experiences in fighting substance misuse, education, desistance from crime and jobs I held before becoming a student.

In this section I have suggested that the prison as research site has the potential to negate or significantly undermine the so-called privileges and many advantages associated with insider positionality. In the next part I introduce the qualitative methods involved in selecting the participants, data collection and analysis.

3.5 Methods

3.5.1 Pilot Study

Before selecting participants and progressing to the main study, a pilot study was completed with an individual respondent and then in a group context with four inmates. This test run allowed for the development of a degree of familiarity with the research site, to trial chosen methods and an opportunity to practise interview techniques (Silverman, 2011). It was after the success of the first pilot interview that I decided that the life history interview approach would be the most appropriate. The group pilot was designed like a focus group to explore whether there were any 'no go areas' in how men felt talking about some of the difficult and more intimate issues associated with their masculinities. It was also an opportunity to get feedback and ask the respondents how they felt about the study, whether it was flawed in any particular areas in their opinion or to discover if they wanted to add anything (Silverman, 2011).

The pilot study was enormously useful as it confirmed that the study seemed interesting and valid to those who took part in it. It also reinforced and allowed me to add to the interviews several subject areas, as well as generating a degree of confidence for the next phase of the study.

3.5.2 Participants

The study's core aim—to investigate the classed and gender trajectories of male prisoners from impoverished working-class neighbourhoods—required a

purposive sample. This strategy permits the researcher to seek out participants with particular characteristics that are central to the research process (Bryman, 2012). I was interested in recent and future working lives and keen to explore experiences across more than one generation and so actively sought respondents covering a broad age range of between 18 and 45. There was no intentional focus on one ethnicity over another. Although currently experiencing some degree of cultural diversification, this region (and the prison population) was still predominately white and this was certainly reflected in the group of participants. On the whole, the type of offence was not of great importance in deciding whom to interview, except that those whose offending was mainly of a sexual nature were avoided wherever possible, already being a highly researched cohort. All prison terms/experience were equally valid, from first-timers to persistent offenders or long-termers, and popular prisoners to those struggling or 'poor copers'. The nature of the 'local' prison means that the bulk of men coming through the gates are repeat offenders, drawn from the locality and surrounding areas, and in the main, men who have committed mainly lower scale acquisitive and/or violent crimes.

Thirty men from all areas of the prison were interviewed for the study and were selected through a variety of means. Several officers nominated individuals they felt would fit the required criteria and these participants then suggested friends, a method otherwise referred to as snowball sampling (Bryman, 2012). Further volunteers were identified during the time that I spent interacting and observing on the wings, and in education classes and workshops. All participants are white, except one who identifies as 'mixed

race'. They all claim to have grown up in what might be described as working-class households. Other relevant demographic information relating to the informants such as parents, type of household, schooling, education, work history, offending and incarceration is too varied to list here and can be viewed in the table in appendices one and two. All the respondents' names and other identifiable information have been changed and pseudonyms used in the following chapters.

3.5.3 Ethics

Before any interviews took place the ethical concerns about informed consent, anonymity, and confidentiality were addressed following guidance from the British Sociological Association (www.britisoc.co.uk). Using a signed agreement of informed consent (see appendix three) respondents were given an accurate description of the nature of the research and told their anonymity would be protected and the degree to which their confidentiality would be guaranteed. With regards to anonymity they were assured that no names or any other identifiable features would be disclosed. Moreover, it was vital that the participants were clear on bounds of confidentiality. It was understood that there would be particular concerns about whether any information would be made available to prison officials or police, which could in turn lead to lengthier sentences or further charges. The participants were reassured that neither the prison staff nor any other agency would have access to any information disclosed, unless it was deemed they were a risk to themselves or a direct danger to others. Fortunately, nothing of concern was ever disclosed but it was important to clarify my position. The men were

informed that the results of the research would be made available to relevant academics and could well be published and accessed via an online repository. Additionally, it was important that the inmates were fully informed and understood that their participation in the research would in no way favour them for early release or extra privileges within the prison. Finally, it was made clear that they could abort the interview at any time.

3.5.4 In-Depth Life History Interviews

As a core part of the study was to investigate how the respondents constructed masculinities retrospectively (and currently) over key sites, I decided to use in-depth life history interviews to generate the bulk of the data. This type of interview generates rich, nuanced and detailed information because it encourages respondents to express their 'knowledge, views, interpretations, experiences, and interactions' (Mason, 2002, p. 63). In-depth life history, according to Connell (1995), is a 'first class method' (ibid, p89) not only because it produces data about an individual's actions as a human agent, but also because life histories document the interaction between social structures, social movements and institutions (Connell, 1995; Plummer, 2001). In collecting data for analysis, the in-depth interview, as Kenneth Plummer (2001) notes, offers a plethora of strategies or approaches. For the purpose of this study I used in-depth interviews with open-ended questions that were designed to gently probe and prompt memories. To meet the study's main aim the interviewees needed to be prompted to discuss areas relating to their transitions between multiple spaces (home, school, streets, work, prison etc.) and therefore an interview guide (see appendix four) was

devised. Use of a guide ensures that interviews follow the same overall plan, whilst at the same allowing freedom to explore and clarify individual responses (Bryman, 2012). The interview guide was informed by the researcher's personal experience/knowledge and comprehensive literature review and adapted after the pilot study.

The interviews mainly took place in the relatively comfortable and vacant staff offices on the respondents' respective wings and had to fit in around prison routines. Interviews often ran well over an hour and were recorded for later analysis. Tim May (2001) suggests that a disadvantage associated with recording is that some participants may find the presence of an audio recorder inhibiting and not wish their conversations to be documented. Experience meant that I was aware the participants would have been interviewed and logged on numerous occasions whilst in police custody and in many cases this would have been used as evidence against them. My awareness of these issues meant that I was able to fully reassure the informants and continually remind them of their confidentiality and anonymity; in most cases, though, I seemed to be much more concerned than they were as a common response was: 'I don't give a fuck anyway' (Buster) and 'I'm not worried about people hearing' (Danny).

The in-depth interview, as David Silverman observes (2011), is one of the most time-consuming methods in social sciences and this makes it difficult to apply to a large sample and so limits its use to small scale studies. Connell (1995) in using this approach for her empirical work on protest masculinities acknowledged, as is the main recognised limitation of qualitative research, that there is a trade off between scope for depth.

Plummer (2001) notes further limitations when he highlights that in-depth interviews rely solely on the narrative of the participant and the respondents may lack memory of key events/issues or simply try to deceive the interviewer. Furthermore, the researcher, he argues, might fail to establish an 'intimate familiarity' with the person whose life he is analysing and so the researcher is at risk of simply getting it wrong: 'speculating, abstracting and theorizing to great remove' (Plummer, 2001, p. 37) or worse still, 'substituting the researchers own view for that participant' (ibid, p. 37). Messerschmidt (2000b) in defence of in-depth interviews and qualitative enquiry argues that there is no reason to assume that respondents are no more likely to be dishonest during this type of interview than they are as participants in any of the other methodological approaches. This logic may also apply to a researcher's interpretation of data collected, as the life histories method is no more vulnerable to manipulation by unscrupulous researchers than many other research designs.

3.5.5 Data Analysis

Following the example of Rawyen Connell (1995), the analysis of the men's in-depth life interviews went through a number of rigorous and time-consuming phases. Having conducted and transcribed all thirty interviews, followed by a thorough first read through of the transcripts, meant the first and important stage of familiarising and immersing myself in data was complete (Bryman, 2012). Each interview was then read a second time and written up as an individual case study. Every transcript was analysed further and coded line for line and interconnecting codes were then grouped

together. Quite early on in this process consistent behaviours and experiences began to emerge identifying key themes (Bryman, 2012). Although the interview guide was designed to probe and focus on various aspects of the men's lives, a further read-through of transcripts clearly revealed distinct and interesting collective themes which were then indexed and listed under five main headings that correspond to key sites in the formation of masculinity: communities, education, relationships, work and incarceration (Connell, 1995). The main part of this process was to identify, individually and collectively, the 'making and un-making of masculinity' in and against various, structures, spaces and Institutions (ibid, p. 91).

3.5.6 Non-Participant Observation

Other valuable data that contributed to study were collected by observing the inmates engaging with the prison regime and going about their daily routines in the workshops, educational sessions and interactions with other prisoners. Quite unexpectedly but fortuitously a great deal of time was spent with some of the prison's more senior staff team in their private space where they retire for breaks and relaxation. It was during these periods that officers dropped their guard slightly and through observation and participation in some discussion I was able gain a brief snapshot (Bryman, 2012) of the senior officers' culture and insight into their masculine trajectories/performances. I felt that walking around the prison space with a note book and writing down information would inhabit responses, impact behaviour and make me as a researcher stand out in a way that would not be helpful (Silverman, 2011). For these reasons most observations, as Silverman (2011) suggests, were

written up for later analysis once out of sight or away from the field.

3.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed the place of research and relevance for this study, charting Hull's industrial rise, its decline and the profound impact of economic change on the area and many of its residents. I then introduced the site of the research—Hull's local prison—and how the role it plays in the prison estate and the type of offenders it houses makes it a suitable field for the research aims. In discussing my positionality I argued that the prison as field negates many of the privileges often associated with insider positionality. In the final section of the chapter I outlined the methods employed in data collection and analysis. In the following part of this thesis I discuss men's life histories and how they relate to or challenge the claims of previous research that I documented in chapter 2. In the next chapter—the first of the empirical chapters—the focus is on the role of the neighbourhood and schooling in pathways to prison.

4

Local Lads and Pathways to Prison

4.1 Introduction

Most research with prisoners focuses on the inmate's experiences whilst in the institution. This chapter starts from a position that the men in this study did not just find themselves incarcerated but that their pathways to prison started many years before their first prison sentences. I explore the pre-prison backgrounds of the participants to reveal where the bulk of the men come from who fill local prisons like the one in Hull. To start to understand the biographies of these marginalised respondents, then, it is necessary to explore the spaces where they learn to become men (Connell, 2000; Messerschmidt, 2001; Whitehead, 2002). In line with a large body of existing scholarship, the first section shows that one of the primary arenas in which early masculinities were learned, performed, rejected or reinforced was on the streets of their typically impoverished neighbourhood (see Barker, 2005; Bourgois, 2003; Connell, 1995; Gunter, 2010; MacDonald et al., 2001; Messerschmidt, 1997; Mullins, 2006). Nearly all the respondents grew up on one of the UK's poorest council housing estates, and their early ideas of manhood were heavily informed by a type of estate culture that holds no respect for official authority and where residents often employ intimidation and violence to 'protect' their streets from outsiders.

The second section explores the respondents' masculine trajectories over significant sites such as 'care' institutions and educational establishments. The powerful role institutions play in the creation and reproduction of marginalised masculinities has long been established (Connell, 1995, 1989; Segal, 2007; Willis, 1977). This was certainly confirmed by one third of the respondents who spent prolonged periods during their teens in local authority care. As I show, far from being a controlling influence, the care system proved a fertile space for the further creation and performance of what Connell (2000, 1995) identifies as protest masculinities. I argue that the other equally significant institutional space complicit in the creation of troubling masculinities comes through their engagement, or rather lack of engagement, in the schooling process. As I argued in chapter 2 (the literature review) the anti-learning culture adopted by these respondents was not unlike that reported in the literature of schooling and working-class masculinities that has emerged over recent decades (See Evans, 2006; Frosh et al, 2002; Gilbert, 1998; Mac an Ghail, 1994; O'Donnell and Sharpe, 2000; Reay, 2003; Skelton, 2001; Willis, 1977). What is notable about the men in this study, perhaps, is the high rate of early exit from schooling, their failure to achieve any educational accreditation at all, and the high rate of removal from mainstream learning for placements in alternative learning institutions, usually a residential facility or 'boarding school for bad lads'. A key argument of this section is how, in these alternative living and learning environments, the problematic masculine performances that took them there initially were not only informally and institutionally reinforced but also in many cases amplified in order to fit into

the tough masculine environment.

The following part of this chapter provides an insight into the men's criminal trajectories, exploring how early offending was, for nearly all the respondents, about masculine posturing and adrenaline 'buzz' related crime, usually centred around vehicle theft. Highlighting the transitional nature of their criminal careers I show how driving prowess, evading capture and not talking to the authorities often guaranteed fast track routes into older and more established criminal peer groups. I reveal how respectable masculine performances evolved and became based on being 'grafters' or big 'earners'. I finish the chapter by showing how all the respondents displayed the core component associated with protest masculinity: a willingness to engage in serious violence should the situation call for it. Indeed, as is evident throughout this and the following chapters the propensity to commit violence and/or be a victim of violence was an all-too-frequent occurrence in most of the men's lives.

4.2 Deprived Neighbourhoods

In understanding the respondents' pre-prison gender trajectories an appropriate starting point is to explore how masculinities were constructed in the context of the deprived neighbourhoods in which they lived. The areas that most of the men came from were well known to prison staff. As one senior officer puts it: 'it is mainly the scum from these two estates that keep the prison going', revealing his condescension towards offenders. Disregarding the tone, his comment is accurate. The vast majority of the

prison population in the UK are men taken from some of the most impoverished housing estates in the country (Jewkes, 2005). Practically all the respondents for this study came from strikingly similar neighbourhoods and, as shown in other empirical studies of marginalised street identities both here in the UK and the US (Anderson, 1999; Bourgois, 2003; Gunter and Watt, 2009; MacDonald and Shildrick, 2007; Nayak, 2006), the informants shared and were influenced by a culture stemming from values learned as a means of survival on their council housing estates. It was clear from most of the interviews that enforcing the estates' value systems and living up to the expected responsibilities in their communities generated resources for particular types of protest gendered performances or what most of the respondents understood as their masculine obligation.

All of the informants claimed that in their neighbourhoods the value system or code that most inhabitants chose to live by in order to be respected by certain groups was quite simply not to talk to anybody from 'the authorities' who could make life difficult for you or your neighbours, particularly the police, the local authority and 'outsiders'. Buster, one of the most experienced and seemingly highly respected prisoners, puts it quite simply when he states: 'when you are out there you don't talk to no one you don't know. Even most of the cunts you do know, you tell them fuck all'. Another important aspect of life on these estates is not 'taking from your own' or 'shitting on your own doorstep' (Matt). Several of the men suggested that on the 'estate' there is an understanding that everybody is in the 'same boat' and that to take from your own is a low act that can be dealt with severely by others in the community. This so-called self-policing seems to be more of an

ideal than a reality, however. Indeed, some of the men from this sample had to be segregated from the mainstream prisoners because they breached the code of their estate and did steal from, attack and victimise 'their own'. They robbed the wrong person or burgled the wrong house and as a result were in danger of reprisals within the prison. As I show later, these codes or values were often breached, the men regularly talked of there being 'too many informers about on the estate' and the prison being full of 'wrong 'uns'.³ However, despite several failing to fully live up to it, there was clear evidence of an underlying estate culture that has a significant impact on how the young men who grow up there construct their masculine identities.

Nearly all the respondents confirmed Messerschmidt's (1997) claim that those men with little economic and cultural capital will draw on whatever resources that are available in constructing their masculine identities. In their formative years spent on the streets, key masculine gender capital, as the following quotations illustrate, was gained through territorial loyalties, protecting one's turf and drawing on the notion of 'hardness'.

yeah, a lot of it is about territory ... they step onto our territory then we end up fighting with them and if we step onto theirs, it's the same. Like I go to a probation and that's in Grimsby and I always end up fighting at probation, because the lads that I don't get on with are from Grimsby. (Pat)

Yeah, dick heads from other areas would come to our estate looking to fight us. Because I was known as being the hardest, they would come and ask for me and then we would fight it out ... once you start getting the name for yourself through fighting, people will come to you and say 'blah blah said he can do you, him who lives on

³ Individual who goes against criminal or prison code such as violence or robbery of an elderly victim or giving information to the police or prison staff.

Spring bank blah blah' and I would just say 'well tell him to come down'. And he would come with his mates and you would go with your mates and sometimes you would have a fair fight, other times someone would put the boot in and before you know it everyone would join in. When I was that age I thrived off that, me, and especially when everyone was talking about us, I wanted to live up to it. I would never back down, even if it was men and I was 14 or 15. I would never back down and err, yeah I just thrived off it (Buster).

For all these men their early masculine identities were formed through interaction with and the internalisation of the values and culture of their local estates. Many of these, including the core values of protecting your own territory, standing up for yourself and not talking to the authorities seem to be universal expectations across the other housing estates that the men came from. It was claimed in some of the interviews that these values are not just upheld by the criminal element but, as others have reported (Campbell, 1993; Winlow, 2001), are understood as being part of, and often impact, the daily lives of many others in their neighbourhoods.

It was clear from the informants' life histories that their early teenage years on the streets of their estates were the main space in which identities were performed and often monitored, accepted or rejected by older peers or siblings. Like MacDonald and Shildrick (2007) found in their research with young adults in the North East, these men mostly lacked the financial resources to pursue conventional leisure activities like the more affluent of their generation. They also lacked the motivation or social capital to venture too far from their neighbourhood and as other scholars have shown, many of these respondents were firmly trapped in place during some of the most formative years for the construction of masculine identities (Connolly and

Healy, 2004; Johnston et al., 2000; McDowell, 2003b; Nayak, 2006; Reay and Lucey, 2000). Without exception they all talked of just being on the estate 'fucking about' or 'having a laugh'. Many of them recounted spending their younger years on the streets with others from the area or in small gangs that were just formed through the common identity of not having a great deal to do and collective estate values.

Some of the respondents report being on the streets, mainly in all-male groups, with their older brothers or neighbours, from as young as nine years old. As children, these men spent a great deal of their lives avoiding or abandoned by adult supervision. Their estate peers seemed to be their 'family' with whom they spent a great deal of their time and the streets of their communities the place where they were able to be together without too much adult or authoritative interference. Parsons (1964) in his early influential work on protest masculinity posited that delinquent adolescence spent on the streets, school truancy and avoiding adult or authoritative gaze are unlikely routes to responsible and socially respectable manhood. In classic functionalist work on gender, protest masculinity is mainly attributed to not having a father figure from whom to learn appropriate gender roles (Adler, 1978; Broude, 1990; Parsons, 1964); for these respondents it was, as the quotations below suggest, the older male peer group with whom they spent most time and whose masculine performance they tried to emulate and assimilate:

I've got an older brother and I used to follow his path and some of my mates have older brothers as well and they used to follow their path and it was like we were all looking at our brothers. We wanted to be like them

(Hough).

...my brother, he hung around with all these people committing crime and all that kind of stuff, I wanted to be like in with them and I'd talk to his mates and stuff like that but he would be like 'oh get away, get home. You're my little brother and I don't want you hanging around with me blah, blah, blah'. That was when I was probably 12 or whatever. I don't know what age but by the time I got to 14 or 15 their type of age, we'd gone past that, to the point where we were committing crime together... (Gibson).

Having outlined how the respondents' early masculinities were forged through street-based relationships with older siblings or peers and through the reproduction of a particular aspect of estate culture, the following sections explore the men's gendered experiences whilst in the care of the local authority.

4.3 Local Care Authority

Being in the care of the local authority was a common route into prison – just under a third (eight) of the respondents had spent substantial periods of their earlier lives in care homes or foster placements. Adhering to and enforcing estate values/culture and persistent criminal activities brought these respondents to the attention of the police and local social services and police and consequently were ordered (by family courts) or placed (by their parents request) in the care system. All eight respondents, despite experiencing short periods in foster homes, spent most of their childhood and adolescence in residential children's homes. At least three of the men talked of the abuse they experienced in these institutions; two told me about the sexual abuse

they suffered and later reported and one talked of other types of physical abuse. One of the respondents explained to me that he was just at the latter end of negotiating a compensation award and a second indicated the perpetrator was 'away for a long time'. None of the others who had been in the care system reported any form of abuse, but many indicated that their experiences of social workers and being in care only increased their mistrust and lack of respect for authority.

A notable dimension to this discussion is that none of the men interviewed were taken into care whilst babies or toddlers. The two who were the youngest of the group when taken into care were nine and ten years old at the time. Other respondents noted they were put into the care system as they reached their early teens, most of them around 13 to 14 years old. The man who was the oldest when taken into care was just months away from his 16th birthday. Several of the respondents used the term 'being out of control' as the reason for them being ordered or placed into care. Half of these men lived at the time with just their mothers and a further two men talked of their fathers being away from home. The respondents did not link their 'out of control' behaviour to their absent fathers, although both Dean and Victor, whose fathers were away on fishing trawlers, noted fear of their return after they had been in trouble. This entire group, however, felt that they were taken into care not because of the failings of others, but because their own behaviour.

...yeah, up until I was nine, and then I got placed in foster care. Like I say I was a bit ruthless and they couldn't cope with me. Well, my mum couldn't and my dad left when I was young (Bruce).

[whilst at boarding school] robbing and violence levels were getting a little worse, so when it come to it on that day I didn't go home, ... they come to pick me up and exclude me. After they excluded me, they told me I was going home but then when they got me in the car, they put me in with the teacher that I got on with, a female teacher, and then told me that I was going to a kids' home and not home. So I think that is where I went a bit out of control...(David)

Reflecting on their time in the care system, the men in question described their experience not as one that was in any way stabilising but rather as a space with few sanctions and one that in many cases allowed them to continue to 'go off the rails', with little concern or worry about the response from the authorities.

...soon as I turned 15, basically in the year leading up, they were passing me about from kids' home to kids' home and I couldn't understand why because I thought I was behaving, I did not give a fuck about what they thought they could do to me so I started to get really violent and then when they put me in a special kids' home school for the day, I kicked off, hitting teachers. I was done for battery and affrays, assaults on numerous occasions.... But a lot of that stuff happened for a long time, well it felt like a long time but it wasn't, it couldn't have been. It would have literally been four months ... I felt betrayed a lot, I did not know what was happening, I felt unloved, that was it, that is what was going through my head at the time (David).

I got put in a children's home and there's no consequences to any of your actions so you're not interested anymore and I just stopped going. School got sick of me and ended up banning me ... I just don't think there are any consequences and you are led astray by the other people that you are living with and it was a bit of a downer from there ... No offence to anyone, but I think a lot of people in care are not very bright so they don't go to school and they get to do what they want all day. I think at that age you'd rather be out with your friends than at school. I was more interested in being with them than being at school so I knew that if I didn't

go to school that there was nothing anyone could do to me any more, like punishment wise, so I just didn't see the point. You don't see your family so you just not bothered really (Matt).

From their responses it is clear that being put into the care system did very little to manage the challenging behaviour they felt led to being taken away in first instance, and arguably it made the situation much worse. These were 'homes' with 'staff' or relationships that held little authority, sanction or positive influence. When the men talk of their time in local authority care, they talk of being on the outskirts of their original communities and being part of a large group of other young people who had little fear of consequences or sanctions from the 'staff' team. They understood from an early stage that the paid workers held little power over them. Although working in a 'home' it was only a job to them. The young men in care knew that there were statutory duties that the staff had to fulfil as part of their care package, such as attending the police station, for example, and as their only appropriate adult would advocate for their quick release from police custody. A few of the 'looked after' respondents noted that soon after their release from police custody they would be out again, participating in the same conduct. Indeed, many of these men were serving prison sentences by the age of just 15.

It is generally agreed that working-class masculinity is constructed in opposition to authority (Charlesworth, 2000; Connell, 1995; Messerschmidt, 1994; Reay, 2002) and so the care staff provided a potent resource for resistance, largely without fear of sanction. The respondents all describe the care home as a space where they could pursue their gendered identities without too many restrictions, where engaging in drinking, crime, violence

and sexual conquest generated highly valued masculine currency among their peers (Connell, 1995; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Messerschmidt, 2004; Willis, 1977; Winlow, 2001). The respondents talk of being grouped together with other young men (and young women) who admired or invested heavily in these symbols of protest masculinity. Young men like these, as Bourdieu suggests (1984), often 'make a virtue of necessity' and thereby amplify the characteristics that get them into trouble initially.

Despite some of the men describing the so-called freedom to 'do what they want' whilst in local authority care, closer analysis of their narratives suggests that for some of them, being in care was an emotionally costly experience. David, in his earlier quotation above, openly refers to feeling 'unloved' which resulted, he claimed, in him not caring very much about anything. He argued that this rejection led to his overly aggressive behaviour to the staff, teachers and others in positions of authority. Many of the respondents talk of wanting to be back in their locality and with their families. They talk of stealing cars to make their way back home or absconding from the home to be with their mothers. Glen, however, felt differently:

... they moved me to Norfolk and I lived with an old couple. They was quite nice. I lived with them for about two years and they were like a real mum and dad. I lost contact with them a few years ago, but I kept in contact for a long time. They were better than my real mum and dad. They didn't have many rules, but yet again I still carried on at school. I couldn't help it. I had to be the centre of attention in school. I ended up doing stupid stuff like fighting, being mischievous, so I ended up fucking that up and in the end they ended up moving me back down to Doncaster into a children's home.

Over the last decade or so there has been a great deal of concern about how local authorities accommodate and facilitate opportunities for their looked-after children. Some of the main areas of concern relate to low academic attainment, high incarceration rates and lack of post-16 care options amongst this demographic (Schofield et al., 2012). At the time of writing there are significant concerns about the rates of 'looked after' children involved in the criminal justice system. This culminated in June 2015 with the charity Prison Reform Trust (PRT) launching an independent review to examine why in England and Wales care leavers aged ten to 17 are five times more likely to end up in the criminal justice system (Prison Reform Trust, 2015) A long-standing reported failure of the care system is what happens to the young people once they reach 16. The 2013 cross-government *Care Leaver Strategy* report acknowledges that looked-after children leave 'home at a younger age and have more abrupt transitions to adulthood than their peers' (HM Government, 2013, p. 4). With 'patchy' support 'their journey through the first decade of adult life is often disrupted, unstable and troubled' (ibid, p. 4).

Whatever the outcome of the recent alarm surrounding care leavers, it will be of no consequence to the men in this study, although it is clear that their experiences fit in with the concerns highlighted. Most of the care leaver group epitomised the understatement of 'patchy support' when they talked of reaching their 16th birthday and, as can be seen from their statements below, they found themselves ousted from their residential homes and left to live independently with minimum contact or support from their previous guardian:

... it sounds bad, a bad thing to do but, you're in the kids' home they feed you every day, you get your meals cooked, they take you and baby you basically. And then they get you a flat, take you out shopping once and then that's it. You are on your own. You go to this place once a week to pick up your 40 quid and it goes nowhere (Matt).

I was on something called section 20 accommodated, which basically means that my parents didn't want me at home no more. Then the social services had to look after me but their duty run out when I was 16. So when I was 16, I left the care system and went to stay at a B&B. It wasn't run by social services but social services put you there. It's to help you like progress. ... I think the B&Bs were just basically a way of making money. They never used to bother with me, or make sure I was keeping out of trouble... so long as I kept it tidy they was happy (Victor).

I have discussed how for almost a third of the respondents the institutional space and the accompanying challenges of local authority care assisted, even accelerated, their trajectories to protest masculinity. In the next section I explore all the respondents' experiences of school, another major site in the construction and reproduction of their gendered identities.

4.4 Schooling

4.4.1 Mainstream Curriculum

It is well documented in the sociology of education literature that a particular version of working-class masculinity is constructed through battering against the school authority and a resistance to the formal curriculum (Connell, 1989; Corrigan, 1979; Evans, 2006; Francis, 2009, 2006; Reay, 2003; Willis, 1977).

At the early stages of their secondary education all these men certainly fitted within this category. However, from the retelling of their later educational experiences it is evident that most of the informants' resistance to compulsory education is more extreme than is often recorded in most of this scholarship. Only six out of the 30 men completed schooling up to the official minimum leaving age and only three of that six got 'ok' or very 'low' grades in their leaving exams. The other three got to the end of their formal schooling with no recognisable qualifications at all to take to the labour market. The remaining 24 interviewees experienced multiple exclusions from both mainstream and alternative or 'special' provision.

Evidence in the extracts below suggest that learning was not a priority and that many of the men had a great deal to do just in managing, adapting and finding strategies to deal with the everyday demands of their living environments. Glen, for example, links his troubled home life to his troubled school life when he talks about his difficult relationship with his stepfather. He notes:

...I was always naughty in school because he used to hit me and I used to take my anger out at school. I used to show myself up at school and be the class clown and this went on until I was old enough to have a go back at him, which I did when I was 16... (Glen).

In Ian's case, too, it is clear that his home environment may have significantly contributed to his lack of regard or respect for the school's authority:

...I chucked a chair at one [teacher] and, my form teacher really, he was a complete dickhead. I chucked a

chair at him too and my dad come up and I think my dad battered him as well (Ian).

Some of the men who entered the care system noted that learning was encouraged there and that the importance of schooling would often be discussed but that the benefits of attendance and hard work were never really enforced. Further, as Victor outlines below, the care home was a disruptive environment and often it was not worth the effort of trying to settle into a local school and establish new relationships because the emotional challenges of life in the home was so unsettling and, for many, highly transitory.

Victor: ... [time] away from school because it was a bit messed up, being in care and all that, I think it had an impact on me when I was at school ... I was in five or six care homes and one foster placement, I was always moving around quite a bit.

DM: Was it a priority for the home that you went to school?

Victor: They encourage you to go to school but if you didn't, then they didn't really enforce it, but luckily later on in life I went to college and when I come to prison I did a lot of my education stuff here

4.4.2 Masculinities as Barriers to Learning

All the men from an early age felt that schooling had very little to offer them and many only attended because they had to. A small number reported that their parents or carers forced them to school only to avoid prosecution. Amongst these informants there was the suggestion of a tacit understanding between their parents/carers that once they had left for school they were free

to negotiate their attendance and participate in whatever way they chose, as long as the authorities were not alerted. Some of the respondents, however, challenged the low aspiration discourse often espoused in official accounts explaining academic failure among white working-class boys. Two informants who lived at home reported that they had parents who were 'always on their case', trying to convince them of the importance of learning. Buster, for example, noted that his parents 'wanted him to do well and they pushed him really hard'. He went on to tell me that all his brothers had gone to university and were doing well. He admitted that, unlike his brothers, he acquired a reputation for fighting and although it got him in with the 'wrong crowd' and a lot of trouble, he 'thrived off it'.

The second respondent from the group who talked of parental support and encouragement in their schooling and learning was Jamie. He noted that his parents always talked to him about school and the importance of 'giving a hundred per cent' and 'having respect for the teachers'. Jamie, it seems, was very good at sports. He could have gone on to play professional rugby and his parents supported him with this. He talked of a great deal of communication between his parents, the school and his coaches in the various sports teams. Jamie, like Buster, spoke about other siblings going onto university or 'getting trades behind them'. As the discussion progresses into the succeeding empirical chapters it will become evident that Jamie stands out from the other respondents, but it is important to note here that he explained his rugby career ended when he let his love of football violence and drinking get in the way. Eventually he went on to lose trust in his rugby coach who continually went 'over his head' and complained to his parents if

he was late or failed to turn up for training after 'a session with the football lads'.

Unfortunately, these two men were very much in the minority. Although a number of the other respondents talked of parents being supportive towards their learning and schooling, they were not able to provide much detail about how this support was manifested. Perhaps this supports Skelton's (2001) claim that although on the whole working-class parents are not without aspiration for their children, many lack the social capital or do not have the same 'feel for the game' as their middle-class counterparts. Out of the whole group of interviewees, only Jamie and Buster seemed to come from quite settled home environments. Both their fathers became self-employed after many years of working for other people. Buster's mother was a nurse and Jamie's mother worked in the family-owned pub (see appendix one for an overview of parental employment). Over time both their families progressed into owner-occupied family homes located on the periphery of the housing estates. Even so, both Buster and Jamie ended in HMP Hull.

For most of these men, attending school was just a forced inconvenience, a space where they really did not want to be, an institution that offered little gratification whilst they were there. As Evans (2006) found in her recent study of white working-class boys in South East London, many of the informants believed that a commitment to learning offered too little return for their futures. School was a space, as some explained, that exposed some of their weaknesses and left many of them feeling inadequate and 'thick':

...but like I do find it hard sometimes to read and write. I'm all right with the writing; it is more of the reading. Like I think, I thought, just give up on it (Danny).

I wasn't always off school but I didn't get any qualifications because I was in bottom groups ... I always messed about. I was the clown, I was one of them, the one that made you laugh, that's what people used to say I was (Jim).

For nearly all the respondents academic activities in the mainstream classroom did very little to stimulate and engage them and, unlike middle-class boys, their masculinity was not constructed through an expression of academic knowledge (Reay, 2007). Rather, in contrast, their gender identities were expressed through resistance and rejection of the school authority and book learning.

As Willis (1977) found over three-and-half decades earlier, and many others have since (Epstein, 1998; Francis, 1999; Mac an Ghail, 1994; Reay, 2002; Connell, 1989), having a 'laff' with your mates was what they felt schooling was all about. As Jim and the experiences of several other respondents indicate, being the class clown was one strategy for navigating secondary schooling under an LEA that since the introduction of league tables has consistently been shown as one of the countries worst performing (Ofsted 1993, 2013a, 2015). In this LEA catchment that serves Orchard Park and Bransholme council estates being 'school smart', as Buster's quotation below shows, goes against certain masculine ideals and carries the risk of rejection, ridicule and bullying.

DM: can you think back to what type of boys might have got bullied?

People like James, who was seen as clever in school or looked different... They would become victims, definitely. ... I dunno and maybe it was just me, but there weren't many clever kids in our classrooms, because it used to be sorted into sets. If you weren't very intelligent you was put with all the dumb kids.

For some of these informants, as the quotations below suggest, their identity, confidence and sense of masculinity was achieved through rejecting classroom learning, but also through demonstrating their adeptness at stealing/handling all manner of vehicles, while wearing (acquired legally or otherwise) the right type of clothing:

...I'd pinch motorbikes, you know superbikes, because I used to like riding motorbikes and I used to pinch motorbikes and go to the school grounds, go on the asphalt and just be horrible ... got expelled from them schools (Charlie).

...I just started running off a lot and running off with all the other lads, doing our own things throughout the day, like being in the forests, like we were 14 years old and there was a big quarry with these big Bobcats and JCBs and we would just break in and drive them (David).

...not much really at school for me, my mum thought I went everyday but little did she know that I was going twigging, washing line pinching, taking Sergio Tacchini tracksuits. It was just one of them things that you did at that stage of your life (Jim).

Against the backdrop of their impoverished housing estates the respondents' disruptive masculine trajectories had been set in motion and had gained a great deal of momentum well before they were forced into their respective compulsory secondary schools. In their neighbourhoods it was the norm to

see the older boys express a version of a tough masculinity through driving at speed in stolen vehicles, sometimes being pursued by police. These are the type of gender performances identified by Campbell (1993) across estates in other parts of the country. Looking to their elders most of these men had already learned the revered symbols of a version of working-class estate masculinity before entering their teens. Several noted that they were as young as ten or 12 when they first began to be known by the police and were escorted home off the streets.

...the age of ten I used to get took home in a police car, my mum and dad would go mad, that was at the age of ten, I used to get took home in a police car just for daft things, yeah it was quite normal because I'd just get taken home in a police car and I'd make up with my mum and dad and be allowed out the next day and then they'd let me out and so I got back into shit again, they'd let me out and we'd all get together again and go and do summat and if I got took home again I'd stay in and be out again the next day and do the same again, just like a round circle (Hough).

When the men do talk of attending school, the masculinities they pursued were remarkably similar to those described in a large body of scholarship on boys and schooling (Evans, 2006; Frosh et al, 2002; Mac an Ghail, 1994; O'Donnell and Sharpe, 2000). All of these young men recount tales of heterosexual conquest, sporting prowess and fighting. For these men the importance of earning and maintaining a 'hard' masculinity cannot be overstated. As I discuss in more depth in a later chapter, the ability to project a willingness and propensity to fight or engage in other forms of violent conduct seems to be an important (or at least perceived) self-preservation strategy that continued to run through their daily interactions in almost every

environment they encountered. In their childhood, the school corridors or the yard, were, for these men, no different from the streets on their estate in their jostle to prove their fighting credentials and create and maintain reputations. To be seen as 'soft' or weak was to be regarded as vulnerable. As the quotation below illustrates, these young men would go to great lengths to construct their own ideal version of a hard masculinity:

...secondary school I started defending myself. When I was in primary school I got bullied and when I got to secondary school I started playing rugby. I don't know where it comes from but I got massive and I just grew big. I went up to about maybe 15 or 16 stone and it was all probably fat but I looked big for it. If anyone started with me, I just used to lamp them and that's how I went around doing things. ... I did get laid out a few times myself but I'd always come back and give them a slap. ...teachers got the wrong opinion of me because I stood up for myself (Jamie).

DM: So it was quite a tough time at school?

Pat: Yes, that's when my fighting started, when I was at school.

DM: You used to get into fights a lot?

Pat: Yeah, I got kicked out at year seven, for stabbing someone with a chisel, because he was bullying my sister.

In some cases, as can be seen from Andy's quotation below, it is evident that the schools were instrumental in encouraging this type of conduct and complicit in the construction of 'hard' masculinity.

...it was a good old school. If you got into a row then they would put boxing gloves on you and stick you in a gym and you would have to sort it out that way.

Some of the men talked about how their school was not overly concerned with the 'odd scuffle here and there' and teachers, as Charlie explains, would often be heard saying such things as 'sort this out in your own time' or why don't you two fight it out after school or during lunch'? Buster notes below that some of the male staff were not averse to exhibiting their own version of a dominant masculinity and, if necessary, they too would not shy away from using force.

DM: What was it that you saw in a teacher that you respected?

Buster: There was one teacher, Mr [REDACTED] and another called Mr [REDACTED]. They was pretty tough teachers who used to train rugby, but also class teachers as well. There were sports teachers. I looked up to them and they didn't take no crap either. Couldn't really mess about with these teachers, I mean they'd think nothing of giving you a proper slap, or at least they would then.

Just as a few teachers are reported to have used aggression, so too, as I noted earlier, did the men themselves, and in some cases their fathers, readily used violence against the school staff. However, in this particular case David, who at the time of the study was serving an indeterminate sentence for public protection (IPP) for his role in an extremely violent crime, seriously threatened his head teacher because he wanted to join cooking classes. This was an aspect of the curriculum that he thoroughly enjoyed, despite the usual association with femininity. His actions inevitably led to his permanent exclusion from mainstream education.

... I got kicked out because I started to get violent and that was over, I took a liking to cooking and the

headmaster wouldn't let me do it and so I got violent with him and threatened to chop him up and use him as the ingredients (David).

Most respondents had already transgressed the law and had little respect for police authority and it is clear that even the hardest of schools, serving the toughest estates in the region, were unable to contain the protest masculine performances of many of these respondents and so most were excluded and/or expelled.

4.4.3 Alternative Provision

Over half of the participants were eventually deemed too disruptive and too violent for mainstream provision and their respective local education authorities placed them into alternative learning environments. Those sent to alternative learning sites or 'exclusion centres' were completely aware that they had been categorised as the 'bad lad'.

I ended up getting kicked out my primary school and had to go to another one, just for bad behaviour and stuff like that and then when I went to secondary school I ended up getting kicked out of that and then I had to go to this. It's like, it's like a bad boy school... (Gibson).

...I ended up in the exclusion centre because they couldn't cope with me. I got expelled three times, once for fighting and once for selling drugs and the other one was that one of the teachers ended up having a nervous breakdown because of me and my mates... (Rick).

A few of the men suggested that being moved out of the mainstream school environment was positive because the new learning environment into which they were placed was less pressured.

After all the trouble in year ten I went on an alternate learning programme. I went to college basically and I did my Maths and English GCSE. Then when I got to college I just grew up. I was in much more adult environment. I grew up massively. I'd not so much grown up, I had grown up in my mind, I didn't fight no more. I weren't interested, it was all about getting my qualifications and doing it all for me. I think it was because I was left to do my own thing... I was a lot younger than everybody else. Because I was a big lad I fitted right in, everyone just looked after each other. When I was working on the cars I used to get top marks out of everybody, grown blokes, and I was getting better marks than them. I daresay I was one of the top in the class. The tutors used to love me. I just knuckled right down (Jamie).

...the exclusion centre, it was more relaxed and they knew my capabilities and they just let me get on with [it] rather than setting me certain things to do. They just let me do whatever I really wanted, say like if it was art they would let me do whatever I wanted to do and then they would [set what has to be done] but that was for GCSE like modules. Like in maths I would have to do the curriculum and they give me my favourite studies to do as well. English obviously you have to stick to the curriculum but you could do interesting stuff like football legends and things like that. I'm into history and stuff like that. I like my history, especially the Royal family and stuff like that... it was more open and I think that is what let me get on with it basically. They just let me get on with it instead of forcing things down me (Rick).

Conversely, as the quotations indicate, these alternative learning spaces were more productive in educating some of the respondents because they were able to access parts of the curriculum that were of interest. Further, for some respondents, being among older learners meant they felt less pressure to live up to 'hard' masculinities.

4.4.4 Boarding Schools for 'Bad Lads'

Some of the men who were taken out of mainstream schooling talk of the other alternative routes provided by the local authority. A common option mainly for those who were involved with the care system or social services was a type of boarding school for 'bad lads'. Boarding school often conjures up an idea of high academic achievement, structure, discipline and economic privilege. For the eight respondents who attended these residential schools it could not have been further removed from some of the more famous elite institutions reserved for the children of the rich, as the selected excerpts below illustrate.

I was in boarding school at the age of 11 or 12, aged 12 I was, I remember. I went there and I loved it really. I wasn't even doing runners at first. I was behaving and everything ... all the activities that we used to do, like go out, we would go canoeing, rock climbing, we'd do all sorts of things, and because we weren't doing the same things, I didn't get bored. Then it be 'I can't be arsed, come on let's go and do a runner or whatever!' But when I used to stay there, because I was that much of a little twat, I used to stay there for a full fortnight and come home for one weekend, ...then I started coming home every night in the end. ...you could just walk out. It was just like a normal school but we had one part that was the school and then a part that was the bed bit, ... it was easy really. ... To tell you the truth, if there was any trouble I'd be there. If there were a fight it would be me, you know what I mean. I used to be a right little shit... (Hough).

I was 14 when I started boarding school, so I left when I was 15 and it was all right. I liked the work; it had a gym you could do weights and boxing. We would go carting and everything but it was one of them where you had to stay away from home and I only would get to go home on a weekend, which for some reason I've never been bothered about that, it never fazed me, do you know,

being away from home. It was alright I enjoyed it... I just started running off a lot and running off with all the other lads, doing our own things throughout the day... (David).

With an alternative curriculum that involved boxing, gym and outdoor activities of rock climbing and canoeing, 'boarding school for bad lads' had some positive aspects according to those who attended. Clearly this space was designed to engage 'hard to reach' boys through offering constructive avenues in the pursuit and expression of their masculinities, as well as to physically exhaust them.

The question that arises is what happens to these men when they return to their impoverished neighbourhoods where there are not the resources to develop their gendered identities through these more positive activities? Arguably these boarding schools with their alternative curriculum, time away from loved ones, sharing sleeping/living space with other pupils with similar difficulties, fighting and challenging the institutions authority seemed to prepare them not with university entry requirements, as elite boarding schools do, but rather, as I show later, to serve time. Indeed, David and Hough, quoted above, had their boarding experience interrupted at 15 to serve their first prisons sentence and all the others who attended followed soon after before they turned 18. This, however, was not the only major site that contributed to fast track routes to incarceration; long periods on the streets, the care system and peer groups established in these spaces were part of the matrix for the construction of forms of protest masculinities that saw nearly all informants imprisoned before the end of their teens.

What stands out from the respondents' narratives of their early experiences across these crucial sites is that many were incredibly reflective

in recognising how challenging they were/are. Hough above admits being a 'right little shit' and others suggested being 'off the rails' or 'out of control' as reasons they were taken into care. In a later chapter (6) informants are again reflective about their troubling behaviour as young prisoners (YP). Acknowledging their problematic younger (childish) masculinities and then quickly distancing is a strategy, I argue, for establishing and reinforcing appropriate space/age (adult) gender identities. In the next section, on their criminal trajectories, and the following chapter, charting their prison experiences, I draw on the concept of youth transitions, especially on the notion of alternative careers developed by Johnston et al. (2000) and MacDonald and Shildrick (2007), to show how respectable masculine performances change significantly depending on age and (institutional) space.

4.5 Criminal Trajectories

4.5.1 'Buzz' Crime

Just like the 'lads' (Willis, 1977) or 'fellas' (Winlow, 2001) observed by other scholars, the informants in this study were keen to prove their manhood at an early age. In a period of profound economic change the legitimate route to manhood through a hard day's work were not as accessible as for Willis's (1977) lads (see also McDowell, 2003a; McDowell et al., 2014a; Nayak, 2003a; Winlow, 2001). For many of these respondents, as I show in the following chapter, this route was closed. Instead, most informants emulated what they believed to be the 'respectable' masculinities of their older peers

already deeply invested in crime. They looked up to lads, as Buster put it, who 'were always having a laugh, and buzzing, and who knew how to 'graft''. Grafting from this perspective suggests earning through crime.

Notably the vast majority of the respondents' early criminality was not motivated by monetary gain, but rather for the 'buzz'. Involvement in illegal acts typically was linked to their obsession with motor vehicles and, as David admits, 'just wanting to drive all the time'. Many informants have a long history of vehicle-related offending. As I showed in the earlier section it was used as masculine capital during resistance to early schooling. What is important to note here, however, is from their place at the margins car crime, as Campbell (1993) and other research (Corbett, 2003; Cunneen, 1995; O'Connor and Kelly, 2006) in post-industrial communities previously identified, is utilised as a means of generating masculine status and respect. What was interesting with many of these respondents was masculine protest through car crime that involved taking the middle-class symbol of success, the performance car, and using it as a form of resistance against state authority.

DM: So when you were taking the motor vehicles there was no money in it?

Ian: No, just for the adrenaline and buzz, later it was for profit.

DM: You mentioned the buzz of taking a chase, tell me about that.

Ian: Yeah, the police wouldn't come around our estate at one time, I mean we used to do absolutely crazy things like get a can of spray paint and write on the car: 'chase us', 'coppers are bastards' and things like that. And [we would] just drive through town until the police come and

try and get us and we'd just take off... we had a £67,000 Mercedes once and we was just driving around town like it was ours, all the windows down and smoking weed and just taken the absolute piss.

DM: How old were you?

Ian: I think we were about 17... we were just taking the pure piss. I wish I could go back to them days now.

Buster, too, describes the status that comes with taking a performance car from an affluent part of the region and making something he is never likely to legally own his, at least for a very short period.

Buster: I remember we did this big house back in the village and drove back to the estate in the Porsche ... that felt good, I mean joyriding a Porsche, pulling up outside my mates' houses and bibbing the horn, and them saying 'where the fuck did you get that from?'

DM: Did you take them for a drive in it?

Buster: I was a bit funny who I let in it, I did not want loads of people diving in and out, I treated it as it was my own car, I took it for car wash and kept it for a few weeks.

Bruce was insightful about the role car crime plays in creating status and confirming masculine identity in his neighbourhood.

Bruce: everybody loved the police chase ... it was just about the buzz and the thrill, ... everybody knows about it, and they are all talking about it around where I live: 'did you see that police chase last night, it was buzzing blah blah blah'? And yes, it gives you a bit of an adrenaline rush, you know and I did enjoy it.

DM: What was it like if you got caught?

Bruce: That weren't a problem either, that was a buzz as well, you know getting locked up. You know at the time I was young and nothing much was really

happening to me. I was just getting a slap on the wrist, so it wasn't a problem... if you got away then everybody would talk about it more and then I would go around saying 'the police can't do this and do that'. I was seen as like maybe a hero back then. On the estate people liked watching stuff like that. They like watching it all because they are not involved in it. They are just looking at it from a distance. They are not the ones who you are going to end up in the police cells at the end of the night.

Bruce claims that the spectacle of instigating a police pursuit enabled him to accrue masculine capital and respect from many in his neighbourhood. However joy riders, as Campbell (1993) reports, were not 'heroes' but the major cause of distress for many of residents living on the poor estates. And those who complained were often targeted and intimidated by the minority of car criminals. Vehicle crimes were costly too for those involved. A number of respondents named friends or associates who were lost to reckless driving and police chases. Sadly, for some this was also part of the attraction, as David describes:

...you would get a bit nervous when other people were driving. That was another excitement factor, if he crashes that he crashes in it, let's see how bad it turns out. It was another excitement factor and a lot of us enjoyed that. The only time we would ever calm down is, we were going round dangerous roads and we would calm down a bit. But after a couple of times driving around the dangerous roads, we would push our luck and we'd go faster and faster every time (David).

The men's accounts of their early offending provide some interesting insights into how this behaviour was the outcome of a weaving of identity and masculinity both into and from an estate culture that valued high-risk, high-speed and antiauthority activities. Two performances were going on here, each for a different audience: one for those deemed in positions of authority

and one for the men's peers. Anti-authority, highly skilled displays, often in conventionally unattainable vehicles reserved for the successful middle classes, are clearly about protest. And being adept at taking cars, the higher performance the better, skilfully driving them and evading capture is seen as a valuable source of masculine currency among their peers.

What is interesting to highlight about car crime is the role it played in transitions to more profitable and prolonged criminality. A number of informants reported that being a skilled car thief and proficient driver, with a proven track record for not talking to the authorities, attracted the attention of older criminals who would recruit their juniors into profitable and more serious offending.

I got into the wrong crowd then. Because I was good at driving I used to go with the older ones and they would use me to drive the cars to get away (Ian).

...quickly realised that I was as all right driver and so it was not long before they started asking me to pick big parcels of drugs up from Doncaster services and Sheffield services and that (Matt).

Other respondents talk of having some kind of epiphany and suddenly realising the immaturity and futility of spending time in and out of prison for 'the buzz' and to entertain the estate. Some calculated that if they were going to keep going to prison then they might as well earn money out of it. Buster perfectly sums up this maturing or transitional process:

...when I first started offending it was like petty theft really, stealing cars and ram raiding shops. It was not really about the money, it was more about the buzz of it and the respect I would get from my peers. Like if you

did a job and you got loads of money out of it and people thought it was a bit difficult to do and that you pulled it off, you would get more respect for it. When I was younger it was more of an ego trip. I wasn't bothered about money, because I'd give most of it away. It wasn't about the money, it was about ego and status as a kid. As I got older I thought 'well, I'm doing all that, nicking cars, what was the point in nicking cars? It's silly, going to prison for silly things, you might as well do something, if you're going to go to prison it might as well be worth earning some money out of it' (Buster).

Buster's quotation, encapsulating the experiences of many other respondents, suggests early adrenaline- or buzz-based primary offending shifts into a secondary or 'grown up' phase when the motivation to commit crime is to earn an income. It is this transition into materially based offending that I explore in following section.

4.5.2 Material Crime

As many of the respondents got older, their high adrenaline, high risk, anti-authority, protest masculinity found expression through a range of other more materialistic agendas. All the participants claimed that from their early teenage years on the streets they started exploring the highs of street drugs and soon understood the currency they carried both in terms of monetary value and status. Soon after 'growing out' of 'buzz-related' offending most respondents, believing they were progressing to a more mature criminal outlook, turned to drug dealing/using, and other associated offending such as robbery and targeted car crime, as means of making a 'wage' or 'grafting'. Researchers have suggested that in neighbourhoods with extreme structural poverty, selling drugs is an attractive means for accruing street capital (Sandberg, 2008) or etching out respectable masculinities (Bourgois, 2003;

Gunter, 2010; Winlow, 2001). The extracts show that this was the case for several of the respondents:

DM: So after your first sentence what other kind of things fetched you back to prison?

Andy: Crime, easy money, fast cars, drugs. I got sick of running around like an idiot, giving all my money to somebody for drugs, I wanted to have some dignity, a family, a home, a life, kids. Fuck it I'm going to be the one involved in this, I'll be the one selling the drugs, heroin and cocaine back then on the streets of Grimsby was non-existent, I went to Holland and got whatever I could and brought it back and introduced everybody to it.

... I went on to more serious things, had to drug deal or do things for people, you do robberies and get into more serious kinds of crime and even that, even though you are doing it for the money, it was about getting the respect of the lads who you hung out with (Ashley).

The interplay between the material benefits, power and status from dealing meant drugs played a significant part in several respondents' identities and criminal trajectories. However, for several using drugs became a way of life and often, as Jack's quotation below shows, a driving force behind offending.

Whatever he gave me the list for I'd get. I'd get the keys from the house, go at night time and break in to get the keys, push the car off the driveway... You'd get a grand per car, so a couple of cars a week is a couple of grand, but I've been a drug addict for a long time as well and so when you are a drug addict you can spend that kind of money easily (Jack).

Jim also recognises, or at least attributes, his later materialistic offending to his drug use.

I know it's wrong now. I was burgling houses, I was

burgling factories and I sit back now in myself and I think I would kill some cunt if I found somebody in my house. My mum's got burgled and it was the most horrible feeling ever and it's just the drugs, it was the drugs I got into basically (Jim).

A number of the men, less than a third, reported their later criminality was driven by drug use. Nearly all of them noted that they had long criminal histories and experienced imprisonment before their out-of-control drug misuse took over. With this in mind and whilst acknowledging that drugs and substance abuse played a role in the respondents' materially driven crime, it is important for this study to avoid using it as a catch-all explanation for the respondents' prolonged criminal activity and incarceration. (For an interesting discussion on how drug careers play a central role in shaping exclusionary transitions see MacDonald and Marsh, 2002; Mayock, 2005; McCrystal et al., 2007; Parker and Egginton, 2002; Webster et al., 2004). In many cases the informants' offending was controlled, planned and was often about status and respect, as Charlie and Glen explain below.

Out there I was earning £700 a day, you know selling heroin. But I was selling on a big scale. I was getting parcels vacuumed-packed every week with about 7 kg in and I distributed all over Hull. I was on about £600 or £700 a day. I bought motorbikes, quad's, everything, a bigger house, I was on about 40 grand a week. People knew I was doing well for myself, some respected that and other were jealous (Charlie).

...it's always been about money for me, so thinking I'm coming here for something like this, ... [for] me it's always big money, it's money that is going to keep you going and having a lifestyle of nice houses and nice cars, women. With money comes power and respect, when you've got money it comes with a lot of envy (Glen).

Philippe Bourgois (2003) and Sveinung Sanberg and Willy Pedersen (2009) in their research with drug dealers found criminal operations were not too dissimilar from other private sector retail enterprises; this was clearly the case with some respondents in this study. At the lower end of the criminal spectrum respondents talked of their offending in the same way that a self-employed legitimate tradesman might, calculating the potential benefits but also the sanctions that they might incur should they be caught.

...oh I always know what the consequences are. I don't just, you know what I mean, do it. If I'm out there, like since that IPP⁴ come out, it's like a life sentence in it, erm, robberies, I won't touch robberies. A mate might ring me and say I've got a robbery on. Fuck that, do you know what I mean, I'll do other things just not things that you know are going to get you lifed off. What, just for a few quid? (Gibson).

What has been absent so far in this discussion of the respondents' offending histories was the propensity for violence that is at the core of protest or street masculinities (Barker, 2005; Bourgois, 2003; Connell, 1995). As I show in the next section and in the following chapters, violence, whether stemming from criminality or masculine honour (Polk, 1994), played a central part in the lives of all of the informants.

4.5.3 Violent Crime

Gibson, during his interview, acknowledged that in 'this game' there are many things that you cannot control and that events have the potential to

⁴ Although abolished in 2012 and replaced with determinate and extended sentences, IPP sentences (imprisonment for public protection) were indeterminate sentences, set at a minimum term, for offenders whose crimes did not merit a life sentence.

quickly turn violent.

...but then you get other times were you might do something and thing will just go wrong, man. You might be doing a shop or something and someone will run downstairs and grab you. Obviously you'll try and fight them off. Your first thought is always to get away... (Gibson).

There were several examples among the respondents of crimes descending into violence after a disruption or confrontation and there was an acceptance that this was part of the risk—being willing to fight as a way out comes with the territory. This instinct to get away at all cost can go tragically wrong, as in Malcolm's extract below:

I did a burglary one night. There was an elderly person lay on the couch, I didn't really know how old he was, he were lay on the couch, at the time I didn't really know he had emphysema, I turned to get out of the house and he grabbed hold of me, I turned around to shut him up, got him in a headlock and he died, and fucking hell I went to prison at 24 and stayed in until I was 37. 94 I went in, I came out in 2007 (Malcolm).⁵

This is an extreme case and in the world that most respondents inhabit, as I discussed earlier in the chapter 2 and will again in chapter 6, there seems to exist an unwritten criminal (see Hobbs, 1997, 1995) or inmate code (Clemmer, 1940; Copes et al., 2013; Crewe, 2005; Sykes, 2007). Malcolm's offence against the elderly was clearly a breach that positioned him near the bottom of the masculine status hierarchies that exist in prison.

Several of the respondents referenced on numerous occasions an

⁵ Malcolm after serving his recommended tariff on his life term was released briefly but recalled to back to prison for breaching the terms of his licence.

interpretation of their criminal code, suggesting that any respectable 'grafter' does not 'take from their own'. From the extracts below, however, many failed to live up to this code, with some of the most extreme cases of reported violence having occurred during the act of taking the proceeds of crime from another.

...[we] walked passed another house and the kid who I was with said this is a good graft, a drug dealer, [he's] got loads of money. I looked and saw that he had a Porsche, loads of money and yea I thought I will take that for a drive then. We've just gone in, opened his backdoor, he was stood there so I just whacked him, put him out cold, put him to sleep. I tied him up, it just got a bit stupid really, went a bit stupid on him, papers said ... it's something you only see in horror movies, but I can't remember doing half of this stuff. I just remember coming around for bits of it, but apparently they said we beat him up with a hammer, slit his throat, tied him to a chair and tried chopping his thumbs off, but most of it I can't remember (David).

In Glen's case, his involvement in major criminal activity was based on taking from other criminals, actions that ended with his charge for murder.

Glen: I mean I've had a lot of fights with people and I've put a lot of people out of business, a lot of big people... the drug game, I believe that to be the best you have to take out the competition... so that's what I did and I've messed with the wrong people.

DM: So is there a lot of people after you—what's led you here now?

Glen: Prison, I am in for murder.

DM: So what are the events that led up to the alleged murder?

Glen: ...three people have gone to a house, the police don't know why, a man has come out and the witnesses say they heard a struggle and then a gun has gone off

and that was it. ... they're trying to pull me into it. The evidence they've got is hearsay, circumstantial. They've got no gun and they've got no bullets; they've got nothing.

A number of informants undoubtedly felt drug dealers were fair game and perhaps, as Hobbs' (1997) found in his research on organised crime, a code of honour amongst criminals is often overstated and mostly mythical. The severity of violence against the local drug dealer was such that David was given an indeterminate prison term for public protection (IPP) and Glen subsequently pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 18 years.

Disturbingly the propensity to resort to severe violence was so common among these respondents that Jamie, a fully qualified and well-paid electrician from a better part of town, was given his first sentence for his first official offence for so called masculine honour violence (Polk, 1994).

There was a bloke in the middle of the road on a bike, and she [his partner who was driving] nearly knocked him off... he fell off his bike, so then he got up and had a go at our lass ... he was getting all upset, so I said 'if you carry on, next time I will let her run you over', as a joke and then [he] carried on shouting at her. So I warned him and said 'carry on and I'll jump out the car' and he carried on so I jumped out the car and told him that if he wanted to speak to our lass like that then we should sort it out. From then on my mind went blank, I've gone over and cracked him, we had a bit of a scuffle and I've just basically leathered him, I used my fist. I did not kick him or nowt and I picked him up of the floor to hit him again and, if you saw the pictures you would understand, the blood all over his face and it was like a voice just saying 'what you doing Jamie?' And then I thought fucking hell what have I done? And then I dropped him and just got in the car (Jamie).

This was not Jamie's first violent encounter. He had established his 'hard masculinity' though football violence on terraces following Hull football club

but was never caught nor convicted. The respondent with the most convictions, and by far the smallest in stature of the group, was Pat. Being part of a notoriously violent family on the estate fighting and violence were a major part of his identity from a young age. Both his parents, he claimed, had been to prison for violence and aged just 15 he followed in their path. His many offences and several prison terms were all as a result of violence against another person. Below he indicates how his family's legacy influenced how others saw him and how this contributed to his decision to live up to that reputation.

A few of my cousins had been in and out of prison, people was giving me a bad name because of my family name. It got to a stage where I had enough of it and if people are giving me a bad name, I may as well live up to it. That is when I started fighting and pinching cars ... got kicked out of college and started going a bit bad again, nicking cars. And I think it was when I was nineteen I went up for the training for the army. I had one more fitness test and then I would have been in the army and then somebody beat me up with a weight bar. They got me from behind and gave me 49 stitches in my head and nearly killed me and then because I had a head injury, they told me I wasn't allowed in the army for another two years and so I went off the rails again (Pat).

The cycle and everyday currency of violence described by Pat and the others correspond with Polk's (1994) assertion that 'masculine scenarios' leading to serious violence or homicide often stem from minor disputes relating to perceived disrespect and challenges to honour. Similarly, as Messerschmidt (1993) claims, men like Glen and David who are structurally limited will draw on violence in an attempt to live up to powerful representations of material success associated with hegemonic masculinity. Once violent criminal masculinities are established, however, they must be

continually backed up. To lose face is be seen as weak and to become a potential target (Katz, 1988). Indeed, the experiences of these informants confirm what is constantly shown in most of the UK's statistical representation of intra-male violence. Working-class men are not only the main perpetrators of violence, but also its most common victims (Cockburn and Oakley, 2013; DeKeseredy and Schwartz, 2005; Office for National Statistics 2013a).

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter has focused on how the respondents' negotiation of impoverished neighbourhoods, and the key institutional spaces within them, significantly contributed to the construction and reproduction of marginalised masculinities. The first section shows that the respondents, from an extraordinarily young age, spent a great deal of time on the streets in all-male peer groups, usually without adult supervision and surveillance. Under these conditions primary performances of protest masculinity were influenced and informed by an existing and pervasive estate culture that held little regard for formal authority and placed a high value on violence. The following section explored the respondents' masculine trajectories over the crucial spaces in which they learned to become men, highlighting the significance of sites such as 'care' institutions and educational establishments, especially alternative provisions such as boarding schools ('for bad boys') and exclusion centres. It was in and against these sites that the respondents refined and learned behaviours and attitudes that reinforced

and contributed to early configurations of their troubling masculinities. In the final part of this chapter what seemed for many to be far too predictable and progressive criminal transitions were explored. Vehicle-related crime, for example, was a common and ideal early potent masculine resource because it allowed for a demonstration of 'skill' in a performance that was more about risk and the 'buzz', than monetary gain (Campbell, 1993). Reaching late adolescence was the time when many of the respondents progressed to more material- and violence-based offending, being a 'good earner' or 'grafter', and 'powder power' derived from drug dealing, were now the resources through which many of these men expressed what they perceived to be a more mature version of tough and aggressive masculinity.

The early investment of these men in a particular gendered performance proved to be costly and set them on the pathways that led to their exclusion, marginalisation and inevitable incarceration. Before discussing the respondents' entering and surviving the prison space, I first want to explore their experiences of navigating the local labour market. It is this that I turn to in the next chapter.

5

(Non-)Working Lives

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter showed how the respondents developed their early gendered identities within and against the backdrop of their street cultures, homes, local authority 'care' and mainstream or alternative schooling. This chapter explores how masculine investments made under the adverse conditions of their childhood and adolescence not only seriously disrupted their entry into a recession-ravaged and changing local labour market, but also compromised their ability to sustain long-term employment. The opening section of the chapter charts informants' disrupted school-to-work transitions. I show how despite significant barriers, many of the men had some experience of legitimate, mainly unskilled, low-paid, employment. For the vast majority, 'fast track' or early routes to the workplace were not too dissimilar from what has been reported in other research on the transitions of disadvantaged young adults (Gunter, 2010; Johnston et al., 2000; Nayak, 2006). I argue, however, that childhood criminal careers and incarceration saw these respondents at the extreme end of the demographic of undereducated men found to be most adversely affected by widespread economic restructuring (Hardgrove et al., 2015; MacDonald and Marsh, 2005; McDowell, 2003b; Nayak, 2006, 2003a; Webster et al., 2004).

In the following section I suggest many informants significantly furthered their own marginalisation as young adults. Many tried to reconcile protest masculine ideals with workplace transitions and often this led to the loss or abandonment of employment. I show that difficulty turning away from the monetary rewards and visceral pleasure linked to criminal lifestyles (Katz, 1988; Winlow, 2001) exacerbated continued exclusion. The next part of this chapter explores how the prolonged criminal careers and years lost to incarceration left many respondents with the desire to be 'normal'. Confirming other scholarship on desistance from crime (Carlsson, 2013; Laub and Sampson, 2001), they claimed that the only way out was 'growing up and getting a job'. Despite respondents' stated enthusiasm, I argue that unchanging protest masculine ideals risk undermining all best intentions of gaining employment.

In the penultimate section I show how the biographical scars that these men carry, not only on their tattooed and estate-embattled bodies, but through their long criminal records and ex-con status, significantly reduce already limited options in a changing labour market reliant on integrity and honesty and 'doing deference' (McDowell, 2003b; Nayak, 2003a). The chapter ends with an analysis of the role the prison plays in supporting current and previous inmates to overcome some of the post-incarceration challenges they face. Unfortunately, I show that that currently available prison education and training provision, mainly based around traditional masculine trades, are woefully inadequate in setting up these men to serve in the workplace on their release.

5.2 School-to-Work Transitions

There is over 20 years' difference between the youngest and oldest of the sample and for a quarter of century, from 1984 up until 2008, under a Conservative then New Labour government, these men were, or should have been, negotiating school-to-work transitions. Despite this significant passage of time between the informants' transitions there is little to separate early labour market experiences. As highlighted in the previous chapter the vast majority were excluded or completed schooling as soon as they could, leaving with poor qualifications. There is a tentative difference to highlight in 'fast' transitions between older and younger participants. Four out of the five eldest respondents (aged between 41 and 45) found, albeit short lived as I explain later, apprenticeships ranging from butchering to factory-based engineering. Out of the eight younger participants (aged from 21 to 30) three noted getting to their mid twenties without having ever worked and a further two claimed to have only ever done sporadic cash-in-hand work around the estate. Evidently for older respondents there were still some options to follow traditional working-class routes to adulthood as documented by Willis (1977) and others (Young and Willmott, 2007), although as I show in the subsequent section, a couple of respondents who entered the workplace much later were able to find what might be described as 'traditional' work.

On the whole the post-schooling routes to adulthood for the vast majority of these men depressingly resonate with some of the young people in MacDonald's and Marsh's (2002) study of socially excluded young adults in the North East and with Nayak's Charvers (2006, 2003b) in the same

region. As in these studies, the school-to-workplace transitions for most of the informants were significantly disrupted and fragmented as many of them were incarcerated during their mid to late teens. Entrenched criminal careers limited post-schooling options for many respondents and added to their existing disadvantages in finding legitimate work in their regions. Despite these barriers most at some stage, mainly in first five years after schooling, engaged with legitimate waged work, usually low-paid, low-skilled, unstable factory positions. Several of them, at some point, worked in a local factory building caravans. The factory, a well-known employer around the local estates, offered mainly temporary seasonal jobs. A small minority, mainly younger respondents, talked of 'getting on' a building, mechanic or plumbing course, largely with local tradesmen or through family contacts or at the local college. Glen and couple of other younger respondents told me that they tried, usually under pressure from youth offender workers or probation officers, vocational courses at local colleges. Except in two notable cases a consistent factor running through these training or work experiences is that they were not sustained positions lasting for significant enough periods to generate valuable experiences or qualifications.

Limited or short-lived transitions were, however, not always because respondents were not willing to put in 'a day's work'. Many noted, as Macdonald and Marsh (2005) found, that they had done a lot of 'cash-in-hand' or 'fiddly' work around the estate for local builders or businesses. 'Cash-in-hand' options avoided rejection, formal scrutiny and the low pay of limited legitimate 'cards-in' work options. Respondents believed that they would be at the wrong end of a long list of more worthy candidates when

applying for legitimate 'cards-in' work in one of UK's worst cities to find employment. Several indicated they felt they had no chance of 'passing the interview' (Richard) or 'getting a foot in the door' (Hough) and alternatively would not 'stick them jobs; they pay shit money' (Danny).

5.3 Protest Masculinities and Workplace Exclusion

The small minority of the men who fared better in transitions in challenging local economic circumstances are respondents with, as has been reported in other studies (Calvert, 2010; Hardgrove et al., 2015; McDowell, 2003b), families with some form of local social capital and, albeit limited, economic resources. The earlier experiences of the youngest participant, Jamie, for instance, differ from the others in several ways. Both his parents were hard working, relatively financially stable and supportive of his learning, sporting and working options. Unlike many of the others, his early masculine resources were generated not from crime but rugby prowess, drinking and (under the police's radar) football violence. Excluded from mainstream education for fighting he still gained creditable GCSE results in an alternative 'learning centre' that facilitated his entry into the armed forces. Unfortunately, he was soon after discharged on health grounds. From the family home, as the extract below suggests, he, much more than the others, demonstrates resourcefulness and (from his rugby playing days) social capital or contacts that helped him to find a legitimate 'trade' or 'respectable' route to manhood.

When I come home I got somebody to do me a CV and sent the CV, I literally got the Yellow Pages and opened it and chose hundreds of people out of the Yellow

Pages. I then seen an apprenticeship in the paper, went and had an interview, had a second interview and I got the job... went on an apprenticeship and never looked back... work eventually dropped off,.., I did it again, I sent a CV out to tons and tons of companies, I know someone who works for Hull Daily Mail and he put me in the paper as an electrician looking for work. An executive from BAE rang me up and offered me an interview and I went, it was just over an hour, there were three of them in there, probably a big company, they gave me the job and offered me to come back in and retrain with them as a maintenance technician, I got my OCN in electrical engineering. So I've got my three years as an electrician and I've got my two years RNC as an electrical engineer. (Jamie)

Jamie's tough rugby masculinity and early protest masculine resources stemming from a readiness for violence stayed with him and eventually culminated in a long prison sentence, loss of professional reputation and loss of employment.⁶

In structurally impoverished regions with a scarcity of opportunities, hard-won job prospects are often undermined or, as with Jamie, sabotaged as a result of a residue from earlier gender trajectories or continued protest masculine posturing. Charlie's experiences encapsulate how past gender performances that led to exclusion and childhood incarcerations first served as a catalyst for his family to draw on their contacts and limited resources to invest and try to save his future.

My first time in prison was at 15, I went to Wetherby Young offenders Institute and I got out of Wetherby just before my 16th birthday and my mum and dad said to me look you're going to have to do something with your life, my dad said he would pay for my sea survival because my dad was a fisherman, so we paid for my

⁶ Jamie notes his attack was widely reported on local television news and press and he felt he was represented as a 'monster.' Shortly afterwards, his employer wrote to inform him the company wished to terminate ties.

sea survival £500 and I went away to sea. At first to see if I liked it and I liked it, I come home after, it was only a short trip about six weeks, but I come home with about £1000, ... I kept on going away to Sea and I did my deckers learners ticket, that is like basic first aid, basic firefighting and basic survival, I did that and I was allowed to go away on the ships for three months at a time doing decking line out, on a percentage, I used to pick up like £3400 per trip and so it was right good money and I was enjoying it. (Charlie)

Sadly, as with so many of the others, Charlie struggled to sustain his position as a trawler man. Fighting prowess, as I have already shown, is core to particular protest masculine identities (Connell, 1995), as, too, is excessive hedonism and overt displays of being able to take 'your drugs' (Bourgois, 2003) and hold your drink (Gough and Edwards, 1998; Mullen et al., 2007). Such conduct in the early days on the estate and throughout schooling had already contributed to the significant exclusion of many, and continued into young adulthood, adding to their own marginalisation, 'ruining', as in Charlie's case below, rare opportunities of stable and well-paid traditional employment.

... I would come home from sea and have lots of money, I would pick up about 10 grand for three months work. So I used to go in the clubs and sniff cocaine and take ecstasy tablets and stuff like that. I ended up fighting, I ended up having a fight with a bouncer and that's when I come to prison, so I got sacked from the firm I was working for, because I come to prison and when I got arrested I got found with a bunch of cocaine on me and stuff. (Charlie)

During his time away Charlie got involved in taking more drugs and after serving a number of years he found it difficult to get back into this work. He felt it was a more closed industry by then, although he managed to get a

couple of final trips out to sea as result of favour from an old boss: but 'it just did not work out'. In many respects Charlie's experiences mirror Hull's decimated fishing industry and with it one of few local pathways to respectable masculinity (Gillett and MacMahon, 1989). Although several respondents' fathers, uncles and grandfathers had worked at sea, Charlie was the only one among the other 29 participants with any trawler experience. His clubbing, drinking and partying with high earnings was similar to the sort of masculine behaviour among trawler men described by Ulyatt (1985). Arguably Charlie's early masculine trajectory meant he took hedonism too far and 'ruined' his work chances to the extent that he could no longer compete for or 'hack' this work:

the fishing industry collapsed though... the docks were no longer full of fishing boats. There's only a couple of fishing boats that sail out to Norway, you'd have to fly out to them. I did go back away to sea, It just wasn't for me, do you know because I ruined myself and I just couldn't hack it and I ended up jumping the ship in Norway and it took me five days to hitchhike home. Within 10 minutes of being home I was in a nightclub in Hull taking ecstasy. (Charlie)

A further factor in exclusion from the workplace, especially for those whose early working experiences were in less skilled and lower paid jobs, was (in the same way as it was on their streets and throughout their schooling) in the participants' inability to respect the authority of the shop floor management, as Buster's quotation illustrates.

I did not take well to being told what to do, if you had left me alone to do the job and not been nagging on at me I'd be fine, but as soon as I started to feel a bit of authority, trying to talk down to me I would just walk out

and not think twice, it did not bother me at all. I did not think - I need this job, I have to stick at it I need the money, I've got all these responsibilities, it did not matter at all. (Buster)

Like Buster, the vast majority of the respondents had from a young age learned to resist most forms of authority and had minimal or no experience of managing their lives around timetables or schedules, except those forced upon them during time spent in various institutions. Moreover, as already indicated, most of them had spent time in prison before they reached the age of 20, and, as this suggests, they were not averse to transgressing most rules and regulations that restricted them. Taking a risk, pulling off a good 'earner', having a 'buzz and taking 'no shit' were the core components of their masculinities and to try to contain or harness these behaviours in any workplace was a monumental challenge, not only for the employer but also for the employee himself. Other research has shown how many poorly-educated working-class young men, who were arguably much less invested in the extreme versions of protest masculinity than these respondents, were struggling to find and keep work because they lacked the social capital required for contemporary service dominated labour markets (McDowell, 2014, 2003b; Nayak, 2006). Within this literature it is suggested that many employers in low-end jobs in service industries tend to avoid potential conflict associated with these young males and recruit female staff because they are considered to be less resistant and easier to manage than aggressive young men (Hardgrove et al., 2015; McDowell, 2003b)

For many of these men an important further consideration in their exclusion from the contemporary workplace is their refusal to 'take shit' for

low-paid work on the lower skilled shop floor. These jobs demanded long hours for relatively low pay, and the respondents were well aware that one night and the 'right graft' or crime could cover a week's or even a month's wages.

I tried jobs, different jobs... they did not last because I was more interested in, well I thought what was the point of earning 250 quid when I could go robbing and earn it just like that (clicked fingers). (Buster)

The perceived material rewards of criminal conduct significantly impacted the men's early attitudes and motivation to participate in legitimate forms of work. Later in their prison experiences, however, many, as I show in chapters 7 and 8, recognised just how costly this had turned out in years lost to incarceration. For some, after as many as 20 prison sentences, the mundane routine of work was highly appealing.

I could earn more going out grafting, selling drugs. I could earn more than two and half hundred pound a week for a 40 hour week, which is like minimum wage, that's not asking for owt special, do you know what I mean? I could earn a thousand pound a week, more, selling drugs but now I would rather work. (Mick)

The desire of many of the informants for legitimate, even minimum wage, jobs might seem appealing after yet another period of incarceration, but completely giving up 'grafting' and living on a weekly wage is, as I go on to show in the next section, much more challenging once on the outside.

5.4 Crime and Work

In criminology there is a growing body of scholarship exploring the later stages of criminal careers and desistance from crime (Gadd and Farrall, 2004; Laub and Sampson, 2001; Maruna, 2001). Consensus in much of this work is that desistance grows out of a complex matrix of psychological and sociological variables including age or maturity (mid 30s to 40), subjective shifts in attitude, stable employment and formation of family (Gadd and Farrall, 2004; Laub and Sampson, 2001; Maruna, 2001; McNeill, 2006). As previously argued employment did not prevent many of these respondents offending. Nor did, as I show later in chapter 7, being in a relationship or being a father keep respondents out of prison. A number tried maintaining relationships, paternal responsibilities and legitimate jobs alongside criminal careers. Matt, for instance, worked extremely hard after a substantial prison sentence to get the credentials required for a relatively well-paid, stable, and senior position within the railway. It was, he claims, the economic pressures of everyday living and, ironically, the cost of maintaining legitimacy through paying for his expensive car insurance that kept him involved in crime.

I did a railway qualification whilst in prison, and I went to court and applied to get my license back and they gave it me. I... I got the car I got all insured and everything was brilliant for a while... I was working to pay for my insurance, I got a job working on the railway and worked my way up and then last year I got involved with some armed robbers, wanted by the police, I would hold them up in a hotel and I was basically paying for them to stay in hiding while they were going out doing jobs for me. They done a job the night before and hid the money, I went to pick the money up with two of them in the car and the police tried pulling us over in their Subarus and

Evos, they were badly wanted and if stopped that was it. They were going on saying don't stop don't stop and I thought to myself of all the police chases I've had over the years I can get away from these, I got away from them and a vehicle pulled out on me and I crashed into it about 100 mile an hour, it was quite bad and it all come crashing down. (Matt)

Henry, like Matt, managed after some time in prison to find work in the building and construction industry and work his way up into a supervisory position.

I had a job in 2010 with [local building firm] and I lasted a full year, I think it was a year from January until December, I was a contractor, bricklaying and all that, construction again. I got up to a supervisor and ended up having a beer and taking some tablets and thinking that it was all right and ended up trying to brain somebody and ended up back in jail... I enjoyed it, don't get me wrong but it was boring and it wasn't enough money, but I knew I had to do it to prove to my daughter that I can work. (Henry)

Both Matt and Henry proved resourceful in finding relatively good employment that involved and reinforced a 'respectable' hard working masculine performance. However, as with initial school-to-work transitions, early criminal careers and the contacts generated from this lifestyle continue to exert powerful influences on masculine trajectories. Instead of a good job turning many away from crime as is often shown in desistance literature, criminality instead disrupted good adult working opportunities on several occasions. It was clear that for many, even after numerous spells in prison, they were not able to commit themselves fully to legitimate lifestyles.

Gibson's extract captures significant obstacles in completely turning away from criminal careers that many have relied on since childhood, both

for constructing a gendered identity and for material resources. He admitted to enjoying the challenges that sometimes come with crime and explained how everyday activities can turn quickly into an opportunistic 'graft'...

Let's say that even if I'd just go out to the shop right, I start thinking if they've got real high security on it, they've got some real good shutters on it and blah blah blah, I like to think that I'm going to have to do this or I'm going to have to do that to get in or I'm going to have use this or that to get that. Do you know what I mean, that's the bit I like about it. (Gibson)

There is substantial masculine capital and emotional gratification gained in beating commercial security systems and flaunting the subsequent rewards (Copes and Hochstetler, 2003; Hobbs, 1995). Despite efforts to go straight, crime will be a fall-back option for many because of what it seems to offer:

DM: can you say that this is your last sentence?

Gibson: no, no because I won't stop committing crime, even if I got a real good job, I think I would still do little bits and bobs on the side, I don't know it's just, it's brilliant, I think it's brilliant.

Gibson's struggle to commit to going straight because it was 'just brilliant', Matt's armed robbery enterprise and the experiences of many other respondents suggest emotional pay-off plays a role in their prolonged and persistent offending (see Katz, 1988). Visceral pleasure-seeking is often presented as a heavily masculinised activity (Courtenay, 2000) and, as Winlow (2004) and others (MacDonald and Shildrick, 2007) suggest, types of pleasure or leisure are influenced by social and economic backgrounds. The careers of many respondents, from early 'buzz-based' offending to

transitions into materially motivated crime, are loaded with examples of 'thrilling and intrinsically enjoyable' (Winlow, 2004, p. 18) experiences. 'The adrenaline rush, the nervous energy, the gratification' (ibid) derived from violent encounters jump out from many of respondents' narratives. Within the context of their deprived neighbourhood, doing crime is, in many cases, a more emotionally exhilarating route to a locally-valorised version of masculinity than the work options open to many. This criminal route, however, as I go on to show in the following section and chapters, meant prolonged loss of liberty at a cost far greater than any immediate pay-off.

5.5 Work Willing

Notwithstanding the devastation many had left 'on the out' in the wake of their offending, an obvious cost of criminal careers was the numerous sentences and years lost, locked behind the prison door. Nearly all respondents claimed to have 'had enough' of this or just wanted to 'be normal' and arguably from their current period of confinement this desire for an ordinary existence drove some of them to become more 'work willing' than in previous years. Take Danny and Pat, for example, who, until their most recent sentence had never done a day of legitimate work.

Danny: they've set up a new [scheme] ... Well my probation officer is seeing if she can get me on it, it's like six weeks un paid work and I'd do that, you get £25 toward your shopping and like a fiver on your gas, a fiver on your electric, which is only 35 quid and you get your dole, your JSA, would be really good because I'd be getting experience and at the end of it, it leads to a proper job. I'd love to do it. I said to my probation officer yesterday... you get me that.

DM: could you do a yes sir no sir type of job?

Danny: yeah, I'd do anything, any job because I'm really good, like my mam says I can work in jail so why can't I work outside, but I can work out there if I'm given a chance.

Pat, like Danny, was aware that he needed to acquire some skills to find a way into the world of work as the only job he had ever held was working in a newsagent as a young lad.

DM: have you ever worked on the out?

Pat: I worked in a paper shop as a kid, but I am doing maintenance course now, it's painting and decorating, roofing, bricklaying, plastering, tiling and get my certificates from that, I've got a better chance of getting a job when I get out there,

DM: do many people not work in Grimsby?

Pat: with the fishing industry, yes... and that is all gone now, all the factory jobs are getting took over by Polish people and so there's not really that many jobs out there.

DM: have you tried to get a job?

Pat: yeah I've tried, I'm no good at like group work, I always end up arguing, because of my anger problems, even if someone sits there and gives me a funny look and I'll be fine for a bit and then I'll just snap.

By the age of 22, Pat had never engaged in the local labour market but he, along with several of the other men, including some officers, were quick to blame others, as Fine et al. (1997) found in their classic US study of white working-class masculinity and McDowell (2003b) in her UK study; namely, the Polish, for taking all the jobs he had never tried to get. As well as fear of competition, a further hurdle Pat recognised in finding and maintaining his

first job was his unpredictable temperament and tendency to quickly turn to violence.

Despite significant barriers, Pat and several other respondents, claimed they were desperate to find an alternative way of life, at least whilst they were behind the prison walls. With a great deal of time to think, they claim to be trying to map out a crime-free future, once released. For some of the respondents with extremely limited experience of the labour market, the post-prison working lives they envisaged were, as the quotations below indicate, modest and in some cases have an air of desperation.

I suppose you could think... would you wannabe a road sweeper? And now you kind of think the way things are now you'd be lucky to get that, like if you got a job you're lucky to have one. There are people who really want jobs and are struggling to find jobs. It doesn't matter if you cleaning toilets to being a stockbroker, if you have a job you have some respect and independence.

DM: so what do you think changed... to the point that you are at now that you would take any job?

Buster: maybe I'm just a bit more mature and growing up.

DM: do you see any jobs as women's work?

Buster: maybe working in a perfume shop, retail maybe, you know clothes shop, Ann Summers, that's probably one job I wouldn't do, yeah those type of jobs.

From Buster's extract it easy to see how his 'mature' outlook on working life is very different to what it was in his early teens. After many sentences and from the cold reality of the prison cell, road sweeping, cleaning toilets or pretty much anything else seemed a more attractive way of life than incarceration. He, as with many other informants, recognised that if they

were to work then they would have to be prepared to consider low status service sector employment, albeit under conditions that were not too feminised such as selling perfume or lingerie. Ian, like many others, expressed his desperation for legitimate work. However, influenced by his upbringing he was more prescriptive about what he was looking for:

DM: What would keep you out of jail, would you do any job?

Ian: yeah just about.

DM: would you stand in McDonald's?

Ian: no, I couldn't do that, I'd end up fucking spannering someone, cheeky little bastards, I've done it myself, been cheeky to them, no, I could not do something like that. Building sites or manual jobs, you know labouring, jobs, that you use your hands with, I couldn't work in an office or shop I don't think, too enclosed.

Ian, from a travelling community, proudly noted that he was shown a strong work ethic and has far more employment experience than Buster, mainly 'fiddly' cash-in-hand work tarmacking or collecting scrap metal. Buster's short and sporadic employment history included a period of a few months in a safety-clothing outlet and over a year landscaping.

Even with their lack of labour market engagement many of the men I talked to were aware of some of the major local economic challenges and changes but had little overall idea of the extent of this shift. The respondents demonstrated some awareness that 'tough jobs' in 'all-male environments' had become scarce and highly sought after. Most were less knowledgeable, however, about global and national economic shifts and the how they impact their future work prospects. What they were fully aware of is how hard the

2008 crash hit their local region and the immediate employment situation awaiting them outside the gates. It is quite probable that for all their enthusiasm for work, Buster, Ian and most others would struggle on their release to compete in and adjust to a demanding and shifting local labour market.

From the deprivation of prison it is easy to understand how respondents' hopes for 'normal' life are pinned on low-end, low-paid work. The reality when 'on the out', as previous sections in this chapter have shown, is much more complex and difficult than accounted for in their work-willing narratives. Masculine conditioning from childhood and prison that contributed to complete workplace exclusion or the struggle to maintain rare 'traditional employment' will continue to be a major barrier upon release, especially in labour markets where limited work opportunities are increasingly short-term, unreliable and reliant on 'doing deference' for a minimum wage (McDowell, 2003b). Arguably under these conditions it will be exceedingly difficult for informants not to return to past lives and the more accessible resources these lives provide for doing a version of adult masculinity: criminality.

5.6 Ex-Con

Without following the men out of the prison gates it is difficult to predict with any certainty how the vast majority will meet the challenges involved in turning away from crime and securing waged work. Exploring previous post-prison experiences, however, highlights the struggles that face ex-prisoners

and that lead many back to prison (Gadd and Farrall, 2004; Laub and Sampson, 2001; Maruna, 2001; Webster et al., 2004). It is widely acknowledged that one of the major barriers in desisting from crime and violence among entrenched offenders, as many of these respondents are, is the way in which their criminal histories continue to disrupt their attempts to construct a crime-free future (Maruna, 2001). Even in the face of these structural difficulties, many continued to hold firmly to the belief that finding work was a way out and, as Bruce's quotation illustrates, some were quite resilient in their efforts to find a job.

I was just sick to death of this life, I was sick to death of it... getting a job, you go to an agency and agencies always have work. Wages not too good but earning two hundred pound a week is better than earning 7 pounds a week in prison... I've actually applied for a job at McDonalds before, I never got the job but I applied for the job... I'm honest and I tell them I've got a record... you don't have to specifically go into what you've been in trouble for, you've just got to tell them you've been in prison, ... but I think if Jo Bloggs turns up and he hasn't got a criminal record and I turn up and I have got a criminal record there obviously going to go with him over me. (Bruce)

Perhaps as is argued, 'going straight' for men like Bruce is much more a process than an event (Laub and Sampson, 2001; Maruna and Roy, 2007). Maybe the consolation is that with training and voluntary work he managed to spend a record continuous year out of prison at the age of 32. What is important to highlight from Bruce's experiences is his claim that his criminal history excluded him from even fast-food service work that most of his peers believed to be humiliating. Other informants, several with much more serious offending histories than Bruce, were acutely aware of the potential exclusion

from contemporary labour markets awaiting them upon release:

I get released on parole and I'll be on licence again, basically it's back to jobseekers because you cannot really get a job when you're on license, it's hard enough getting a job nowadays, when you've got no criminal record or nothing its hard, I think Hull has just been voted the worst place ever to get a job, it's even harder when you've got a criminal record, because you have to disclose it, as soon as you disclose it: 'oh what were you in prison for?' 'Attempted murder!' 'Oh we'll call you'. So it's not easy, a lot of people will fall back on criminal stuff just to make money. (Victor)

...it's hard for me to get a job because of my record, because I've got arson, violence, theft. I've even got weapons and firearms on my record. I've got domestic violence... I've been in the paper that many times, everybody knows me, as soon as I fill a form in or write my name and they notice who I am, they refuse straightaway because of what they've heard about me, I've got ASBOs splattered all over Grimsby. (Pat)

Often potential employers do not necessarily need access to official records documenting long histories of dishonesty, violence, drug and alcohol use in order for the informants to find themselves excluded from the few local employment opportunities. Research done by Hardgrove et al. (2015) in the UK, for instance, has shown that many of their young adult male research subjects felt excluded from employment opportunities because of bodily presentation—with visible tattoos for example—or by exhibiting the wrong attitudes. A further significant hurdle to securing work in a service-dominated labour market for many of these respondents, then, stems from their bodies that carry the marks, decay, scars and/or symbols of resistance and protest resulting from their long criminal careers, violence and years in institutions. Even after surmounting such hurdles and securing a position often embodied

performances honed on the streets or institutions will, as Bourgois (1996) found in his work with young street dealers entering office work, reveal far too much to employers and, as Andy's extract perfectly captures, this can result in rejection:

Last year I was required to go on a back to work scheme, I said 'is this really viable for me?' 'Yes, yes you've got to do it'. I know it's a complete waste of time, introduce my record into the equation, who I am, boom, boom, nobody on this planet is going to employ me. So I've argued this point and I said 'okay go through the motions, I'll do this and I'll do that'. I'm required to go to the British Heart Foundation for an interview, for voluntary work, this was un-paid, this was through Social Security benefits, and I've gone through... I mean I spent years not even claiming just to stay out of the system, and I've gone through, gone for this interview. It's all good, then they said 'how would you feel standing outside the shop with the bucket asking people for donations' and it just rolled off the tip of my tongue and I said: 'don't you think I'd be better at the bank across the road with a shotgun'? Being funny, there was nothing, no seriousness to that at all, funny, amusing. It was funny to me anyway. I saw the look on their face, and I thought you are fucking joking. I knew at that point that it was finished, but this was on a Friday and I was to start on the Monday and I was in jeans and a T-shirt and she said we don't wear jeans, I thought alright I'll have a little laugh with her, I said I've got no trousers and she went 'oh, errm' and I've said well you've got plenty in here though, its a charity shop. She went, well yes, I've gone over to the rack and said they will fit me, they will fit, they'll fit me and she said I must charge you for them. I said 'it's not a problem', took a wad out and said 'here, keep the change'. I walked out and got a phone call about an hour and a half later sorry but the position that we had given you is no longer available. I thought fuck you, if I can't work for nothing what chance have I got of getting a paid job? That's the reality that I'm faced with, stick an interview in front of me for a job, I'll go on that interview, I won't be cynical, I'll believe and when told I can't I won't be disappointed, I'll just crack on. (Andy)

Andy's sense of personhood, as with most other informants, has been built

on the estate and in prison among other men like him. In this 'back to work' scenario he was having to go it alone in a female-dominated space, being told both how to act and dress and evidently found it difficult to know how or what conduct was expected of him. More notably, however, the personal in a scheme designed to get excluded groups back into workplace, had no idea how to accommodate men like him. This was a humiliating experience and a significant blow for Andy to have his labour, offered for free as part of a government-backed initiative, refused.

Malcolm's experience, almost 15 years earlier and for a paid role in the more traditional shop floor manufacturing sector, highlights how his personal history was of little concern in industrial work where 'hardness' is sometimes a valued attribute. In fact his potential new boss actually identified with Malcolm's shady past

Malcolm: I was really upfront on the interview, I said listen I've been a bit of a bad lad, I just hope you give me a chance, he was willing to give me a chance and said I'm not interested about your past, he said I'll give you a chance, great and I was there for quite a while.

DM: do you think that that could happen today?

Malcolm: no, I mean I told him, I said I was like burgling shops and smoking cannabis and he went well we have all been through these phases when we've been teenagers, he said you haven't exactly done anything horrendous.

Malcolm later stole the petty cash from the office of the employer who had given him a chance and never went back to work. Shortly after in 1994 he found himself sentenced to life in prison for an unrelated murder. Mick, with more recent experience of seeking work believed that, although his history of

offending will no doubt exclude him, there are still some jobs 'if you look hard enough' that value strength, hard work and common sense over historical transgressions:

Mick: I'd do any work, anywhere that would pay me a decent wage it's just getting the work once you got a criminal record, that's the thing, once you got a criminal record it's hard to get the work.

Interviewer: have you gone for jobs were people have asked you about your criminal record?

Mick: yeah, normally, in the building trade you're normally all right, if you know how to fucking graft hard and you are not totally stupid you will get took on, but not in any shops or nowt like that, forget it...

Mick's and Malcolm's experiences suggest that more traditional workplaces that rely on strong bodies rather than emotional labour are less likely to exclude men like these.

Building on this discussion about the challenges the respondents have experienced or expect to face as an ex-con entering post-industrial local labour markets, I now turn to an exploration of how they used their time in prison to better prepare for the significant challenges on their release of 'being normal' and going to work.

5.7 Prison Learning

A key part of ending the cycle of crime is how time in prison is used to better equip these men to be able to participate in the labour market. One important aspect is how the prison and other services harness the men's attempts to change their attitudes and behaviour (see McNeill, 2006). The majority of the

respondents explained that it was within the prison that they had first learned to properly read and write. Bruce claimed that in some ways prison had had a positive impact on him:

...prison can be a good thing in certain ways, I never went to school, I never got any qualifications and now I've done all the education I can do in here, the only thing I can do in here now is do a university course, hopefully I'm not going to get a prison sentence and be here long enough to ever do that... I never went to school and I can write perfect, I can spell perfect and I'm quite bright... [when I] first started coming to prison you had nothing, you worked on a sewing machine and now you can do bricklaying courses and you can get qualifications in the gymnasium...

Bruce was not the only one who felt he had a positive learning experience in his time away. A high proportion of the men indicated that they had improved their basic literacy in prison, noting it was when behind the cell door they had truly come to value the ability to be able to read and write fluently.

Victor, who came up through the care system and who had found little encouragement or motivation for formal schooling, explained that when he first came to prison he did all his learning on a course that prepared him for a career in the armed forces.

...when I come to prison I did a lot of my education stuff here. For young offenders obviously, education, education is a big thing. If you haven't got education skills they try and build you up and then you can get a job and they encourage you to go to the gym. I took part in this new scheme that they was doing, this APTC training scheme, army preparation training course. I took part in that,... its basic training like you do in the army but obviously to a lesser skill. You learn the phonetic alphabet, you learn all the code words, first aid, field craft, camouflage, covering and conceal, they had a place in the gardens at the back where you would take

your trenches. They learnt you like military knowledge and military intelligence, military history, weapons training theory and stuff like that... ...we all got proper uniforms, we got proper boots and polish and we had to polish boots, every Sunday. We have to sort our self out, fold everything away all creases and everything,... 50 of us started that second course and only two of us passed out, me and this other kid from Doncaster, and basically what that sets you up for is when you got released from young offenders you would go straight to Army Careers and they was doing like a scheme for first-time offenders who come to prison it was still possible for them to get into the army and that's what this course was basically building you up for.

DM: did you go to Army Careers?

Victor: I did yeah, I went one time and then didn't go back, I did want to go in the army, it was something I wanted to do but I chose the criminal world instead.

As Atherton (2009) and others have argued, military masculinities are built on hegemonic ideals that have many parallels with tough but respectable masculine performances that most of these respondents sought to live up to. For Victor the shift from the care home, to prison and then the armed forces would probably not have been too big a leap in terms of his sense of self and the behaviours that are valued in each institution. Perhaps in the absence of a supportive family he 'chose' what he already knew: the indiscipline of the criminal world. This choice had resulted in him serving a number of sentences. His current term was over ten years for an alleged serious violent offence against the girlfriend of a 'gangster' rival. In his time in prison, however, he used the system to 'better himself' and, like Bruce, had reached the pinnacle of what the prison has to offer in terms of improving education and skills. It was common among several of the men with long prison histories to claim that they had reached the maximum Level Two in Key and

Basic Skills that this prison education offers in the main. Pat though, following advice from his ex-prisoner dad, was still enthusiastic. With some way to go, he proudly noted that he was trying to 'do everything he could whilst he was away rather than 'doing fuck all, all day'.

Others were not as positive about some of the official learning opportunities and workshops available to them. Jack pointed out that his previous experiences of prison learning and training had no impact on preventing his return to jail. Quite intuitively, and echoing some of the arguments in the desistance literature, he proposed that only he could make the decision to end his current lifestyle, a decision that depended on him growing up and taking responsibility for his own actions.

..., they go on about education and this and they can do that and they can do this but there is nothing in jail that is going to help you on the out. If you want to stay out of prison only you can do that, nothing you do in here is going to help you, everybody reaches a point in the life where they have had enough and they say that it is usually when you hit 30, 35 if you're going to stop you'll stop at that age, I'm am now nearly 32 and nothing I've done in jail is going to help me along the way. I've got a business plan for mobile car valeting, I got my provisional license when I was out for that seven days but that was through my own perseverance, nothing to do with the prison service, they've never help me in any way, I had to get my own college application, I wrote my own business plan, had no help with that, maybe these do find it helpful the education thing but I don't. (Jack)

Like Jack, Gibson, when asked if there was anything his time in prison had done to prepare him for living on the outside, simply replied 'no'.

Leon had a more interesting view of how prison time better prepared him for gainful employment on the outside. Although he was happy to engage in education and training as part of the regime inside, he argued that

he gained nothing from it. The most valuable learning experiences, he explained, came instead from the informal aspects of navigating prison space and 'surviving being around the other inmates'. This informal learning, he suggested, assisted him in running his 'security business'.

...my experience with prison and this life in general helps me in supplying doormen and defusing situations if you like... because of the reputation of who I am and how I can talk in a tranquil manner

Learning in the prison space enhanced Leon's credentials for a business that is highly masculinised and where enterprising criminals with an appetite for violence and intimidation are able to sell their physicality as part of their labour (Hobbs et al., 2003; Winlow, 2001). It is clear that Leon and several other respondents believed the official learning programmes offered by the prison service have little to offer upon release. Yet learning in some cases was born out of a necessity to communicate with partners and family outside and a much better option, in most instances, than sitting in the cell for up to 23 hours as was the case in their earlier days of incarceration. Regardless of the motivation, the respondents' engagement with the limited levels of education and training can only be positive but evidently it is not enough to end the revolving cycle of incarceration for many of these men.

In contemporary labour markets that demand more and more credentials (McDowell et al., 2014b; Nayak, 2006) it is questionable how much currency 'up to Level Two' English and Maths carry. Furthermore, with clusters of short-term sentences, the transitory nature of being moved from one prison to the next at a moment's notice, the physical confines of the prison space and its timetable meant several complained that the skills and

training, especially in the trades, were often not completed and could only be taken to a very basic level. It is noteworthy, too, that in this prison, as with most local prisons, many of the vocational training schemes were centred on traditional masculine trades or on bodybuilding and fitness. In the competitive climate for mainly service-based local work opportunities it is doubtful respondents will see much transferable value in their gym instruction credentials or in partly completed *City and Guilds* certificates in bricklaying and joinery.

Some of the failings in prison education and training highlighted by the respondents' experiences feed into wider political and academic debates about prison education (see Bracken, 2011; Champion, 2013; Czerniawski, 2015; Hewson, 2013; Rogers et al., 2014 for a good overview of these debates). What is important to highlight is that since 2010 there have been three different Conservative Justice Secretaries and as part of their strong pledge on punishing and rehabilitating offenders, each with varying approaches, have successively aimed to overhaul prison training and education. The ministerial forward in the report from the government's 2011 review, *Making Prison Work*, admitted that the current system: 'is not performing well, as repeatedly confirmed in many reports from Independent Monitoring Boards and the Prison Inspectorate. Recent reports from Ofsted confirm this' (Department for Business Innovation and Skills, 2011, p. 3). This recognition is rather late for many of the respondents and only time will tell if the Conservatives' 'rehabilitation revolution' will lead to employability skills that entrenched prisoners like these men can take to the changing workplace.

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter has explored the respondents' post-compulsory schooling transitions exposing some major difficulties they encountered in finding and maintaining legitimate routes to an acceptable and legitimate version of manhood. Against so-called 'choice biographies' (Beck, 1992; Woodman, 2009) or individualism (Giddens, 1991) posited by some scholars, I show how avenues to manhood were severely restricted through structures of poverty and inequality. Challenges encountered by the participants parallel those faced by the majority of undereducated working-class men, as national and regional economic restructuring increases their disadvantages in local labour markets (Hardgrove et al., 2015; McDowell, 2003b; Nayak, 2006). I argue, however, that many of the informants' early starts on criminal career paths and inevitable entrenchment in the criminal justice system meant that by the time they reached working age, they carried heavier disadvantages into the job market than other men of their age and social class. Despite these challenges, the vast majority had some, albeit short and sporadic, engagement in the labour market within the first five years after leaving compulsory education. Out of these, six secured what might arguably be described as stable, and in some cases, semi-skilled and even well-paid employment. On the whole, however, their main source of employment were in low-skilled, low-paid and mainly 'off the cards' 'fiddly' (MacDonald, 1994; MacDonald and Marsh, 2005b) labouring work.

A key argument of this chapter has been that many of the informants significantly added to their own exclusion and marginalisation as young

adults. Protest masculinities constructed in response to earlier structures of inequality were carried into workplace transitions and often resulted in termination of employment and/or incarceration. What seemed like the easy monetary rewards of criminal activities were often preferable to the low wages of bottom-end employment. Several respondents tried to run criminal activities alongside their participation in legitimate employment that was, in two cases, stable and relatively well paid. Paralleling Winlow's (2001) argument based on research with door security staff, I suggest that this involvement in criminal activity whilst in employment was about more than simple monetary gain, but is linked to a particular masculine approach to visceral pleasure-seeking and the emotional satisfaction gained by involvement in crime.

The respondents were not, however, beyond redemption in their own view of their future prospects. Their often long criminal careers and the years lost to incarceration contribute to many of the men claiming that they have 'had enough' and want to change once they are released. Nearly all of the participants were aware that to end their criminal careers through employment would mean securing work in a city with one of the UK's highest rates of unemployment. I argue that in face of such significant structural barriers it is more likely that many of respondents' unreformed version of protest masculinity that led to their previous rejection of (and from) the workplace, will continue to contribute to their exclusion from the harsh local labour market upon release.

The final part of this chapter showed how prison learning contributed little, if anything, in preparing the respondents for understanding and

minimising the barriers to employment they face upon release. Indeed, as I go on to show in chapter 6 that follows, the provision of inadequate vocational training and education is one area of many in which the prison facilitates the trapping of many respondents in prolonged cycles of marginalisation and incarceration. I now move on, in the next chapter, to examine respondents' transitions from boys to men on the landings of the 'local jail'.

6

Lads to Lags: Adolescence-to-Adult Transitions in the Local Prison

6.1 Introduction

This chapter charts the respondents' youth-to-adult transitions in penal spaces. The discussion is split into two main parts: the opening subsections explore the informants' first and early encounters with incarceration and the second section focuses on adolescence-to-adult transitions in local penal establishments. I start the chapter by showing how the respondents' first-time prison narratives reveal various dimensions to their gendered construction of self and ideas of appropriate masculinities in prison. All the men were able to recall their prison debut in graphic detail and almost unanimously admitted to a profound fear of incarceration prior to the actual experience. In this section I argue much of this was gender-related terror that centred on insecurities about being able to maintain respectable masculinities 'inside'. I then explore why, after only hours of incarceration, most describe going from immense fear or what Erving Goffman (1968) terms mortification to a feeling of being 'home from home'. As part of this discussion I map the respondents' journey from the procedural booking in at reception to 'hitting the wing'. Their accounts of this process offer valuable insights into how their street-based protest masculinity was first imported

(Irwin and Cressey, 1962) into the penal space and then initially adapted (Clemmer, 1940; Sykes, 2007) to the existing masculine cultures. The analysis then leads onto an exploration of why some of these men were able to adapt so quickly to the versions of masculinities valued in prison.

Having outlined first and early encounters with incarceration, the second part to this chapter begins by exploring the respondents' transitions in the local prison or Young Offender Institute (YOI) starting with a discussion of how custodial sentences were given to most respondents long before reaching full adult maturity at 24 and, once in the system, how transitions to adulthood for many were institutionally imposed through uncompromising age-based markers. I then outline how, consistent with a large body of literature, turning 18 inside and becoming young adult prisoners meant the respondents were faced with navigating some of most emotionally-impoverished and violent regimes in the prison service. I argue that not only is the official carceral space of these young men ill equipped to challenge the street-based protest masculinity that characterises them on entry, but also it fails to encourage alternative avenues to manhood. In the final section of this chapter I suggest that living up to hyper prison masculine performances, during their most formative years, contributed to these teenagers' final institutional transition, aged 21, from young adult prisoner to their current status of adult 'con'. I finish with a discussion of the ways in which the final institutional transition to 'full con' status significantly changed, with some relief among the respondents as to what constituted respected prison masculinities.

6.2 Prison Debut

For all the respondents the first prison sentence was one of their most memorable and significant life-changing experiences. Many were in their mid to late teens when they started their prison journey. Almost half were aged just 15, two thirds had received their first sentence by 18 years and all, except three, had experienced prison by the time they had turned 21. The generational differences between the respondents meant that the type of carceral space they first encountered varied: some were housed in YOIs whilst several respondents were first placed on a segregated wing for young prisoners (YP) in Hull prison.⁷ Every interviewee, some going as far back as three decades, described their first day of prison in graphic detail. As Crew (2009) notes, the structural and procedural side of receiving inmates from the courts has changed very little over the last half century and it is striking that from the youngest to the oldest the subjective and emotional responses to first entering prison was almost unanimous. As Joel Harvey (2006) found in his study of how young men adapted to their first month in Feltham (YOI), every informant admitted being filled with fear from the instant they were sentenced and that this fear grew as they approached the prison.

...it don't really hit you when you're in the court room, it's like later on when you downstairs in the cell and you know you're going soon, you finally realise you know, nine months in prison and you think of all the things that you've heard from the street, what prisoners are you going to be with and just worrying in the showers, stuff

⁷ Up until the creation of the Youth Justice Board in 1998 and their responsibility for commissioning *Custodial Places 2000*, it was common for local prisons to have a young prisoner wing housing young people aged 15 to 21. Local prisons still house some young adults aged 18 to 20 who are on remand awaiting trial.

like that, stuff that you always hear... (Victor)

...you don't really think about it, do you know when they tell you in the court room, your head just goes, you're not really thinking, it's when you're actually on the bus, on the way to the jail that's when you start, your mind starts to go am I gonna be all right? Am I gonna get hurt? The stuff you see on telly about prisons and that, so it's scary and when you get there and then on induction there telling you what prisons about and all that you don't really pay attention, the first time I come in, as soon as they put me behind my door I sat on my bed and started crying. (Pat)

These extracts are typical of almost all responses. For many, their anxiety centred on whether they would be able to maintain their status as a 'one of the lads'. They were terrified of being seen as weak and as a consequence feared being violently raped and emasculated by bigger and stronger prisoners.

A further, but related, cause of concern was whether they would be able to stand up to the more subtle and daily challenges to their masculinity from other prisoners. As chapter 4 highlighted, the vast majority of men that fill UK prisons are, as with these respondents, from some of most deprived neighbourhoods in the UK (Jewkes, 2005). Numerous studies have shown valorised masculine performances in these impoverished spaces are constructed and dependent on a heavily managed front (Charlesworth, 2000) or 'face work' (Connell, 1995) and preserving male 'honour' (Polk, 1994). Many participants, having constructed their childhood masculinities on the streets of similarly deprived estates and in similar learning and living environments, would be acutely aware of the cost of not living up to accepted masculine ideals in all-male spaces. Many worried that prison would require more 'keeping face' than they would be able to live up to.

...yeah I was petrified, I was always taught that it was something to really fear and I think I was quite comfortable in the kids homes and foster care homes, being one of the lads you like lead the pack and you're quite comfortable, all the staff cater for you. To be going somewhere where you don't know nobody or what they are capable of, it's a scary thing, to be honest yeah I was scared. (Matt)

Not all the men's worries about prison life were just about being raped in the showers or not being 'hard' enough. Ian recognised, as with many other respondents, that he was not used to being constrained or adhering to any authority and, as the following extract illustrates, feared that he would find it hard adjust in prison.

DM: what do you think your fears were before actually experiencing prison?

Ian: not being able to do what I wanted to do, that was the only thing, I mean I knew prison was alright, I mean I wasn't expecting to get gang raped or anything like that, you know I don't mean, not them type of fears, fear of, I don't know, not being able to do what I wanted, you know being told what to do, I've always had a problem with authority...

For a number of men whose first time away could have, and did in a couple of cases, result in quite substantial sentences, their dread of what might happen on the inside was coupled with the fears about what they had left behind or lost outside. Leon, whose first time in prison was as result of being remanded in custody awaiting trial for a serious kidnapping and other violent offences, spoke openly about his first days inside.

DM: talk me through the minute the judge remanded you.

Leon: ...being locked up, I just had this insecure feeling that I would lose everything whilst I was inside, the main problem wasn't actually being in jail... it was more of a mental thing and that's the main reason I couldn't cope, the main reason I couldn't cope because one day for me away from family it's like two weeks for other blokes being away from their family.

Glen, who from a young age claimed to be a major drug dealer and robber of other dealers, managed to avoid prison for a relatively long time compared to most of the other respondents. However, at the age of 21 he finally found himself on remand accused of murder. His quotation below was one of a number of moments during the interview when he allowed glimpses past his hard 'gangster' masculine identity and exposed his fears of what it meant to lose his liberty and all he had on the outside:

...it's hard, I think I'm good at hiding how I feel... I've never been so scared in my life, rather than do 30 years of my life I would rather they brought the death sentence back and put me to sleep, I've got too much out there, I am not like a lowlife who hasn't got nowt to look forward to, or I could get on with it but I have, I've got loads of friends, I've got my girlfriend, my mom, my dad. (Glen)

Leon's and Glen's first prison experiences were overshadowed by the fact that they were looking at extremely long sentences and consequently their fears, as Drake's (2012) and others' (Cohen and Taylor, 1981; Hulley et al., 2015; Scraton and McCulloch, 2008) research with long term inmates also found, were based around losing masculine presence and honour outside the walls. This was often linked to worrying about the loss of their partners, or their loyalty, and an unbearably prolonged loss of liberty. However, the predominate fear of incarceration uniting most of the respondents, old or

young, serving long or short sentences, was a perceived threat to their masculinity.

6.2.1 Representations of Imprisonment

Most men who are imprisoned will have spent a great deal of their lives perfecting tough or hyper masculine exteriors (Bengtsson, 2015; Butler, 2008) and so it was an extraordinary experience hearing so many talk openly about fears and shedding tears during their first days of incarceration. It also raises the interesting question of where, having no previous personal experience, they got their knowledge or ideas about prison life. Criminologists have established that most people's understanding of crime/criminals and insights into the working of the prison estate are vicariously obtained through various forms of media (Mason, 2006a, 2006b). Those not working within the prison estate or with no personal experience of imprisonment acquire knowledge about prison from books, television, films, newspapers and conversation. These respondents might have been involved in the criminal justice system from a young age, but as their narratives suggest their understanding of life on the 'inside' was also vicariously informed. Many, throughout the interviews, made references to popular films and television depicting prison life, with the 1979 film '*Scum*', (a violent depiction of life, including male rape in a British Borstal) and '*Sense of Freedom*' (the life story of Glasgow gangster and hard man sentenced to life and resisting the violent prison system) being commonly cited. There was also a direct source of real life stories of experiences of incarceration from people 'on the estate', which in some cases included siblings and parents

with tales to tell of 'doing bird'. Often post-prison narratives of standing up to and surviving the harsh and violent conditions seen on TV or doing 'easy time' were, as we can see from Bruce and Pat's quotations below, a potent form of currency in the construction of gender identities among some of older peers on the estate.

DM: where did you get your information about what prison was like before you actually got here?

Bruce: just from the guys that I knocked about with on the estate, a lot of them had already been to prison you see, because as I said when I was in the children's home I was a lot younger than them. I was 13 and they was maybe 16 and 17... they spoke about jail, they never really spoke about in a scary way, they talked of it as a brilliant place. I don't know, people see you as even a bigger man than. Well if you've been to prison you've got out all right, it ain't bothered you, it ain't affected you, but I was absolutely terrified. I wasn't going to put it on like they was, I know a lot of them was scared when they first come to prison, I know for a fact they was, but they try to put on this front, make out as though they are bigger than they are. (Bruce)

Often the informants' narratives on the origins of their early insights into imprisonment resonate with Tony Kearon's (2012) assertion that popular cultural representations of imprisonment are fragmented and contradictory. He found significant distinctions between representations of imprisonment in popular British news media compared to fictional representations in film and other cultural texts. Kearon (2012) and others (Jewkes, 2002; Mason, 2006a), show that public perception and attitudes to prison are on the whole shaped by overly simplified narratives about imprisonment peddled by poor journalism in the mass market populist newspapers. So-called factual reports/programmes focus on the privileges of in-cell televisions, game

consoles, days out and other luxuries and present this as evidence that inmates have an easy time (Mason, 2006b). In contrast to prison being too comfortable a space, as Kearon (2012) notes, are the dominant representations in fictional texts that portray imprisonment as brutal and an atomised experience, where inmates have to contend with the daily threat of bullying, serious physical violence and sexual abuse. Of course there are strands of reality running through these representations but such contradictory and oversimplified representations evidently shaped many of the respondents' pre-prison expectations.

However, people do not just passively consume powerful media representations and narrated experience. Interpretation or readings will vary depending on what the respondents bring to the text in terms of class, gender, group/individual interests and lived experiences (Ferrell et al., 2008; Jewkes, 2004). Bruce and Pat for instance, claimed to have not fully subscribed to the 'easy prison' narrative espoused by their friends and older peers and showed some recognition that on their estates talk of 'doing your jail' easily was, for some, just a way of doing masculinity. As the chapter unfolds I show how many of the respondents continually conflated contradictory representations of prison as being both easy and brutal as part of a strategy for constructing prison masculinities.

This section has highlighted how conflicting representations of imprisonment contributed to many of the respondents' anxieties about how their estate-based protest masculinities would import into the hyper masculine space of the prison. Starting in the 'reception suite' and then the 'wing', the following discussion explores the respondents' actual first

encounters with prison and charts the profoundly defining transitions from boys to young adult prisoners and then 'con'.

6.2.2 Reception and 'Hitting Wing': 'Home from Home'

As has been shown to be the case with a high number of men in the UK's prison system (Fitzpatrick et al., 2014; Morgan, 2002), most informants, as chapter 4 highlighted, have long histories of being bounced around various institutions and having their lives interrogated by professionals. Even with this experience, however, their first hours in the local prison or YOI had significant parallels with the mortification process described by Goffman (1968) in his classic asylum study.

...it's just a lot of questions, a hell of a lot of questions, your age, your name, next of kin, your home address and your offence that you're in for, any medical conditions, any worries and they tell you a little bit about how things work, they take all your clothes off you and you get strip-searched, you see a nurse and you see an officer and then they take you to the wing, so like in the space of a couple of hours, you go through quite a lot in a couple of hours... and if it's your first time in prison it's quite a lot to take. (Victor)

In these procedural stages most of the informants spoke of being a boy when they first had to come to terms with the loss of liberty, identity and dignity or, what Goffman terms, 'civil death' (1968, p. 25).

After having what many described as their outside identities stripped away, the next stage of the process involved being taken from Reception to their living quarters on the residential 'wing' and allocated a cell or 'pad'. The wing is the part of the prison where inmates eat, sleep, shower and associate

with others. It is at the point when many of the respondents started talking about 'hitting' the wing that remarkably, and almost consistently across the all the respondents, the mood and tone completely changed. The way many described entering this space for the first time speaks a great deal about not only where they had come from but it also why they returned to prison time and time again.

...I had a lot of friends who was already in the prison, even though it was still daunting and frightening... but yeah, when I come from reception to D wing, as I walked past the wing my mates were shouting me out of the window, it sounds daft but I felt a bit at home. (Dennis)

...I walked onto the wing expecting there to be some big hairy arsed cons and honestly it was like being back on my own estate, I walked on the wing and I knew everybody and that was the worst thing for me because then I started enjoying prison. (Bruce)

These extracts sum up the experiences of nearly every respondent. Total fear, loss of identity, the unknown or mortification was almost immediately replaced with relief and a confidence that comes with familiarity.

This was not case for many of the young research subjects in Joel Harvey's (2006) study who struggled and took some time to adapt to Feltham YOI. He found prison entry to be the most vulnerable time and the point at which self-harm and suicide are more likely. Harvey terms this initial period a 'liminal phase', in which his young men were coming to terms with the shift from the outside world to the prison, preoccupied with their personal safety, loss of liberty and control and separation from outside attachments (2006). In this 'liminal phase' of adaption, his young men were hesitant to leave their cells and reluctant to engage with staff, other inmates and structured

activities (ibid). The informants for this study indicated that they experienced some difficulties in the liminal phase, but to a much lesser extent than Harvey's young men. These differences might partly be explained in that Harvey interviewed his participants just days after arriving to do their first sentence in a YOI with a long troubling history, a prison the Howard League for Penal Reform (Howard League for Penal Reform, 2010a) list as one of most violent in England and Wales. The retrospective first time prison narratives of the respondents in this study, however, with some reflecting back over a decade, may have softened their accounts of their initial experiences in a range of penal institutions.

Respondents' versions of street-based protest masculinity and the ease which many claim it transferred into the prison space contrasts with Harvey's conclusions (2006) but shares some interesting parallels with what geographer Shabazz (2009) describes as 'post industrial carceral masculinity'. He found many young black men construct this version of masculinity as an adaptation to the structural poverty and spatial organisation of one of Chicago's biggest and most disadvantaged housing projects. Navigating projects that were built in the 70s under the 'carceral logic' of restrictive architecture, surveillance and containment, many poorly educated young men when faced with mass de-industrialisation and high unemployment turned to the underground economy. A daily 'hustle' that often involved drug dealing and serious violence led to high rates of incarceration among young men from the same project. Once inside, Shabazz suggests, their gender performances already 'prisonised' transfer with little adaptation to a carceral space not much different to their housing project. Although his

work reflects America's heavily racialised penal system, and all but one of the respondents in this study are white working-class males from post-industrial estates in England, there are some obvious similarities between the two groups. Shabazz's description of how a 'circular system' of Black bodies 'vacillating between prison' (p. 286) and their poor neighbourhoods parallels the way in which estate masculinities both reflect and affect prison masculinities and vice versa.

This strong connection between the respondents' neighbourhoods and local penal establishments makes it easier, as Buster's quotation highlights, to import already well-established 'hard masculinities' from the 'estate' into the prison space.

DM: What was D wing like?

Buster: it was all right, there was lots of fighting with the older lads, because it was like 15 to 21. I knew them all, especially the hard cases on the wing. I mean I were mates with them on the out so I was all right, it didn't bother me, one little bit.

Not all the respondents reported an easy transition from the streets to the wing. Pat, like Buster, was just 15 when he was first sentenced, but he did not have the same confidence, stature or masculine capital and, importantly, he was not from nearby estates. Despite his appetite for violence he struggled through the liminal phase and adapting to life on the wing.

...really nervous, I didn't come out of my pad. When you do start coming out of your pad and start chatting to people, the way, well the way I see it when I come in, you find people from my area, other lads from Grimsby and stick with them, because that is the way it is in jail

everyone looks after their own, so like if I'm fighting with someone else and the Grimsby lads see it they will join in, because we are all from the same town... [even] when I know there are some lads in there I knew I was kind of still nervous, I was walking about and all that but was careful because of all the stabbings that went on, but once you get in to a routine it got easier. (Pat)

It would be difficult to overstate the importance of locality and local identity in shaping the men's early experiences of incarceration. The small minority of respondents from neighbourhoods furthest from the penal establishment were the ones who admitted to struggling the most in the early days of their first sentence. As Crew (2009) and Phillips (2012) found in their study of similar institutions, local area, town or city contribute significantly to the organisation of prison masculinities. The longer the distance the inmate is from home, the more important the regional identity becomes for finding a sense of belonging and fitting into existing masculine hierarchies. The vast majority, however, reached the wing to find 'lads' they were in care with, 'lads' they went to school with, 'lads' from their street corners, 'lads' they had committed crime with, cousins, uncles, sisters' 'boyfriends' and older siblings. It is easy to understand, then, why Dennis 'felt a bit at home', and Bruce likened it to being back on his 'own estate'. They were, clearly, on very familiar territory, with lads and men they had been around most of their lives; those whom, like them, accessed the same resources, in the same spaces, in pursuit of the same masculine ideals.

For many of the respondents their initial experiences of prison did not conform to the brutal representations they had seen on the 'telly' or some of the myths they'd heard on the estate. Instead the 'worst thing', Bruce admits, was the realisation that it was from this point that 'he started enjoying prison',

and Jack, too, felt that rather than deterring further sentences his first time signalled the 'start of something'. Andy, in his careful, reflective statement below, captures the significance of experiencing and surviving the first prison sentence and how in some way doing so was like passing a test that then permitted greater criminal freedom.

I've always said from my experience prison is a bigger deterrent before you actually go, the thought of prison was horrendous, going to prison was emotional but a relief and it removed a lot of inhibition, like yeah I've done that, I've survived that, it wasn't that bad and I forgot about it a couple months after I got out. (Andy)

The surprise at the ease of adjusting to prison life and the accompanying relief described by Andy was common among many of the other respondents. They thought prison was going to be much 'harder than it actually was'.

6.2.3 'Easy Jail'?

It important here to unpack why the respondents talked of their first prison experience as a relief or not as hard as they imagined. For these men the illusion that prison was 'easy' says more about their pre-prison social environments and ideas of masculinity than legitimising any claims that prisons are not 'punishing-enough' places. As I indicated earlier, the biggest and consistent pre-prison fear among the men related to being potential victims of sexual violence, and of course it must have come as a great 'relief' to find, at least at this level, that fighting off predatory male sexual violence was not, as represented in the movies or according to estate legend, a daily

occurrence. In fact the opposite was more typical because in this type of highly transient local prison or YOI, with most doing relatively short sentences of four years and under, anyone suspected of being a predatory rapist of other inmates would be at serious risk.

The men also assumed prison to be a tough and frightening place because of their anxieties of being locked in a highly violent and dangerous arena. There is, of course, substance to these anxieties; nearly all research points to prisons as highly violent places, where masculinities are constructed and positioned through fighting prowess and a willingness, if necessary, to engage in gross violence (Jewkes, 2005, 2004; Kupers, 2005). Studies as far back as Sykes (2007) for instance, show that that one of the major pains of imprisonment is the deprivation of security, where the biggest threat to personal security or safety comes from other inmates. According to Sykes and others (Crewe, 2011; Jewkes, 2005) an adaption to the deprivation of security, real or imagined, is dealt with through hyper masculine performances based on individual or collective violence. Jewkes (2005) in her research in the UK notes that 'for most inmates, peer group respect, individual status, and access to scarce resources all rest on a reputation for aggressiveness and physical strength' (p. 46). This creates an environment where weaker inmates are vulnerable to being exploited by the more powerful inmates. For many of my respondents, however, as already highlighted and as the quotations below reinforce, most of their lives before prison, and intervening periods 'on the out', involved navigating and constructing masculinities in similar spaces and under comparable conditions.

It was like the detached exclusion centre that I went to, they was all near enough my age and yeah there were some bad lads and some people doing like five and six or seven years but to talk to they were all right lads... (Richard)

to me it was just like boarding school, just a stricter regime than the school I was at, so it didn't really bother me, but I remember being scared, yeah. I remember being very scared, but at the same time I knew I didn't need to be scared, nowt was going to happen, nowt worse than what I've already been through with boarding school, it's just I wouldn't be going home on the weekend and half the time I didn't wanna be going home anyway... (David)

The ease with which the men talk of adapting to their first prison sentence is not because being incarcerated was easy. David talks of being scared and many suggested other 'pains' of imprisonment or structural deprivations such as missing families, girlfriends, children and generally reported finding the loss of their liberty the difficult part. As many of them had been imprisoned at a young age, though, such 'pains', as I show later in the chapter, were not fully realised until they were older and trapped much further into their prison journeys. What is important is that many of the informants, as Richard's and David's extracts suggest, had been learning to serve time long before first 'hitting the wing'. What many deemed easy was in reality just familiar.

Highlighting the respondents' claims of their initial easy adaptation to imprisonment is not to challenge research that shows prison is a brutally violent, psychologically harmful and depriving space. Rather, it is to suggest that they were able to adapt to the deprivation or pains of imprisonment as it to a large extent paralleled their earlier lives. As the evidence provided in chapters 2 and 3 indicates, the respondents, like most of the men in UK

prisons, have spent most of their lives creating and negotiating a particular version of working-class masculinity and a gendered trajectory under extraordinary levels of deprivation. In chapter 7 that follows, I show that many informants' real-life accounts are responses to quantitative markers of deprivation that expose their regions as having some of the highest suicide and mortality rates in the UK. The areas where they grew up have also significantly higher-than-average deaths from drug overdoses and alcohol abuse, as well as a high propensity for violence. Many men in prison, including the men to whom I talked, had either been a victim and/or had previous offences for violence. Some were already doing time for serious assaults.

This is not to suggest, however, as posited by some proponents of the classic importation thesis (Irwin and Cressey, 1962) that, for the offenders, imprisonment is just another aspect of their lives, *par for the course*, and that criminal identities constructed on the outside simply transfer into the prison space. As Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) suggest, masculinities are situationally accomplished and have to be continuously worked and reworked. In the prison space, therefore, with nowhere to retreat to from the constant scrutiny of gendered performances and the threat of violence, masculine hierarchies based on domination and subjugation will, although influenced by outside, be much more pronounced (Sabo et al., 2001b; Scraton and McCulloch, 2008). The 'hard' men entering the prison space may well find they have to up their game to maintain the same respect they commanded on the out. Those without adequate physical masculine capital, as in Pat's case, find that they may draw on other resources, becoming for

example, a 'dealer or 'tobacco baron'⁸ (see Crewe, 2006), to construct alternative masculine identities (see also Jewkes, 2005).

The type of prison, as Sim (1994) notes, whether long term (high security), local or open conditions (low security), also determines different types of masculine hierarchies and performances. On many occasions, for instance, informants made statements that suggest they understood that there were certain modes and behaviours in the local prison that would not happen in long-term establishments. Jack, for instance, in reference to a wing bully, noted that 'he wouldn't last a day bigging it up like in a proper jail like Frankland,⁹ they'd put a jug of boiling water and sugar over his fucking face'. As these studies and Jack's statement suggest, early criminal identities combine with varying levels of deprivations found in different prison spaces to create extreme or exaggerated forms of prison masculinities (Jewkes, 2005). For these respondents, many with their long investments in protest masculinity, hitting the residential wing filled with others from the neighbourhood meant that most of them were equipped to adapt to the existing culture of prison masculinity in their local prison.

6.2.4 Initiation Test

As the respondents' narratives unfolded, it became increasingly evident just how much previous cultural conditioning assisted many in navigating the countless pitfalls, challenges and tests of early incarceration. It was clear from one or two informants that any mishandling of their masculine identities

⁸ Prisoner who credits tobacco to other inmates with 100% interest or 'double bubble' on pay day.

⁹ High security prison housing some most violent and longest serving prisoners in the UK.

and performances in the early days could have a significant impact on all future prison experiences. From the very first night, as David illustrates below, new prisoners are scrutinised and tested in what is often an attempt to try and gauge the attitudes and reactions of the latest arrival to the wing.

... the first night with the lads not seeing you on the wing, I remember some kids shouting out their windows, trying to make me sing a song for them Baa Baa Black Sheep song out of the window. I just went to the window and shouted 'listen if you want me to sing a song come down in the morning and make me sing a song. (David)

David was not the only man to mention the window test. Several other interviewees talked of being called to their cell windows on the first night to face interrogation by other inmates. They told me how initially innocuous conversations often quickly shift to demands or threats in attempts to try to persuade the new prisoner to do something that might expose him as naive and weak, including reciting nursery rhymes.

Another common test for a new prisoner looked on the surface like a simple compliment about his trainers and an enquiry as to the size. Respondents used to hostile environments understood that this was not a friendly enquiry but was instead a test to explore how easy it might be to take the shoes off his feet. Other researchers have commented on the significance of 'trainers' or designer sporting footwear in expressing masculine identities in prison (Jewkes, 2002; Wilson, 2003). In the carceral space, trainers are important symbols of conspicuous consumption (Jewkes, 2002). Under the deprivations associated with prison, wearing expensive trainers is a highly visible strategy of expressing masculine ideals that suggest the individual is an earner and still able to maintain aspects of his

outside identity (Jewkes, 2002; Wilson, 2003). Jewkes (2005) concluded that many of the young 'street wise prisoners' in her study 'literally wore their masculine credentials on their feet' (p. 57). Several respondents made reference to the importance of having and being able to wear their own trainers and most had experienced or understood the implication behind the trainer test. This was a clear strategy, as Dean's extract illustrates, for the more established prisoner to try to assert his masculine dominance over the new man.

...when I first started coming to jail it was hard to wear your own trainers or anything like that because there was a lot of taxing going on, people coming in and saying all that: 'oh they are nice what size are them'? A size 8, 'I'm a size 8' and the next thing you know he's getting done in and getting the trainers took off him.
(Dean)

Designer trainers were of great symbolic significance for doing masculinity among the respondents; however, to lose footwear to another inmate is an emasculating experience that leaves the individual vulnerable to further and continued exploitation. Time in all-male spaces and all male peer groups meant that most respondents will have faced or been involved in similar challenges and would be aware that their standing in the prison rests, as Dennis outlines, on a response that suggests a willingness to use violence.

I'd have to be cold to have my trainers took off my feet. I've been asked what size my trainers are and they are: 'about the size of your mouth' ... or 'my size', that's how it's got to be. (Dennis)

For young prisoners, there was much more that they had to be alert to when presenting and maintaining respectable masculine identities when they were among the other inmates. Gibson highlights the extent that masculinities are monitored for weaknesses and the importance of recognising and quickly dealing with all types of, often subtle, challenges.

...when you first come to jail you can't just overlook little things... my mate might say what are you looking at you dick head, I don't know, just little things like that, you just wouldn't even bother outside, but when you come to jail and that. If someone talks to you like that, in that kind of way, you have to fucking fight it out, because otherwise someone else will hear and number one, he knows that he can talk to you like that so he's going to keep doing it and number two, other people are going to hear him talking to you like that and think he's a muppet. Fuck it! You've just got to jump on it straight away. (Gibson)

The challenges are not always as clear cut as above:

...lets say I'm not hungry, like obviously the workers on the servery that gives the food out blah blah, they're meant to give everyone the same, obviously if your mate comes through he gets a bit more than everyone else, so like when you come walking through, it's like I might not even be hungry but I want as much food on my plate as I can get so I don't look like a dick head when I walk through, because otherwise my mates... he will be like, ha ha, you've been stitched up. (Gibson)

As Gibson's, Dennis's and David's examples clearly demonstrate, knowing how to present and maintain a version of respectable masculinity was critical to their first prison experience. The informants, confirming what has been shown in a large body of penal research (Crewe, 2009; Jewkes, 2004; Kupers, 2005; Messerschmidt, 2001; Sabo et al., 2001), explained that this mainly centred on masculine posturing and that if a prisoner successfully

projected or established early on a willingness to 'stand up for yourself' or to fight, 'win or lose', then it is likely things would be much easier. It is perhaps notable that all three men quoted above had gone through the alternative learning/boarding school route and/or the care system and so understood how to jostle for position in masculine hierarchies

Similar masculine trajectories that included boarding school and the 'care' system, however, failed to prepare a fifteen-year-old Dean for sharing a cell with an older inmate suffering with 'bad mental health problems.'

...they put this other kid with me, I still remember his name, called ... and he must've had mental health problems. I woke up in the middle of the night with him bull whipping me, do you know what I mean by bull whipping, he'd rolled towels up the nutter and he'd wet the end of it, ... I was asleep, and he was bull whipping me, he's a lot bigger than me, I was only just coming on 16 and he was nearly 21. I was like what do you want, what do you want? ... he was just laughing like a lunatic and I thought fucking hell! I couldn't sleep all night and I came out in the morning with bruises all over me and I pulled the screws up like, told them what was going on and they moved me out the cell and put me in a cell on my own and he ended up getting put on governors report and I said look I don't want the police, because I was shit scared, do you know what I mean? I didn't want to be back in there and I didn't want to be seen as being a grass because back on the wing the punishment for me would have been worse. Even after that they were putting me in the same class as him because we had to go to education together, he was intimidating me... friggin' lunatic, he had like a split personality... (Dean)

In his instinct to protect himself Dean reported or gave information to staff about the frightening encounter with his 'lunatic' cellmate and by doing so went against what Clemmer (1940) and others have identified as the inmate or convict code (Copes et al., 2013; Crewe, 2005; Wellford, 1967). As discussed in the previous section and highlighted in chapter 2, a number of

studies have shown that prison masculine culture or hierarchies are influenced through imported criminal identities (Irwin and Cressey, 1962; Jewkes, 2005), but also that prison masculinities are situationally constructed and maintained through adherence to and enforcement of the inmate code (Clemmer, 1940; Sabo et al., 2001; Sykes, 2007). Dean noted that after the incident he was seen as weak and positioned as a 'grass', even among other inmates from the estate where he had grown up. Managing this highly stigmatised masculinity in the mainstream prison space is both difficult and dangerous. Dean after a short time, feeling he could no longer live with the risk of reprisals, requested protection from the prison. Consequently he was categorised as a 'vulnerable prisoner' (VP) and so segregated from the main prison population.

The categorisation of vulnerable is given to inmates who are thought to be at serious risk of harm from other prisoners and, as will be explained in more depth in the following chapter, to be labelled a vulnerable prisoner permanently marks a prisoner. No matter where they do time these men will always be near the bottom of the masculine hierarchy, seen as 'shithouses and tossers who can't be trusted' (Ian). Ian, in his insightful extract below, captures the importance of constructing respectable masculinities in the first days of incarceration. In the process he acknowledges both the fragility and tentative nature of gendered prison identities, whilst at the same time pointing to the durability and legacy of undesirable masculinities.

... yeah in YP's you have to make a name for yourself, if you do something wrong in YP's it sticks with you for the rest of your prison sentences, I mean I know lads in here now who might have done something wrong in YP's and

went on protection and every time they come back in they have to go on protection, not because they have done anything wrong this time, it is just because someone would say: 'you was on protections last time', not knowing what they were on protections for, and so its back on protection. So what ever you do that first day you land in jail, whether it's ten-month or 10 years down the line, it stays with you. (Ian)

Clearly from the men's experiences, prison, despite being familiar, is not an easy place. Often the more brutalising or cruel aspects of early incarceration come not as much from the structures, regime or the officers as was commonly reported of earlier regimes (Scruton and McCulloch, 2008), but rather from other inmates. However, as chapter 4 highlights, the targeting of those who do not live up to the particular conceptions of masculinity can be just as violent and unpleasant in the respondents' old schooling environments, residential 'care' homes and the streets of their estates. Many of these men had long ago refined and performed acceptable or desirable gender performances in these spaces, resulting in easier adaptation to the culture of masculinity encountered in prison. Dean's experience demonstrates, however, that whilst locked in the prison space, masculinity has to be worked at daily and under constant scrutiny (mainly) from other inmates. One breach of the dominant codes, even as a young prisoner, could be forever unforgiving.

In mapping in detail the respondents' first experiences of incarceration this section has explored how their early street-based protest masculinity adapted, in many cases with relative ease, to the varying culture of hyper masculinity that exists in local penal institutions. In chapter 7 that follows I show that despite many of the men to whom I talked that claiming that they

had little trouble initially fitting into prison hierarchies, over their long prison journeys most of them faced considerable challenges. These difficulties were associated either with having to live up to the 'extreme' construction (Jewkes, 2005) of masculinity that dominates in the prison space or found themselves subjugated by it. Before this in the following section, again drawing on ideas around transitions, I show how these respondents navigated routes from boys to men on the residential wings of the local YOI or prison.

6.3 Time Served: Coming-of-Age Transitions

The on-going criminal careers that most of these young men found too difficult to avoid saw well over two thirds of the respondents returning to prison, time and time again after their first sentence. A consequence of these prison journeys that started in their early teens meant that the key formative years that so often profoundly shape identities and create a foundation for an adult existence were spent behind the walls of their local prison. Other than the three that were doing their first prison sentence at the time of the fieldwork, the other 27 were serving anywhere from their second to their twentieth prison term, with most participants well into double figures of prison sentences received from the courts. The quotations below are typical across all the respondents and highlight how time served is often measured through birthday milestones or age transitions.

... I had my 18th, my 21st, and my 22 and 23rd inside
I've had about ten birthdays out since the age of 16.
(Jim)

Yeah, all my 20s in jail and just about, nearly every Christmas since then... yeah, 18th and my 21st, all the milestones, 30th, I just had a birthday last week, is just like any other day now to me... (Neil)

As others 'on the out' might have been marking their sixteenth birthdays by concluding formal education and entering college or training, or reaching 18 years and celebrating being accepted on a training programme/apprenticeship, many of these participants were marking their transitions into young adulthood through institutional-based markers within the criminal justice system. In the criminal justice system in England and Wales, turning 18, for example, meant they were no longer deemed juveniles who had to be accompanied by an adult when attending special youth courts.¹⁰ They were processed as in the adult criminal justice system or as Hough put it: 'it stopped the bastard police calling and stressing mi mam to come and get me every time they locked me up and dragging her to court'. Other institutional markers at 18 meant they advanced from 'juvenile prisoners' to 'young adult prisoners' (YPs), with a notable change to their regime in terms of rights and privileges. For many on the outside this momentous birthday milestone may have involved the commemorative, but legal, pub-crawl or alcohol-fuelled party, and/or maybe triumph at a coming-of-age income increase, or even just simply enjoying the newly acquired right to vote. For these respondents, however, as many fondly remember, turning 18 in prison meant that they were entitled to buy and smoke tobacco for the first time and that they were permitted to wear more of their own clothes and fewer items of prison uniform.

¹⁰ Serious offences like murder and rape would still be passed from the Youth Court for sentencing or trial at the Crown Court.

6.3.1 Abrupt Transitions: Young Adult Offenders

Although the informants welcomed this significant coming of age shift, many scholars, policy experts and campaign groups have expressed concern at this 'dramatic transition' (Lösel et al., 2013) and have highlighted serious failings for this group once they are transformed from juvenile prisoners into young adult prisoners (Brereton, 2015; Goldson, 2003; Harvey, 2006; Howard League for Penal Reform, 2010b; Lösel et al., 2013; Roberts et al., 2002). As discussed in chapter 2, economic change and its impact on labour market relations have contributed to creating extended transitions to adulthood. 'On the out' delayed routes to adulthood are met with a legislative push for later education and training provision and, although in decline under the last and current government, a multitude of youth support services that extend to those aged up to 25. In the criminal justice system, however, institutionally determined transitions are fixed and this aged-based uncompromising approach only further perpetuates, as for most of these respondents, long-term revolving-door incarceration. A major concern is that offenders on their eighteenth birthday face the statutory transition from the youth justice system centred on rehabilitation to the adult criminal justice system focused more on punishment (Barrow Cadbury Trust, 2005; Lösel et al., 2013).

Widespread concerns about this group of young offenders led the charity Barrow Cadbury Trust to establish in 2004 an independent Commission on Young Adults and Criminal Justice System. According to a number of prominent criminologists, including Sir Anthony Bottoms and David Farrington, the Commission's report that followed in 2005, *Lost in*

Transition, was one of the most important reports on young adult offenders in England and Wales since the early 1970s (Lösel et al., 2013). It highlighted the failure of the criminal justice system to take into account varying levels of maturity when dealing with young adult offenders. The Commission found that the police and judiciary's universal approach when dealing with offenders as adults from 18 ignores the vast body of scientific evidence that shows there is a broad spectrum of ages at which boys emotionally, mentally and physically mature into men. A later study (Prior et al., 2011), also instigated by the Barrow Cadbury Trust,¹¹ set out to review advances in neuroscience research and maturity. It was found that although intellectual maturity was reached at 18, higher functions of the brain involving planning, memory and impulse are not fully developed until 25 (ibid).

A recent review by Lord Harris into deaths in custody among the young adult population acknowledged these findings on maturity and in his 2015 report, *Channing Prison, Saving Lives*, he notes: '...given current understanding of maturity ... we feel it no longer makes sense to expect that young adults ... should be sentenced as an adult solely on the basis of their age' (Harris Review, 2015, p. 81). A decade earlier the Barrow Cadbury Trust's report, *Lost in Transition*, had recommended that the National Offender Management Service (NOMs) should introduce specialists able to assess maturity and present findings to courts before sentencing. The report further recommended: 'As most young offenders stop offending at 23 it would make more sense to require sentences to refrain from imposing custody in all

¹¹ Leading on from their 2005 Commission on Young Adults and the Criminal Justice System the Barrow Trust conveys and funds the Transition to Adulthood Alliance (T2A Alliance). The T2A alliance is a broad collation of organisations that promote the need for a distinct approach to young adults (19-24 throughout the criminal justice system. More information is at: www.t2a.org.uk/t2a-alliance/

but the most serious cases until after then' (Barrow Cadbury Trust, 2005, p. 62). As a key argument of this study is that different spaces link together and are complicit in creating and reproducing troubling gender trajectories, it is worth emphasising again that 23 out of the 30 respondents had a custodial sentence imposed before reaching their twentieth birthdays. Well over half of these 23 informants were first incarcerated, as chapter 4 shows, for low-end acquisitive offences, mainly 'buzz-related' vehicle crime that many claimed to have been a phase they matured out of.

6.3.2 Carceral Purgatory

For many of these respondents turning 18 and spending their final teenage years as young adult prisoners meant that at some point they had been or were part of a population that has been variously described as the 'lost generation' (Prison Reform Trust, 2012), 'abandoned generation' (Howard League for Penal Reform, 2010b) or 'forgotten group' (Allen, 2013, p. 7). Young adult prisoners, according to Rob Allen (2013) and others (Lösel et al., 2013) are found to have the poorest statutory support and protections. Allen (2013) notes that in recent years there has been much more policy interest in how best to deal with under 18s at the expense and neglect of 18 to 20 year olds. Although coming too late for some respondents, the overhaul of the youth justice system that was started by New Labour saw the creation of the Youth Justice Board, Youth Offending Teams (YOT) and improved custodial regimes for under 18s. These and other improvements over recent years have seen a reduction by a third in offences committed by under 18s and a similar reduction of the numbers in this age group in custody (Allen,

2011; Prison Reform Trust, 2012). In stark contrast, young adult prisoners have been languishing in a political and policy vacuum for a number of decades. Consequently, many of this age group have been, and are still, being held in some of most impoverished regimes within the entire prison estate (Howard League for Penal Reform, 2010b). As far back as 2001, after recognising years of neglect for this group, the New Labour Party made a manifesto pledge to improve the appalling standard of custodial accommodation and offending behaviour programmes. Labour failed to live up to this pledge and consecutive governments have failed to improve conditions for young adult prisoners (Allen, 2013; Howard League for Penal Reform, 2010b).

The respondents' narratives show how throughout their time in a young adult custodial setting, masculinities were constantly tested and masculine hierarchies maintained through fighting and violence, confirming core and constantly reported areas of concern (Harvey, 2006; Howard League for Penal Reform, 2010b; Prison Reform Trust, 2012). In his 2015 annual report, the Chief Inspector of Prisons, Nick Hardwick, emphasised that young adults in prison were over-represented in statistics of violence, adjudications and the need for the use of force by prison officers. He added that there is currently no proper approach to 'understand, address and manage this population' (HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, 2015, p. 34). With this prolonged lack of policy and political strategy, young adult carceral spaces, that have previously housed most of these respondents, have not had for some time an effective means of challenging or addressing street-based protest masculinities. Indeed, as I argued in the previous section,

many respondents adapted and adopted more intensified versions of violent masculine performances that were required to navigate their respective volatile young adult penal establishments. Evidently in the absence of any real or meaningful institutional intervention in these spaces many respondents completed the all-too-predictable transition from young adult prisoners to adult convict.

6.3.3 'Con' Status

Given some of the challenges reported above it is hardly surprising that most respondents celebrated, albeit with some fear, the institutional transition that came at the age of 21 when they were no longer deemed 'young adult prisoners' and so moved to 'con' status or adult prisoners. For some, initial anxieties of transitioning to 'con', as David indicates in the following extract, are based on the thought of 'mixing' with far older men convicted of serious violent offences, men 'with nothing to lose'.

...in YP, you don't really think it being full of murderers and rapists... But a cons jail, like Hull say for instance, or a prime example is like Wakefield, if you grew up around Wakefield you'd end up in there, it's one of them were you think my god rapists and murderers and you just think I don't want to be mixed in with that. (David)

In reality for many, however, the adult prison space, as Buster captures in the extract below, allows for a less aggressive masculine performance.

...there was a lot more pressure on you to be seen to be able to handle yourself and to survive in prison as a

young person. As you get older it's is not so much the case, but definitely from 15 to early 20s you have to be seen as, like if someone talks down to you a little bit, you'd have to go and fill them in, now, as you're older you would maybe say to them: 'look don't talk to me like that or else we will fall out', it wouldn't probably not come to blows. But as a young kid it would always come to blows. (Buster)

For most of the men, reaching 21 marked a clear transition from youth to manhood and with it a substantial shift in what constitutes respectable prison masculinities. Despite initial fears and reservations, many noted they were happy to get away from the young adult prisoner environment where on a daily basis masculinities were contested through overt acts of violence. They felt that among 'cons' they were able to 'grow up'.

The men, of course, did not talk of waking up on their twenty-first birthdays as 'mature' and 'rational' cons. From the interviews it is clear that there were some tensions, contradictions and uncertainty in these identity transformations. Many of the newly-adult prisoners interviewed, for instance, talked of a great sense of relief once they were moved out of the highly physical 'young prisoner' environments but noted too a great mistrust of the older cons. The older respondents denigrated their junior inmates, suggesting that they were unable to 'handle their jail' and their immaturity and resistance just made serving time harder for everyone. In a strange parallel to elder perceptions of youth in the outside world, the more senior respondents, as is evident from some of the statements below, seemed to fear or were at least very cautious of the younger generation of prisoners and often suggested that they were the ones responsible for most of the violence and disruption on the wings.

...they're mixing YO's with adults now and it's like you look around the wing and one minute it can be all adults and be all quiet and then all of a sudden fights break out and somebody gets their ear bitten off or somebody gets slashed and it's always YO's that are doing it, so you just think to yourself while I don't hang around with them, I don't go into their cells and I don't run around their circles so nowt is going to happen to me... don't get me wrong I get on with some of the young ones,... they make me laugh but I tend to stick with my own age, because I'm a little bit older and a little bit wiser than them and so I tend to stick to people my own age. (Rick)

Years ago I'd be down playing snooker every night, arguing over the snooker games and all that and I just can't be bothered with it any more, I'm 35, I'm too old, it's a young man's game, I just want to finish this sentence... I've grown out of all that but a lot of these young ones its all bravado... I've knocked so and so out, I can punch this hard, I'm past that, I'm 35. (Neil)

Clearly a great deal of conduct once seen as acceptable or even celebrated behaviour by young prisoners was denigrated by many cons as 'childish' or 'immature' and lacking any purpose or sense.

Unprovoked violence and bullying that was core to the construction of the young prisoners' masculinity was, by 'con' standards, too overt, unpredictable, unnecessary and too hard a way of doing time. This corresponds with existing research that shows that in adult prisons, respected prison masculinities are constructed through the use of controlled and often justified violence. It has been shown that inmates who too quickly turn to indiscriminate and uncontrollable intimidation and violence generate little genuine respect and are often avoided by other prisoners (Kupers, 2005; Sabo et al., 2001b; Sim, 1994). Most of the interviewees' carceral trajectories from boys to men reflect this distinction in age- and space-appropriate masculine performances. Many acknowledged their stage as

young prisoners, when fighting was the only way to ensure not being taken advantage of. Although this can be the case as a 'con' too, random violence and fighting is less common. Most welcomed the con masculine performances that on the whole meant 'doing your own jail like a man' in the easiest way possible and 'getting out when you're supposed to' at the earliest opportunity (Victor).

6.4 Conclusion

In mapping respondents' carceral transitions from boys to men this chapter has shown how, for many, their street-based masculinities, once imported into the local penal establishments, were easily adapted to the existing 'extreme' (Jewkes, 2005) culture of masculinity in prison. From their retrospective narratives, however, it is difficult to fully discern whether their first encounters with incarceration were as smooth an adaptation as many suggest or if time and ageing had obscured some of the more difficult aspects. What is important to highlight, however, is that nearly all the respondents admitted to first entering the prison estate with a profound fear that centred on whether they would be man enough to live up to the demands of brutal prison spaces as seen on 'telly' and recounted in tales of survival by elders on the estate. As I have shown, however, on reaching the residential wings and finding 'lads' from their neighbourhoods who had shared similar pre-prison gender trajectories, fear was quickly replaced with a confidence that grows out of familiarity. As Sim (1994) notes, 'prisons ...

are linked to ... society by the umbilical cord of masculinity' (p. 116). Local penal establishments were similar to aspects of estate life and this led a high number of informants claiming that 'being inside' was not as difficult as they expected. This was not because prison was not a punishing enough institution, but rather that for many it was just a more severe version of the other highly deprived, violent and volatile sites in which most of them had already negotiated particular masculine trajectories en route to incarceration.

Over two thirds of the respondents had impoverished and violent prison regimes imposed by courts before they were afforded the time or opportunity to see if they would 'grow out of crime' and 'mature' into responsible adults. I argue that as young adult prisoners, and at such a crucial and formative stage of their lives, many were in penal spaces that, after decades of political and policy neglect, offered no real strategic or rehabilitative measures to address protest masculine performances. Indeed, most respondents, under intense scrutiny and testing from other young adult inmates, had to invest heavily in hyper aggressive and violent masculine performances to navigate their respective highly volatile carceral spaces. I suggest that the version of prison masculinities constructed and maintained during such crucial and formative years significantly contributed to many making the transition from young adult prisoners to their current prolonged status as adult 'cons'. Although with the majority of respondents noting adult prison fostered more mature masculine performances that meant much less intimidation and incidences of indiscriminate violence, youth-to-adult transitions, and subsequent long journeys across penal spaces, have come at great cost for many. In the following and final empirical chapter I explore

some of the long-term consequences of their early masculine investments.

Vulnerable Masculinities: Absent Men and Imagined Futures

7.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to disrupt dominant media, political and most academic representations of some segments of working-class masculinity, especially of prisoners. Evidence presented in previous chapters seemed to make it clear that the gender identities of the men of this study were heavily constructed through sexist, aggressive and violent displays. Closer scrutiny of their narrated experiences, however, reveals that this alone is too obvious and superficial an analysis and that their identities are more complex and contradictory than common portrayals of prisoners. Vulnerable is a term that is not often associated with the hard and violent masculinity of the prisoner. The opening section of this chapter shows, however, that a third of the respondents were unable to sustain respected prison masculinities and were officially categorised as 'vulnerable prisoners'. This vulnerable status is allocated for a variety of reasons, but essentially means that this cohort is at risk of attack from other prisoners and so has to be segregated for their own safety. The discussion here focuses on how these 'vulnerable' men navigated their masculinities in a segregated prison space, one that is usually reserved for serious sex offenders. I explore the ways in which

masculinities within this space were constructed in and against the 'vulnerable category'.

Following this, the chapter shows that regardless of category or hierarchal positioning, prison masculinities are a costly and poor investment for all of the respondents. I argue that revolving-door incarceration that many were stuck in meant the failure to live up to their own and wider culturally valued masculine obligations/ideals on the outside. Performing respectable prison or criminal masculinities is the only social capital many of the respondents possess and, as I show, this comes at a considerable emotional cost as they fail to live up to the protector and provider roles expected of sons, elder siblings, partners and, most starkly, fathers in the wider society in which these men were raised. The final chapter section explores those the men hold up as role models, their masculine ideals and future plans for and after their release. I show how many respondents look back to the masculinities of their own fathers or previous generations of men in imagining futures without crime or incarceration. The chapter closes with a rather bleak discussion about the respondents' predicted pathways from their current destructive prison masculinities to respectable masculinities of the future. I show that this shift rests heavily on the out-dated breadwinner model that has been unattainable or unsustainable for most of these men in the past.

7.2 Vulnerable Prisoners

The previous chapters focused on how the men's teenage masculine

investments provided a solid gender foundation upon which to construct prison masculinities. It was clear that most of them were able quickly to align their earlier gender performances with what was expected of them within the prison space. For some of these respondents, however, keeping up the performances of prison masculinities was just too testing and over the numerous sentences that they served fractures and vulnerabilities were revealed. Scholars have shown that living up to dominant gender performances in hyper masculine spaces, such as prison, is difficult to sustain for most men (Evans and Wallace, 2008; Viggiani, 2003). There are several practical reasons for this difficulty. Men of a certain age, for example, are unable to compete in the same way that they used to with younger more physically fit counterparts, and so their masculine performances are easily discredited by, for example, not meeting a physical challenge or breaking the dominant cultural codes (Evans and Wallace, 2008). Most of the informants claimed to have maintained respectable gender identities in the hyper masculine, young adult prisoner space, and although transitions to the 'mature' 'con' masculinity came with relief, sustaining these gender performances over long carceral journeys proved too difficult for around a third of respondents.

Ten of the informants at various stages in their prison lives were placed under Rule 45 and categorised as vulnerable prisoners (VP),¹² which meant they were segregated from the main prison population for their own

¹² There are rules, regulations and guidelines on the running of prisons and under rule 45 prisoners might be segregated from the main location under two categories: 1) as a means of punishment and for the smooth running of the penal establishment, a disruptive prisoner might be segregated and placed in isolation under 'good order and discipline' (GOD); 2) the segregation of vulnerable prisoners for their own interest. Unlike segregation for GOD this is not a form of punishment that limits privileges, but a duty to keep vulnerable prisoners safe.

protection. What stands out when looking at the experiences of these men is the fragility and superficial nature of prison identity/masculinity. Further, as other studies have shown (Drake, 2012; Liebling and Arnold, 2004; Sabo et al., 2001; Sparks et al., 1996), prison structures, staff and particular designated spaces are complicit in reinforcing and reproducing masculine hierarchies. Under Rule 45, the prison has a duty to segregate those thought to be at risk of attack and reprisal from mainstream prisoners. This often means being housed with other at risk (mainly sex) offenders, in the vulnerable prisoners' unit (VPU). In Hull, as in many other places, the prison's physical structures and regimes are designed to keep these two populations separated. VPs—including anyone from serial rapists and child murderers to informers or those who have simply run up prison debts they cannot pay—eat, sleep, exercise, learn and work together. From the perspective of the mainstream 'con' and, evidently in Hull's case some staff, it was not uncommon for all VPs to be lumped together as assumed sex offenders under pejorative titles of 'wrong un' or 'nonces'. All VPs in this study, however, were keen to separate themselves from the 'real' sex offenders who in almost any prison setting sit firmly at the bottom of the hierarchy. In their interviews most employed the same strategies to distance themselves from those whom they felt were the lowest form of prisoners, with several repeatedly emphasising most of their jail time had been done on the 'mains'. This was accompanied with most highlighting their continued contempt and daily denigration of VPs and a small number confessing to long track records of violent assaults against 'wrong uns'.

The ways in which these informants came to be sharing the VPU with

a population they so overtly express their disgust toward varies greatly. Two men, who I discuss in more detail later, admitted that they were on 'protection' for 'minor' childhood convictions that came about from sexually related 'pranks' or just being a 'kid'. Most others were suspected informers or had gone against the so-called criminal and prisoner code (Clemmer, 1940; Copes et al., 2013; Crewe, 2005) and left victims that were either too elderly or too vulnerable to be considered fair game and therefore had been moved out of reach of other inmates looking to affirm their prison masculinities. A further two respondents had allegedly committed crimes against 'their own' and were now at serious risk of retaliation from bigger and better connected criminals.

7.2.1 Reluctant Transitions to Vulnerability

Experiences across both the general prison population and the VPU show how respondents tried to reconcile once-respected prison masculinities with the category of vulnerable and, as Thurston posits (1996), make sense of themselves as men in a highly emasculated segregated space. It was evident that almost all of the vulnerable prisoners I talked to felt shame around their status. None of them acknowledged their vulnerable prisoner status until I explicitly asked them about it and when it was discussed all except one downplayed their own agency in their VP identity and segregation. Glen, whose opening words of the interview were: 'I've always wanted to be a gangster', struggled with this 'forced' identity as it profoundly undermined this 'gangster' masculinity that he had always aspired to live up to. From his quotation below, however, he was still clearly able to glean, at

least to this interviewer, currency for a hard masculinity from his status as a vulnerable prisoner.

'I've got bounties on my head, ... people are trying to do me in... I'm on VPs obviously in Hull because they are worried about my life, ...somebody tried to, a kind of hit man got himself arrested and it was to do with me. The police had to be called... they put me straight in the seg because they was that worried about me, I'm not bothered I would rather go on the mains, it's exciting for me with someone trying to do me in, I'd love to see them try, but they won't let me. (Glen)

Glen's language, using terms such as 'bounties', and 'hit man', and his admission that he was 'excited' by the prospect of someone trying to 'do him in' clearly indicates his reinforcing of 'gangster' masculinity and that he has no other choice but to accept protection enforced by the prison. It is evident from his story that he certainly has cause for concern, accused and later convicted of shooting and murdering an individual who, he claims, was well connected and whose family and close associates are out for revenge.

The magnitude of Glen's predicament might not be obvious to those outside prison and criminal cultures, but by agreeing, under any circumstances, to go on 'protection' and live among 'beast' and 'child rapists' is a decision, regardless of previous exploits and hierarchal positioning, which immediately emasculates him in the opinion of most of the people who inhabit his world. Nearly all inmates understand that the prison's duty to protect those already housed on VPU supersedes any desire to force an inmate into that space against his will. In reality Glen, probably quite rightly, feared for his safety and felt forced into accepting VP status, which according to the masculine culture of prison was the wrong way of dealing with it. Ian,

another respondent from the main population who found himself in similar situation to Glen, explained the process of 'blocking off' as an acceptable way of managing and dealing with threats from other inmates.

I was meant to have robbed someone's uncle on crack, I'm not a crack head, I wouldn't rob an old man but when I went to Acklington, I was the only Yorkshire lad in there, ... I bumped into this lad and he said you robbed my uncle ra ra ra, I said it wasn't me, it genuinely wasn't me... I don't rob old people. He said I am getting you stabbed up ... it was one of his jails, he knew everybody in that jail, so I thought fuck this I don't know where this knife is going to come from... thought fuck this, shut my door, packed all my stuff up and then got opened up for dinner and then a lad come in and stabbed me. It was only in the leg, but I thought fuck this, it's not going to end here, and so I smashed my pad up and a screw came up. I kicked the door in his face and said take me down the block. So I was down the block for about 10 week ... then they shipped me out to Stafford... (Ian)

'Blocking off' or intentionally breaking rules is a well-known coping strategy employed by prisoners to get themselves removed from their main location to the relative safety of the 'segregation unit' or 'the block'. The 'block' is used to house and manage unruly and high-risk prisoners and is a very different space to VPU. Inmates are usually kept in solitary confinement, with loss of most privileges, which for many is a preferable option to officially accepting 'protection' as in this way respected prison masculinities are maintained or even enhanced.

7.2.2 Vulnerable to Staff Betrayal

Jack, like Glen, suggested that he had no agency in acquiring his vulnerable status, but instead claims that this emasculating identity was enforced as a

result of a 'grudge' by a prison officer. Jack claims that whilst serving time in a long-term 'jail', an officer leaked to other inmates and 'blew out of proportion' a childhood caution for an assault, relating to the incident he describes in the extract below:

...nipple cripple, nipple twister, that's what I done, I gave somebody a nipple cripple when I was 15, it was a house party and I done it in front of her dad, I didn't even know, he just kicked me and my mate out. My mate grabbed her and I gave her a nipple cripple and that was it and I woke the next day at my house and was took to the police station charged with that and that was pretty much it, ... it never affected me throughout my sentences... but an officer in Frankland, because I was up in Frankland, an officer up there put it around the wing that I had a dodgy pre-con and it escalates from there, I got stabbed in the face and that, that is what that little scar is on my eye, it just escalated from there. I've done all my sentence on the main wings,..., it was just a prank. But it's just got totally blown out of context and people in jail don't see it like that. (Jack)

Jack's case demonstrates how prison culture can be turned and used against inmates to serve the ends of individual officers. As I show shortly, Jack was not alone in claiming that some staff, as other research has shown (Cohen and Taylor, 1981; Scraton and McCulloch, 2008), exploit prison culture to make the inmates' lives very difficult. Jack notes how he tried to avert this 'staff stitch up' by openly confronting the officer but this just served to fuel the rumours. Concerned for his safety senior officers convinced Jack that the block would be a suitable short-term option. Jack, unlike Ian, did not instigate being taken to the block through aggressively resisting the regime; he went voluntarily without a fuss and this, he asserts, left the impression that he was running scared and was therefore guilty of being a 'wrong un'.

Jack was eventually transferred back to Hull but notes it was impossible to escape the earlier allegations. After several assaults, including being stabbed in the face, he had little choice but to accept vulnerable prisoner status. He was now one of the 'others', part of the same group that he had denigrated and assaulted in etching out his so-called highly respected masculinity. What is notable from his extract below is how he still holds onto the same criminal/prisoner code or prison masculine culture that now positions him as the lowest form of prisoner.

I would assault them, I wasn't a perfect prisoner... one time I'd literally just walked on the wing, ... my mate come up to me and said that guy in that pad there has just robbed £1000 off an old man, I think it might have been a bit more than that, I went to see him in his pad and dragged him off his bed and started jumping up and down on his head, that was just on principle because he'd robbed off an old man... people think that people in prison have got no morals but we have, we've got rules that you go by, ...you don't rob off people who live near you, never shit on your doorstep, don't assault women, don't rob women, don't rob old women, don't touch kids and don't rape women, it's a logical thing that you shouldn't do that, a lot of people outside jail think that we accept that and that we are accepting of that but we're not... (Jack)

Jack and Glen found themselves at the sharp end of the very masculine ideals that they were both heavily invested in and although Glen was trapped in the system serving 18 years, Jack was months from release and could not see any way in the future of reconciling his identity with the vulnerable category. Visibly emotional he explained how in some perverse twist this professional betrayal had forced him into position where he could never return to prison.

...people don't understand exactly what the officer done to me, he's fucked me, how can I come back to jail again? In a way he's done me a favour but on the other hand he's just ruined any kind of reputation that I may have had in jail, he's just taken it and flushed it down the toilet, pretty much. I've been all around the country on this sentence, I've been to 2 category A prisons, I've done about five category B prisons, all long-term, I know loads of people... when I think about it it's mad, I've been in and out of prison and said I won't come back, or fuck it I don't want to go back but we'll see what happens, but this time I can't go back, because of this, I just can't. Because it's prison, it's so small and no matter where you go you always bump into someone you know, always and that will never be forgotten. Everybody will think, from now on people will think I'm a sex offender.
(Jack)

Jack's case was one of a number of instances where the staff were just as responsible as the inmates in maintaining violent masculine prison hierarchies. Bruce, for example, suggested that a number of Hull staff had too much of a good relationship with some of the more respected men on the wings and would 'chat too much of other people's business'. He went on to claim that, like Jack, he was on protection because an officer had let it out that he had 'grassed', meaning he had given information to the authorities that led to another inmate getting charged and convicted of further offences. Dean, too, claimed he was initially segregated because staff failed to act with discretion when he reported another inmate's disturbing behaviour.

What is fascinating about Dean and Bruce's cases is that, in complete contrast to Jack and all the other VP group, they actively maintained and embraced their vulnerable category.

...on the mains it's so much different than VPs, on the mains there's a lot of younger guys and there is a lot of older guys on the VP's. On the mains there's a lot more younger guys and there's a lot of drugs and so there's a

lot more violence, a lot more intimidation and on the VPs its very, very rare you see a drug unless it's somebody's medication ...just a lot more chilled out, like I say it is just a lot more older guys on here... (Dean)

Bruce, like Dean, had sought vulnerable status in prison, but interestingly turned the category around to suggest it was a decision that took 'balls'.

...it like undermines me, it's like you're weak, you've gone on there because you're weak and you can't hack it out on the mains, which in a way it is a way out. I put my arms up I couldn't, I didn't wannabe looking out all the time waiting in anticipation when my cell door was going to come flying open and if these guys were trying to pound my head in, ...it don't matter how big or hard you are there is always somebody who is going to knock you about... ...I'm not a nonce or a wrong un, I'm on here because I've had a hard time, I've been turned over and all the rest of it, people jumped on me, I'm on here for an easy life at the end of the day, I think most of them given the choice out there if they had the balls would be on here as well. (Bruce)

Both Bruce and Dean admitted they had struggled to live up to mainstream prison masculinities and found it a relief to be off the 'mains'. Bruce, arguably, went as far as suggesting that he rejected the futile jostling for position in the main part of the prison and, unlike Jack, Glen and the others, saw the acceptance of vulnerability as an act of courage and resistance, even a way of subverting dominant prison identities. Both recognised and welcomed that on the VPU, masculine performances were less 'extreme' and that doing time was more 'chilled' because of an ageing population and reduced drug use/dealing. This resonates with some of the limited research in this area. Alice Levines and Ben Crew's (2015) study of situational identity formation among a group of sex offenders in the UK, for instance, found that many who inhabit the VPU space were not only usually older, but often more

educated and middle class and as such less invested in the hyper masculinity associated with the working-class inmates who make up mainstream populations (Jewkes, 2005). Less drug use and dealing among sex offenders (Levines and Crewe, 2015) means, too, that VPUs are, as Bruce's indicates, much less likely to suffer the associated consequences seen in the general location.

It is important to caution against overplaying Bruce and Dean's agency in opting out of these mainstream power struggles for the relatively drug- and hyper-masculine-free VPU. As was the case with Jack, both claimed to have been forced into taking VP status through staff incompetence or betrayal. It might be more accurate to suggest they better adapted to the vulnerable category than the others because their initial pre-VPU prison/criminal masculinities were much less established. Jack and Glen, as indicated earlier, were at the apex of their respective criminal/prisoner world and consequently had a great height from which to fall. What is notable, however, from the collective experiences of all these research subjects categorised as VPs, is that the fluidity of prison masculinities flows much easier to the bottom of prison hierarchies. Once at or near the bottom a return to any previous status is highly unlikely.

7.2.3 Prison Masculinities in a Vulnerable Space

Although on the surface those living under protection on the VPU were lumped together at the bottom of all hierarchies by the main population and some staff, there is still movement in this space for the construction of multiple masculinities through relations of domination and subordination.

Even among the sex offenders, Levines and Crew found (2015), there are subdivisions at the bottom, with the rapist of women positioned above paedophiles. Glen briefly captures how the hierarchy operates at the bottom.

DM: is there a code that you have to live by in here?

Glen: yeah, don't grass, grasses are snakes they are the worst.

DM: Are grasses worse than the sex offenders?

Glen: no sex offenders come before, especially paedophiles, disgusting, I believe there should be a death sentence for paedophiles because paedophiles can't change.

Aware of their inferior masculine status according to most on the mains, VP respondents who were not sex offenders stuck together and claimed some sense of gender (and moral) superiority through overt and vehement, denigration of all 'real' sex offenders they shared the unit with.

...you know who's who, or they know who's who. The dirty paedophiles seem to know who the other dirty fuckers are. ...the others they call them debt heads, they run debts up borrowing tobacco, borrowing drugs and cannot afford to pay them back and so they're in fear for their lives, so they then go on VPs... you've got them and you've got the VPs and the non-sex offenders like me, who stick together. (Scott)

...I'm always getting pulled in, because of my attitude towards them... I hate them and I tell them that their face, I've been pulled in many times for calling them dirty paedophiles, nonces... I hate them, I despise every one of them... (Jack)

Although Jack's vulnerable category was a result of the disclosure of a 'dodgy' offence, he did not identify in any way, nor was seen by the others in

the VP group, as a sex offender. Perhaps because of this 'dodgy' link and another reason that will become apparent later, he was one of the most ardent of an already vociferous group in attempts to separate themselves from what they perceived as the deviant and depraved masculinity of the 'others'.

Resources for doing masculinity on the VPU were different and the power struggles among those at the bottom were more complex than in the mainstream location. Studies with sex offenders have shown that they understand they are at the bottom of prison hierarchies (Lacombe, 2008; Ricciardelli and Moir, 2013). However, as many reportedly have a better education and higher status before conviction (Levines and Crewe, 2015), such men, unlike the respondents I interviewed, are not beholden to prison norms and the officers in the same way and so are able to be dismissive of the prison culture that positions them and shapes masculinities (ibid). They have been shown to be more compliant or easy to manage and more likely to inform staff of those who breach the rules or, as Jack's extract highlights, will readily report threats and concerns.

I threatened to assault one of them and he put a complaint in against me, said that I've threatened to assault him and he was scared of me and he wanted me moved off the wing. SO [Senior Officer] pulled me and told me, I said look miss at the end of the day I don't like the guy... I think they are a bunch of beasts... She said I do as well but I can't say that and you can't say that, you will get yourself kicked off here... you'll end up down the block... I ended up doing two and half months down the block last time because of these cunts. (Jack)

Jack and others from the VP cohort, in their strategy of separation, to some extent were trying to import dominant prisoner masculine ideals into the

VPU, but in this space such performances held little value and could be costly.

What count as dominant masculinities can vary, according to Connell and Messerschmidt (2005), depending on place or institution; however, importantly, as Messerschmidt (2012) clarifies, dominant masculinities are often not necessarily the most powerful. This was certainly the case for those from this study who were living on the VPU. Within the confines of the segregated wing, VP informants may have held higher masculine status than they would in the mainstream population, but despite their physically intimidating presence, selective adherence to criminal/prisoners' codes and, as the extract above suggests, being held in slightly higher esteem by some staff, they held no real power over those offenders deemed the 'lowest of the low' (Dean). Indeed, as a number of these respondents note, the sex offenders they shared the VPU with were fully aware of the prison service's duty of care toward them. It was believed among these participants that 'sex cases' held the relevant capital (knowledge and ability) to officially take on the prison and to ensure their safety and rights were respected. Most of the respondents in the VPU understood that they walked a fine line and if they pushed their 'main' prison masculine ideals too far they would compromise their own safety and comfort by losing their place and being 'shipped out to fuck knows where' (Malcolm). Even though some men noted their relief at the easier and less violent regime and others acknowledged they had no choice but to be there, they all felt that the unit primarily belonged to the sex offenders. The majority lived daily with the contradictory bind of trying to prove they did not meet the core criteria of the unit, whilst at the same time

living with the fear and insecurity of losing their place in it.

For a small number of respondents in this group there is a further notable and important dimension to doing prison masculinities against the vulnerable category and power relations on the VPU. For two of these men, a hidden vulnerability is having to share a space, live among and be associated with the same type of predatory men they were victims of as children. Two in this cohort disclosed to me that they had been sexually abused as boys. At the time of the research, Jack was in the later stages of negotiating compensation for crimes perpetrated against him during his time in a children's home.

Undoubtedly feelings and behaviour towards predatory sex offenders, a shared vulnerability and the instability of their placement united this VP cohort and formed a type of collective. This did not mean, however, that there were no subdivisions, conflict or mistrust among this group. Glen, part of the way through his interview, was keen to let me know that his 'gangsta' masculinity, although tarnished among most other prisoners because of his VP status, positioned him as 'top dog' on the VPU.

So even in here the person you interviewed yesterday, I've offered him out three times. He thought he was the top dog on the wing and I offered him out in front of everybody on the wing just to show that he would back down. (Glen)

The type of crime that prisoners commit plays a core role in shaping prison identities (Drake, 2012; Jewkes, 2005) and Glen's claim of openly challenging Jack, a potential rival in power struggles on the unit, was his way of asserting his dominance and holding onto the status associated with his

underworld connections and firearm offences. This masculine posturing, as noted earlier, is much less extreme and not as frequent on the VPU than elsewhere in the prison, but what is equally as intense as on the mains, indeed perhaps more so, is the culture of mistrust that exists among those in this group. Just being on the VPU generates a great deal of suspicion about what it was that warranted the placement in the first instance and the informants noted the importance of determining which side new arrivals belonged to. In the following section I discuss how this VP cohort, as with the inmates on mains, use official means to import their pre-prison criminal credentials into the prison space both to establish a degree of trust and to bolster acceptable prison masculinities.

7.2.4 'Con' Trust: Pre Cons

In the prison space, as other scholars have documented (Cohen and Taylor, 1981; Crewe, 2005; Sabo et al., 2001), the slightest or most tenuous of challenges to criminal credibility can instantly undermine and endanger even the more established and respectable masculine identities. Inevitably this generates a great deal of fear, mistrust and anxiety amongst all inmates. It was noted by many of the informants that a common strategy to deal with this fear or vulnerability, not just among the VP cohort, was to carry a copy of their 'pre-cons'. Usually sent in via a request to their solicitors, this is an official document listing all the crimes for which they have been convicted and in some respects, as Scott indicates below, it serves as a certificate of authenticity for respectable prison and criminal masculinity.

...like if there's a rumour going around, they will say get your pre-cons, if you don't get your pre-cons it's like an admission of guilt, I've got mine... when they come in here and that they want to be your pal, say you'd come into my cell today I would ask you what you have done and that might not be enough I would want to see your pre-cons, I want you to ring your barrister or solicitor and send in your pre-cons... (Scott)

Disclosing official records of previous offences is not a straightforward process and is loaded, as Dean suggests below, with connotations of power and exploitation.

...Some people say you're a wrong un and some will say I'm not a wrong un, well prove it then, but if anyone's got anything about them or they trying to play the hard man they will say fuck off I don't have to prove nowt to you, if you back down and show um they will think they've got one over and then they will try bullying you. (Dean)

'Face work' (Connell, 1995) or front is important. Dean warns that proving your criminal credentials too readily can have the opposite effect of showing weakness and opening the individual up to intimidation and bullying.

The levels of mistrust the men held for each other, both on the mains and VPU, was quite astonishing. Several respondents noted the importance of knowing the type of criminal they might be forced to share a cell with and it was common practice for unfamiliar cellmates to subtly or not so subtly scrutinise each other's offending histories. Disclosing 'pre-con' data was not the only strategy in importing criminal credentials to establish trust and respectable identities. Prison researchers agree (Butler, 2008; Clemmer, 1940; Cohen and Ainley, 2000; Crewe, 2009; Drake, 2011) that sharing or exaggerating stories of criminal exploits or experiences is a strategy that is widely used to generate respect. A number of respondents noted, however,

that they were aware of some who tried 'blending it' with fake stories or 'chat shit' about what they might have done. Here too, official documents, in this case court depositions,¹³ are used or called upon as a means of backing up criminal narratives. The vast majority of men who are inside understand that once sentenced most will have the court depositions outlining the case. New cellmates will nearly always talk about their offence and court papers are often informally shared as a way of showing off their crime or in order to reveal any 'grasses' that led to their conviction.

Actually cause there's fuck all to do when banged up, you always end up reading each other's in depositions. It can be a laugh. When they don't talk or are a bit cagey, I've checked their cupboard before when they've been at work or something to try and find them to see. Sometimes it can be a legitimate reason, but it's proper suspect when they are not open like. (Clarke)

In many cases it was noted that a prison cell, the place they lived, slept and kept all their possessions, could not be fully personalised until trust had been established between the men who shared it.

...I've got photos in my cell of my girlfriend and my kid and I don't know what these people are in for, I don't ever put my photos up until I know who I'm in with. (Ian)

There were real anxieties, as others have found (Crewe, 2009), about inadvertently revealing too much of their personal lives and exposing their loved ones, mainly through photographs and personal cards, to the depravity they felt surrounded them. Even though the informants say they know many of their fellow inmates from the surrounding estates, concerns about people

¹³ Copies of all witness statements, evidence and court proceedings.

turning out to be a 'wrong un' contributed to prison being, for many, a lonely and isolating place.

I would never open up to a prisoner about my life, I keep that to myself, like I said the phrase: you come in on your own and you go out on your own. You've got to keep your barriers ... especially in this environment, on these wings, no way would I have pictures of my nephews and my lad on my walls. (Malcolm)

As other researchers have shown, femininities and masculinities are created through expressing what they are not, just as much as much as displaying what they are (Edley and Wetherell, 1997). In this climate of mistrust, both on the VPU and across the main wings, respondents' prison masculinities and hierarchal positioning were partly defined by being able to prove, often using police and court documents, that were not a 'grass' or 'nonce' or any other form of subverted prison masculinity.

Until now this chapter, and the previous chapter (6), has explored the construction of respondents' gendered trajectories over multiple prison sites and the ways in which respectable masculine performances vary in different penal spaces. The remaining sections of this final empirical chapter show how, for many of the respondents, the more they had invested in dominant or respectable gendered ideals on their route to manhood, from early street protest masculinities to negotiating prison masculine hierarchies, the more they failed, by their own definition, as men. I begin this discussion by exploring how the pursuit of protest and prison masculinities meant, for many, their continued absence as 'real' men from the world beyond the prison.

7.3 Life Behind the Door: Absent Men

Malcolm's phrase quoted earlier, 'you come in on your own and you go out on your own', encapsulates his sense of absence from the lives of his loved ones left in the outside world. Regardless of their prison categorisations, what united a high proportion of informants was that they had served more time in inside prison than 'on the out'. Many revealed, like Malcolm, similar moments of vulnerability when reflecting that isolation behind the prison wall meant their absence from many of life's significant events. It is important to clarify that on the whole the respondents' time away was not as a result of serving single long-term prison sentences, it was much more, as Buster and Gibson suggest below, life behind bars on a multiple instalment plan.

DM: Have you done quite a few sentences?

Buster: altogether it adds up to about 14 years, because they have been quite long sentences as well... I've had a couple of shorter ones when I was a kid but then when I got to 18 they got longer, as it got more serious.

Malcolm was the only 'lifer' and two others were serving terms of over a decade. The informants were mostly classed as 'persistent' offenders or 'career' criminals (see Carlsson, 2013; Farrington et al., 2009) and over long offending histories served numerous prison sentences. Sometimes their sentence was just a matter of months for something petty; on other occasions they had served sentences that had run into years. Most talked of being out for only short periods of time before finding themselves back inside, locked away from the significant life events that help shape and maintain meaningful male identities.

Absence from outside life and lack of presence as (grand)sons, brothers or fathers seemed to be felt much more profoundly when coping with extremely difficult life situations whilst inside. These informants as I argued in chapter 4, and as other studies with criminals/prisoners have shown (Barker, 2005; Drake, 2012; Hobbs, 1997; Phillips, 2012; Winlow, 2001), come from high-crime and highly violent neighbourhoods and this meant some talked of coping with outside life events, whilst incarnated, that many people would find it hard to imagine encountering. Ian, for instance, had spent much of his life in and out and during a short spell of freedom lost his father to a violent murder. In a matter of weeks he found himself back inside and during his time lost both his younger brother to an accidental drug overdose and then his mother after a short illness.

I mean when my dad got killed in 2007, I kind of blamed myself a bit for that really... my cousin killed him... if I was with him it would never have happened, no one would have dared hit my dad if I was with him... I should have been there... then my brother died on the last sentence I done... he died before I got out... if I'd not come to prison for him he'd still be here, my mam died two weeks after that. (Ian)

Another respondent, Henry, spoke of his mother's 'suspected' murder just days before he was given his previous sentence. Jim noted the toughest jail term he had ever done was when his partner was raped whilst he was away and his sister took her own life after being sent to prison for the first time. Then there was Danny; minutes into his interview it became apparent he was in the process of trying to come to terms with the loss of his newborn child just days earlier. The moving extract below, after his refusal to abandon the interview and insistence on continuing, captures his grief and the

difficulty of not only being locked away from his responsibilities as a grieving father but not being present for his partner.

I pleaded with the judge to not send me to prison, but he gave me four weeks, which means only doing two and with me doing big sentences I thought two weeks is nothing, but I was going to miss the most important thing, my baby's birth, do you know what I mean? But like I've come to jail, missed it and then found out that he was born with brain damage and then died, he lived a week, he lived a week and I'm going to the funeral this week... I need to be out there to look after her. I'd like to be able to go to the funeral, not in this [special escape tracksuit], I don't want to be at a funeral, my own kids funeral in this. (Danny)

What makes Danny's case even more tragic is that after meeting and settling with his partner and getting 'the flat sorted', he kept out of trouble for over two years. He was arrested for a historical offence and after being sentenced there were no security staff to 'take him down' and so unusually he was told to wait for them at the back of court until someone arrived. He decided to abscond until after his son was born. Picked up before this could happen and deemed an escape risk he was made to wear 'stripes' everywhere,¹⁴ even to his son's funeral.

Several more respondents, although perhaps not to the extent of Danny and the others quoted above, talked of experiencing the death of a parent or a significant other whilst away. Of course if a great deal of life is spent in and out of prison then an absence for such life events is inevitable. It is the death of someone close or the difficulties or suffering of those close to them 'on the out', however, that, as desistance research found (Maruna and

¹⁴ Highly visible blue prison and brightly yellow striped uniform for prisoners categorised as escape risks.

Roy, 2007; McNeill, 2006), brought their absence from the outside world sharply into focus and with it their perceived failure to fulfil what they understood as traditional working-class masculine obligations of providing and protecting their families through difficult times (see Broude, 1990; Charlesworth, 2000; Fine et al., 1997; Segal, 1990; Walker, 2006; Willis, 1977). A part of Danny's distress, for example, was because he was not able to look after his partner. Ian, similarly, felt that as the older brother he had let his recently deceased father down by not being out there to prevent his brother's drug-related death or to look after the remaining siblings. Henry, too, as is evident from the quotation below, felt the weight of not living up to the responsibilities of the oldest male sibling after the death of his mother.

...not having my mum, and [with] my brothers growing up in jail, it reflects on me, I feel guilty for that, knowing that I showed him what I didn't want to show him if you know what I mean. And like he's going through, he's coming through the stages that I have ... I sit here and I think that's my fault that, knowing that I haven't had a physical part in it, but I have emotionally and mentally part of it, it does, it does my head in, because I'm like his stepdad in a way... (Henry)

It is notable that Henry thinks that his absence as a 'father figure' has contributed to his younger brothers following him into the prison system.

7.3.1 Locked Inside

The respondents' narratives provide only a snapshot of some of the highly difficult life events many had to cope with as part of their 'revolving door' existence between prison and their estates. With such high incidences of tragedy and violence many were left dealing with incredibly tough emotions

whilst in a prison cell, not only isolated from the people closest to them, but, as others have also found (Evans and Wallace, 2008; Kupers, 2005) surrounded by men, who given the opportunity, would 'ruthlessly' exploit any display of emotion/grief as a sign of weakness. Aware of this, Ian expressed his anxiety about losing anybody else whilst in prison, and his fear of not being able to conceal his emotions sufficiently well.

...that's the only thing that scares me these days about coming to prison is if someone else dies, because you can't show that emotion. When I was in Everthorpe and my brother died I never came out of my pad for three weeks, I was on a sports course and I never finished that. (Ian)

Ian felt safer hiding himself away in his cell rather than exposing his grief and vulnerable state to the other men on the wing. Revealing too much emotion in the prison environment brings unwanted attention and, as Henry's quotations below show, exploitation and bullying often start in the guise of sympathy during tough times.

...when mum died I came to prison for a couple of weeks, after I got sacked from the job ... I was under the weather you can call it, I was depressed, I didn't want to talk to nobody and people started trying to take liberties, oh yeah I've got baccy if you want it. Then they never did anything about it when it didn't get paid back... but then I started to wise up a bit... (Henry)

'Wising up' for Henry meant that he did not allow himself to get too deep into debt with those offering him credit during his tough times. What on the surface looks like an act of generosity could quickly turn into a debt that could not be paid and consequently a highly compromising position for the

debtor.

This is not to suggest that prisoners do not support each other through 'hard times'. There are occasional references in penal scholarship to prisoner compassion and care for each other through various struggles (Cohen and Taylor, 1981; Crewe, 2009). Over recent decades, too, there has been a surge in prisoners supporting each other to combat substance misuse through self help groups/communities (see Kopak et al., 2015) and inmates as 'Listeners' trained by Samaritans to offer peer support to suicidal prisoners (see Perrin and Blagden, 2014). A number of informants noted that fellow inmates had offered support in various guises when they were going through a tough time. However, as Dean suggests, it is a difficult balance to get right and unofficial or individual gestures of help have be accepted with caution.

...you see a lad who maybe his girlfriend has left him and the lads try cheering him up, or somebody that's not got any family and they've got no money, there's a lot of guys that help other guys out. But that can also be turned on its head because people can do things for people and they can turn it on the head by saying I've done that for you now owe me this, you've got to bring drugs in for me on a visit and stuff like that, so there is a fine balance. (Dean)

Similarly, Malcolm recognises both a caring and 'ruthless' nature to his fellow inmates.

...I mean we all have bad stages, there might have had a bereavement outside, or a bad phone call, they might have had a dear John letter ... I've seen cons being caring and considerate sometimes ... but they can also be fucking ruthless, so you've got the other end of the stick haven't you. (Malcolm)

Even at the height of his grief, Danny, was alert to those who might try and take advantage of him at such a difficult time.

...when they heard about my bairn dying all my mates kept asking if I had this or if I need that, but you do see the downside and you see bullies in here. (Danny)

This anxiety of being exploited by other prisoners when dealing with challenging life events meant that some of the respondents, like Ian, were very careful about how they managed their grief/emotions outside their cell.

Building on Goffman's (1969) dramaturgical model in his work on the *Presentation of Self*, penal scholars (Crewe, 2009; Jewkes, 2005) conceptualise prisoners' management of their private emotional self as distinct from public presentations of identity in terms of 'back stage' and 'front stage' behaviour. In the prison setting, as Jewkes (2005) notes, backstage, or in this case time alone in a cell, is where the 'basic ontological security system is restored' (p. 54) and while in this isolated space individuals can leave 'bodily, gestural and verbal codes' of hard masculine personas at the door. Front stage is where respondents, as demonstrated throughout this study, present public gendered performances refined over a 'long process of socialization into male-dominated subcultures as a child, adolescent, and adult' (p. 54). Ian's experiences show that there are some incidences where maintaining front stage masculine identities proved too difficult and how he found himself having to hide away in his cell and retreat back stage with his emotional pain until he was able again to put on a convincing and appropriate gendered performance. Many of these respondents will have established early on in their classed and gendered trajectories that public

displays of emotional pain or struggles significantly compromise working-class hegemonic masculinities performances (Connell, 1995; Segal, 2007) and certainly undermine respectable masculinities in carceral spaces (Evans and Wallace, 2008; Kupers, 2005; Sabo et al., 2001a). Sadly, however, it is men from impoverished, complex and violent backgrounds that are more likely than most, as shown with these respondents, to have to come to terms with exceptionally difficult life events (see also MacDonald and Shildrick, 2013), often whilst confined in the hostile and enclosed space of a prison.

The adversity of some of these men's lives meant that having to find well measured brave masculine 'front stage' performances, often in the face of extraordinary circumstances that include the alleged murder of parents, sibling suicide or drug overdoses and the loss of a child. Inevitably there were also other less extreme and arguably more typically difficult issues relating to outside lives that they had to process whilst locked in their cells. As the following section shows, the most consistent and emotionally challenging of these, for many, was relationship breakdown and their absence as fathers.

7.3.2 Absent Fathers

Along with what some felt was their failure to meet obligations as the elder son, sibling or partner, criminal lifestyles and incarceration meant that many were also absent fathers. This added to their sense of failure to live up to their own ideals of manhood. A third of the respondents have children of their own and several others mentioned that they were stepfathers to the children of their partners. Liz Walker (2010) in her study of recently released

offenders with children found, as with some of these respondents, that the status of fathers caused greater reflection on the cost of their crimes and imprisonment than almost any other circumstance. Most of the informants in my study calculated the cost of incarceration through the impact of their absence from the lives of their children, partners and other family members.

I got three kids and two grandkids. I thought it was about giving my kids everything they wanted but it wasn't, they'd of rather have had me around than sat in jail, I provided for them everything that they needed but I wasn't there on an emotional level when they needed me to be there. (Andy)

Andy did not go into detail about the impact on his children, but he suggested that his continued incarceration has a significant negative effect and that he worries his children are a 'bit too like he was'. His and the responses of some of the other informants confirm what scholars have found in research with imprisoned fathers: their absence puts a big strain on family ties, increases a family's deprivation and can increase the risk of inter-generational offending (Dyer, 2005; Lösel et al., 2012).

These informants, as Walker (2010) also found, were aware of the high cost to their families and were equally aware, too, that their criminal lifestyles meant, as Malcolm's extract indicates, lost opportunities to be present as fathers.

....got released October 07, met up with my son, I felt like the floor was swallowing me because I haven't seen him since he was three, he was about 16 or something, he just done his exams and did real well and I went back to the hostel and started smoking gear, they asked for a drug test and I refused and came back for 3½. (Malcolm)

Malcolm's retreat to his hostel to smoke more drugs as a way of dealing with his lost and damaged relationship as a father, and being returned to prison as a consequence, illustrates the perpetual cost and loss some of these respondents experienced. Other participants, in reckoning the cost of criminal lifestyles and measuring failures as fathers, marked time incarcerated by how many of their children's birthdays and Christmases were spent behind bars. These dates, as Chris suggests, were some of 'hardest days in jail'. Malcolm, Chris and the experiences of others confirm Thomas Ugelvik's (2014) assertion that the deprivation of family life, especially contact with children, is one of the most painful aspects of incarceration. Ugelvik argues that an important aspect of this pain for men's sense of themselves as men is connected to their inability to live up to modern values of fatherhood and meet the changing cultural expectations of fathers. Andy's, Malcolm's and others' sense of failure is arguably intensified in the changing and binary definitions of contemporary fatherhood noted by both Ugelvik (2014) and Walker (2010). In these representations, 'good' and responsible fathers are emotionally present and actively involved in the lives and welfare of their children. Counterpoised to this is the 'deficit model' (Walker, 2010, p. 1402) of the absent 'bad' father who abandons his paternal responsibilities through the pursuit of selfish agendas. Many of these debates surrounding the 'bad', 'feckless' or absent fathers, as highlighted in chapter 2, are part of what generates and fuels the 'crisis of masculinity' discourses.

Of course, the experiences of respondents with children were more nuanced than the limited binary representations of good or bad fathers. Their narratives indicate complex and difficult relationships with the mothers of

their children and in many cases with their children. Some note that they wanted to be a larger part of their child's life but maintaining meaningful relationships whilst incarcerated was extremely challenging. Numerous studies (Cohen and Taylor, 1981; Dyer, 2005; Lösel et al., 2012; Walker, 2010), including Goffman's (1968) influential work, show that unique conditions of incarceration are mainly incompatible with family life. In their attempt to not compromise their hard masculine exteriors with outside emotional baggage and, in some cases, to minimise pain and worrying about loved ones, several found it easier, as is commonly found in other studies (Boswell, 2002; Richards, 1992; Social Exclusion Unit., 2002), to sever outside ties whilst away. Severing contact with children, as in Ian's case, not only preserves a solid emotional masculine front, but also protects the child, in a painful attempt to be a good father.

I would never let her bring my son to place like this and see me in here. I don't want him to have anything to do with it. I don't even like talking to him on the phone because I have to lie. (Ian)

A number of respondents explained that there were times when they felt they were doing the right thing as fathers, but equally many admitted to times having difficulty putting their families first. Justin Dyer (2005) in his research with imprisoned fathers made similar claims when he noted that many criminals are more likely to have 'antisocial and egocentric behaviours and attitudes' (p. 202) that impede their priorities as fathers. Several informants believed that their chaotic criminal lifestyles, drug and alcohol induced hedonistic pursuits and being continuously in and out of prison inevitably had led to break ups, 'betrayals' or 'dear Johns' and consequently

separation (often acrimonious) and/or distancing themselves from their children. Indeed under such circumstances, as some studies have shown (Boswell, 2002; Lösel et al., 2012), inmates returning to unstable relationships/family environments who try to take up paternal roles often detrimentally impact the children and partner. This consequently hinders resettlement and may contribute to a father's speedier return to incarceration (Lösel et al., 2012).

This section has shown how criminal careers and time spent in prison was damaging on many levels for these participants and those closest to them. Hearing about losses experienced whilst incarcerated, it was clear that many of them believed that they failed to live up to their own and their families' masculine ideals and responsibilities. This, combined with having to manipulate and deeply suppress grief and/or profound emotional pain in order to adapt and enable the smoother navigation of the prison space, could only significantly contribute to the continued construction of problematic and dysfunctional masculinities. This resulted in men that end up being released back into their troubled environments with few solutions and perhaps more difficulties than when they were last incarcerated.

It is beyond the scope and scale of this study to follow up on these men after their sentence was over, so it is therefore impossible to say with any certainty what happened to them. Interviews did, however, attempt to explore the respondents' masculine role models and imagined futures post-release and it is to this that the final section of this closing empirical chapter now turns

7.4 Imagined Futures

7.4.1 Masculine Role Models

Towards the end of the interviews I sought to explore with every respondent those they saw as their role models and how they imagined their futures. It is striking that nearly all the participants struggled to suggest role models, with 23 out of the 30 saying they had none at all. Most seemed a little taken aback by the question with several taking some time to ponder a response. Five out of the seven who did respond named their fathers as the men they looked up to. As Chris's extract illustrates below, this was mostly because of their work ethic or how they had fulfilled their roles as breadwinners.

...he's a proud man and he's done well for himself, he don't drink, he's got a beautiful home... he was like a proper man, he'd make sure we'd have food on the table all the time...

Similarly, Ian, Malcolm and Jamie named their fathers as role models because of their years of providing for their families by earning a legitimate income. Gibson, noted however that his role model was 'possibly his dad', because of the less legitimate 'little schemes' he had for earning money, albeit, 'never real high risk things'. Buster also identified his hard working self-employed father but Buster's other role models were chosen because of their reputations as criminals or business entrepreneurs.

I used to look up to and like loads of known criminals, I used to read books about criminals, when you are young and impressionable you would read books on the Krays and think I want to be like them and you would think that

you was like them when you weren't really, I was fascinated with them ... I like Alan Sugar, Kenneth Noye¹⁵ I respect him, I've actually met him and he's a good bloke. I was in prison with him for quite a while.

DM: what makes you respect Kenneth?

Buster: just how he started off, you know from nothing he ended up being high up, he mixed in a lot of places where you thought he would never mix but he did. That poor kid got killed in the end but yeah I like Kenneth Noye...

DM: do you think there are similarities between all of the men that you look up to?

Buster: yeah they all have determination don't they? Strong characters aren't they?

Wayne, like the others, was taken aback by the question of role models and struggled to identify anyone. However after a long thoughtful pause he responded:

I don't know about role models as such but I would love a lifestyle where I could wear a suit, a real suit and walk the streets and click, clack, in nice Savile Row shoes.
(Wayne)

It is important to acknowledge that most people might find it difficult (men especially) to identify those they look up to or would like to model themselves on (Hicks, 2008; Tarrant et al., 2015). This might partly account for why less than a third of the respondents were able to identify role models, even after a number of attempts to re-phrase the question to be certain the meaning of role model was understood.

Further exploring their ideas around meaningful masculinities and in

¹⁵ Kenneth Noye is an English criminal who is said to have been involved in the famous Brinks MAT bullion robbery and later stabbed and killed a detective investigating the crime. He is currently serving a life sentence for a 'road rage' murder in 1996.

an attempt to engage more of the respondents I expanded the role model question by asking 'what qualities they thought make a man'.

a man has to... if he's married and got children, go out and work and provide for his family, looks after his family and just respects anyone that respects them. (Jon)

what makes a man, one that works and provides for his kids, I can't stand people that have kids and don't provide for them. (Mick)

being able to support his family, being able to work for his family, being brave and being sensible and having polite manners. (Henry)

The quotations above were typical across all the participants, It was almost as if the respondents were reading from the same script of hegemonic masculine ideals: the man has to 'provide', he has to be 'brave', 'strong' (character) and have 'determination', 'morals' and 'respect'. The core and pervasive masculine discourse that had significant meaning in all their lives and that came up time and time again throughout their narratives, was the role of protector, provider or the breadwinner model.

Against powerful political and policy rhetoric suggesting 'intergenerational cultures of worklessness' (see also Macdonald et al., 2014), the high value placed on the breadwinner model was to a large extent inspired by the respondents' role-model fathers or others from their neighbourhoods of that generation. It was not lost on the researcher or on the respondents that the attributes for 'being a man' that they listed were nearly all impossible to fulfil from a prison cell. In the quotation below, Malcolm explicitly points to his failure in living up to his own masculine ideal.

DM: what qualities make a man?

Malcolm: being able to cope, being able to help your spouse, being able to look after them, I'm not very masculine at the minute I don't feel, because I can't look after my girlfriend, I'm a let-down if anything, I don't see violence as masculinity, yeah it's to be the provider...

Malcolm's quotation suggests a more complex picture of the prisoner masculinity than is often portrayed. He, like most of others, feels that he has failed or is a 'let-down', because he cannot provide or be there for the people closest to him outside. These failures, and others discussed in previous sections, meant being in a hyper masculine prison is in many respects, as others have argued (Cohen and Taylor, 1981; Crewe, 2009), an emasculating experience.

It is notable that despite failing to sustain for any period of time their own masculine ideals whilst 'on the out', time lost in jail was often attributed as the main reason for their shortcomings as men. It is deeply concerning, as I now go on to show in the next section, that most of the respondents are still heavily reliant on the same unattainable or unsustainable traditional working-class hegemonic ideals for their imagined crime-/prison-free futures.

7.4.2 Imagined Futures: Domesticity

When exploring their futures, a troubling aspect was their dependence on out-dated notions of femininity and domesticity as a route to freedom or 'normality'.

what I want to do in the future obviously, I want to gain things, a good job, a decent bird and a good place to live, not coming back to prison and things like that...

(Hough)

... I tried so many times to not get involved, to get away but like they're actually good mates, but I've got to get away from of all that now because I want kids and want to live a normal life, work and things like that... coming home to your missus and kids and things like that. That's all I want really, a normal life. (Danny)

Their reliance on or belief in domesticity as a way out of offending and incarceration was in some respects not misplaced. From their lived experiences it was clear that for many some of their most stable and sustained periods of freedom were when they were with a partner and had responsibilities, a time when they felt they had something, a function, a role as a man.

...I was very, very, very determined and I think the girlfriend that I had at the time had quite a big impact on me, her getting pregnant, ...I sort of had my son as a responsibility and I wanted to do the right thing... then things started breaking down with her and that is when it started going wrong, I let myself be influenced by the lads that I was with... until our relationship broke down everything was fine... (Mat)

David, too, was aware that even from a young age it was the fact of being in a relationship that had a significant bearing on the type of masculine conduct he expressed.

I was taking cars, but then at that age I took more of a liking to the lasses as well. So that kept me out of jail, you know just being with the lasses, I was in with a new set of friends ... I got with Rachel and moved to... And that was good for a good year, I stayed out of complete crime, no crime whatsoever, no thought of crime or anything. Then we started arguing, she started, I don't know, it just went bad ... my mates rung me up one

night and he said oh look I'm driving past that estate right now are you coming? And as he drove past I've jumped in the car and I've never seen her again...

Heterosexual relationships, waged work and taking responsibility are, of course, key resources for doing masculinity (Segal, 2007) and according to the desistance literature (Gadd and Farrall, 2004; Laub and Sampson, 2001; Maruna, 2001; McNeill, 2006) highlighted in chapter 5, are key components towards stopping offending. What stands out from Matt's and David's experiences, however, is just as in the workplace as shown in chapter 5, when things were too difficult, many retreat to all-male groups and to a default protest masculinity that has been the basis of their identity from an early age.

Most of their histories have proven, whether in job or relationships, that they were unable to totally sever ties with their male peers from 'the estate' or 'Jail' and fully distance themselves from all criminal activity. Once separated from their partners, the trend was an increase in drug/alcohol use, and in crime/violence, often followed by a return to incarceration. Buster, in the extract below, reflectively recognises the fragility of pursuing a pathway to 'normality' through domesticity.

I always used to think if I had a good girlfriend, I had a place with her and a decent job, used to think them things would be the things to keep me out of prison but they haven't, because I've had them all... I don't think you ever become rehabilitated fully, maybe people just stop and run out of steam, they can't take no more of prison. There is always that voice inside you, you could have it so good and have a good job, a good family life but there'd always be, to me personally, the side to me was somebody could offer you something and you would risk it and end up losing all that... no matter how much money I'm earning, how much I love or marry... Maybe

children would calm me a little and make me sit down and think. (Buster)

Even Buster, and a minority of other respondents who recognised past failures of domesticity or work to 'settle' them down, still held on to the belief that the right job and/or partner or children would release them from cycle of crime and incarceration. This makes sense, as the only legitimate respectable masculinities many looked up to were the 'breadwinners' from their father's generation.

Street- and prison-based transitions meant many had had an extremely limited exposure to or full understanding of some of the fundamental societal changes that now affected them, including the seismic shift from heavy industry to the service sector and consequentially changing labour relations. Although trapped in the sort of protest masculinities described by Connell (1995), most aspire to live up to core hegemonic ideals—to legitimately provide for themselves and their families and to be strong and present fathers, sons and partners. Sadly many do not currently possess the knowledge or appropriate masculine capital to live up to their gender aspirations. The structural poverty that contributed to their criminal and prison journeys is still in place in their respective neighbourhoods and sadly the institutions that have housed them over crucial and formative years have done little to inform or equip them to meet the challenges on release. Rather, as this and the previous chapter has shown, protest masculinities adapted and amplified for negotiating carceral spaces keep most informants trapped in a powerful vortex of marginalisation, exclusion and incarceration.

7.5 Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted some of the lesser-known or represented aspects of prison masculinities. It presented informants' vulnerabilities, failings, fragilities and desires to live up to masculine respectability of past generations. It has shown that although most found it near impossible to break away from destructive protest masculine trajectories originating in early childhood, sustaining 'exaggerated' masculinities in prison spaces were costly and too difficult for a third of the informants who were deemed vulnerable. Once assigned vulnerable prisoner status and segregated along with predatory sex offenders on a specialist unit, informants, regardless of their prior status, quickly plummeted to near the bottom of prison masculine hierarchies, a location from which there is no return. In line with Connell's and Messerschmidt's (2005) theory of hegemonic masculinity, the way in which all respondents constructed masculinities against the category of vulnerable demonstrates how dominant masculinities are configured and legitimised through overt denigration and domination of those deemed less or un-masculine. In the same way that mainstream prisoners denigrate and disown this vulnerable cohort as a way of expressing respectable prison masculinities, all vulnerable informants vociferously disparaged and admitted to intimidation and acts of violence against sex offenders that they were 'forced' to live with. This was evidently a strategy to salvage some respectable masculine capital and distance from those felt to be truly at the bottom of the prison hierarchy. Their experiences, too, reinforcing findings shown in the previous chapter, illustrate variations in dominant and subordinated masculinities depending on prison space.

The next section of this chapter showed that whatever their category or status, substantial periods of life lost to incarceration at great cost connects the vast majority of these respondents. An endeavour to live up to criminal and prison masculinities meant prolonged absence as men 'on the out' and failure to meet what are arguably more culturally valued masculine obligations of protector and provider. Their absence or failures were confounded through the necessity of having to manage extraordinary painful life situations 'back stage' in isolation of a prison cell. Although failure to live up to expected roles of elder sons, siblings and partners was noted as a high price many regrettably paid, absence as fathers was consistently the greatest overtly acknowledged cost among many.

The final section showed a more implicit vulnerability to the men. Most respondents accepted that early gender investments and consequently years lost to incarceration prevented them from living up to their self-defined idealised masculinity, centred on an out-dated breadwinner model. It is concerning to find that most of the respondents' imagined futures of being 'normal' and 'staying out' rested heavily on this breadwinner model that was unattainable or unsustainable for most of them in the past. Sadly, as I argued in chapter 5, time away has done little to prepare these men for the structural challenges of living in a city with one of the UK's highest unemployment rates. Nor has incarceration done anything to address the gendered deficits contributing to their marginalisation in the first instance and that has since presented significant barriers to going straight. Arguably, as this and the previous chapter have demonstrated, the more sentences served, the more entrenched their exclusion 'on the out', the more elusive their role as provider

and protector becomes.

8

Conclusions

8.1 Introduction

Largely influenced by Connell's (2000; Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005) work on masculinities and the Teesside School's scholarship about transitions, in particular their concept of alternative careers (Johnston et al., 2000), the overarching aim of this study was to explore young male prisoners' classed and gendered trajectories in order to present a complete picture of how the key spaces in which they move from boyhood into young adulthood affect and reflect versions of protest masculinities. Throughout this thesis, then, I have been concerned with how respondents situationally construct masculinities on the streets of their neighbourhoods and in compulsory learning and residential 'care' spaces, workplaces and prison. I was particularly interested to explore how these sites interconnect and contribute to the construction and maintenance of versions of protest and excluded masculinities. I found that, for many respondents, their journeys to incarceration started on the streets of their impoverished neighbourhoods many years before reaching the prison gates. I have argued that institutional spaces of compulsory learning and 'care' better prepared the vast majority of respondents to serve time in prison than on the shop floor in the workplace. I have shown that, once 'inside', resources for more pro-social gender

investments were scarce and for most respondents adapting to existing extreme versions of prison masculinity was the most easily accessible, but costly, strategy for navigating prison spaces.

In the first section of this concluding chapter I expand on and summarise these findings by highlighting the major themes that have come out of the research. I return to the main objectives of the study identified in chapter 1 as way of presenting these themes and in this explication I reveal how masculine trajectories that were navigated over deeply impoverished spaces left many respondents marginalised from the margins. Following this I discuss the implications for policy that come out of the research and the study's contribution to geography and social sciences. Finally I look at the limitations of the study and avenues for further research.

8.2 Impoverished Masculine Trajectories

8.2.1 Class, Gender and Protest Masculinity

A key objective of this study was to explore how class, gender and place intersected in creating protest masculinities. Throughout this thesis I have shown how structural economic disadvantages reinforce the type of masculine trajectories experienced by young men growing up in impoverished circumstances on local authority estates in Hull. Rather depressingly I show that, despite the rather broad age spectrum of the respondents (they were aged between 21 and 44 when I interviewed them in HMP Hull in 2012/13), economic status played a powerful role for them all

and their classed and gender routes to imprisonment were all too similar. The study reveals the ways in which the men's early socialisation, exclusion and marginalisation contributed to the start of early criminal careers, careers that many of them remained trapped in many years later. I show that for these respondents the idea of 'choice' biographies (Beck, 2000, 1992) or of reflexively creating individualised or portfolio identities in a knowledge-based economy (Giddens, 1991) is unthinkable. In chapters 4, 5 and 6, the empirical heart of the thesis, I argued that the respondents had little option but to navigate masculinities in highly deprived neighbourhoods, where they were pupils at some of the country's poorest performing schools and with some of them living in inadequate local authority children's homes. As they left these institutions, stable employment for under-educated young men became increasingly difficult to find in Hull's recession-ravaged deindustrialised landscape. Their disadvantage was exacerbated by involvement in crime and incarceration at a time of impoverished young adult prison regimes. I argue that the versions of masculinities constructed as resistance and adaptation to these spaces contributed to trapping respondents in a prolonged and escalating cycle of exclusion and incarceration.

8.2.2 Gendered Trajectories: Deprived Neighbourhoods, Poor 'Care' and Inadequate Schooling

Chapter 4, *Pathways to Prison*, focused on the respondents' early experiences of home, neighbourhood and schooling. It was found that for many of the men I interviewed, protest masculinities originated in childhood.

In some cases, informants reported that they were known to the police and local authorities/services from as young an age as ten. Here I found evidence of the reproduction of destructive masculinities, where, as children, many respondents talked of wanting to emulate older siblings or peers who were already deeply involved in neighbourhood criminal subsections. In response to their circumstances growing up in impoverished neighbourhoods, young men in these groups constructed versions of street-based masculinities, valorised among their younger (and older) peers, through stealing and driving cars, violence, 'hardness' and 'grafting' or 'earning'. Growing up mainly on one of Europe's largest and highly deprived estates in Hull, mostly these respondents with limited legitimate routes to respect, followed, as soon as they were able, the example of the estate's older criminal subgroups in adopting crime and violence as accessible avenues to masculinity.

Childhood masculine protests highlighted a further, but linked, finding. Connell (1989) and others (Evans, 2006; Francis, 2006; Frosh et al, 2002) identify secondary or upper schooling as a key arena for the construction and reproduction of marginalised or protest masculinities. Although I have shown schooling certainly was important in the respondents' marginalised trajectories, street-based masculinities in many cases were well established before they went to secondary school and imported into this and other institutional spaces. These street identities contributed to a number of the respondents during the onset of their teens, being placed or taken in to local authority care after years of reportedly being 'out of control' or 'off the rails'. Importantly I argue, however, that institutional spaces of 'learning' and 'care',

ill-equipped to challenge or undo troubling gender trajectories, created environments and resources that cultivated and exacerbated protest masculinities. Hull LEA, responsible for the schooling provision of most of the respondents, has an abysmal record and has languished at the bottom end of performance tables since they were introduced in the early 90s (Ofsted, 1993; 2003; 2013; 2015). There has recently been wider recognition, too, that failings in the 'care' system often led to it being a all-too-predictable stepping stone to incarceration, with care leavers significantly overrepresented in the prison system (Blades et al., 2011; HM Government 2013; Prison Reform Trust, 2010a). Acknowledgement of these institutional failings and inadequate and delayed political or policy responses to them is of little consequence, changing little for these respondents. It was, as I argued in chapter 4, jostling for position or living up to dominant protest masculine ideals in children's 'homes', schools and in street subcultures that contributed to many respondents' deeper submergence into enduring criminal careers.

8.2.3 Marginalised Workplace Transitions

Chapter 5, *(Non-)Working Lives*, follows the disrupted transitions of undereducated respondents from poor-performing schools into regional changing labour markets with some the UK's highest rates of unemployment. A further objective of this study was to explore and unpack how the street protest masculinities of the informants contributed to their marginalisation, incarceration and continued disadvantage. In this chapter I showed how the respondents added to their labour market exclusion in a number of ways. As

has been documented by other scholars, early street protest masculinities that led to the rejection of schooling, early criminal careers and incarceration meant that many of my respondents, too, added to their own significant barriers in an already challenging economic and industrial landscape for young men moving out of school into work. Many respondents were at the extreme end of the labour market exclusion, illustrated in other research with white working-class undereducated young adult men (McDowell, 2003b; Nayak, 2003b). Their resistance to legitimate 'cards in' employment in favour of cash in hand or 'fiddly' work (MacDonald, 1994; MacDonald and Marsh, 2005) added to their marginalisation. In Hull's local labour market where up to 80 applicants were chasing the same low end vacancy in the later 2000s (Peacock, 2012), the men in this study were aware that their history positioned them among the least likely to be successful in finding steady work. Many realised that they would probably be the last choice out of the long list of applicants. 'Cash in hand' work saved them from what many felt would almost certainly be rejection for a 'shit job' for 'shit money'. Their lack of any documented legitimate work history will certainly add to their difficulties in engaging in the labour market in the future and so deepens their marginalisation.

A more overt way respondents contributed to their own economic marginalisation and continued exclusion was in the struggle many faced reconciling early street masculine protest ideals with 'respectable' working lives. Despite highlighting significant barriers most respondents noted that they had tried to hold down legitimate employment at some point; however, as I argue, this was often short lived, as many were unable to 'stick' with

structure, discipline and mundane work for poor wages. Previous unstructured, adrenalin-filled or exhilarating alternative criminal careers with the occasional big pay-off was the irresistible pull that made committing to poor work opportunities almost impossible for many. It was troubling to discover that it was not just 'shit' jobs that were lost to masculine performances refined on the streets, care homes and alternative learning centres. Four respondents, either through great self-resilience or backing from supportive family, found well-paid and secure work in mainly traditional respectable masculine occupations. Two years, however, was the longest any of these four sustained 'respectable' employment before the violent and drug-related crime that they ran alongside attempts at 'respectability' returned two of the men back to prison and the others to their first prison term.

8.2.4 Boys to 'Cons' in Impoverished Prison Regimes

A third core objective was to explore how gendered trajectories across the key sites of neighbourhood, home, school, workplace and prison interconnect to create and maintain revolving-door incarceration. It was concerning to find that the vast majority of respondents had spent much more time in prison than in the workplace, and in many cases than on the outside. As I argued in chapter 6, *Lads to Lags: Adolescence to Adult Transitions in the Local Prison*, the classed and gendered trajectories leading to incarceration better prepared most respondents to serve time in highly violent and hyper masculine young adult prison space than on the shop floor. I found that unlike the challenges most of them had adjusting to the

workplace, adaptation to the prison space, despite almost unanimous profound fear of incarceration beforehand, proved less difficult than most had imagined. This is not because prison was in anyway 'easy' but because it was full of familiar faces and familiar masculine values and hierarchies that most were inducted into on their 'estates' and/or 'care' or schooling spaces for 'bad lads'.

Sadly, school-to-prison, as I have shown, was an all-too-common transition, with 12 participants being imprisoned before completing formal schooling, a further nine before reaching 18 years and only two out of the 30 men interviewed were over 21 years old before receiving their first prison sentence. These respondents found themselves, consistent with a body of research (Lösel et al., 2013) and concerns expressed among campaign groups (Allen, 2013; Howard League for Penal Reform, 2010b), negotiating penal spaces long before they were fully mature (Prior et al., 2011). With many incarcerated at such formative years it was disappointing to find little evidence that respondents were offered real strategies or alternative avenues to manhood that challenged protest street identities that led to imprisonment. Their narratives mainly suggest they were left or 'abandoned' to 'impoverished' young adult prison regimes that generate 'extreme' (Jewkes, 2005) versions of masculinities constructed much more on violence and 'hardness'. Furthermore, official prison learning and training, one of the key aspects of penal regimes tasked with equipping inmates with resources for alternative avenues to 'respectable masculinities', was evidently, according to respondents' experiences and in line with long-held concerns at the national prison learning provision (Bracken, 2011; Czerniawski, 2015;

Rogers et al., 2014), woefully inadequate for purpose. Introducing and holding respondents as children and young adults in these impoverished penal conditions, before most were afforded the opportunity to 'grow out' of criminal careers, played a significant part in trapping many in an enduring and costly cycle of revolving-door incarceration.

8.3 Marginalised from the Margins: Outside Looking In

8.3.1 On the Margins of the Margins

It was apparent that the respondents were in many cases on the outside or marginalised from already deeply marginalised spaces. One particular housing estate, for instance, where many of the men had been 'born and bred', was regarded, as a probation representative noted, as the 'worst of the worst'. Yet even within this space (or other deprived neighbourhoods where they lived) most of respondents were part of sub- or protest group, as Broude (1990) and Nayak (2003b) suggest, outside the respectable white working class. Half of the respondents were excluded from some of the country's worst performing schools and placed in alternative learning institutions that reinforced their status as 'bad lads' outside the mainstream. Several of the men were excluded from their family or 'proper home' and placed in the 'care' of the local authority. As I have already highlighted, respondents' marginalised relationships to Hull's bleak industrial and economic landscape meant that the vast majority felt excluded even from 'shit' jobs. Multiple periods of incarceration for many meant another obvious, albeit more

extreme, form of exclusion, or in Sykes's term 'deprivation' from already highly deprived societies.

Charting respondents' gendered trajectories over these interconnecting sites I have exposed the limited resources available for doing masculinity and shown just how narrow definitions of dominant and subordinated masculinities were in these spaces. Respondents' 'choice' in the vast majority of cases meant oscillating between doing marginalised masculinity in poor schools and 'shit' jobs or resisting and doing street protest masculinity that inevitably contributed to their existence at the margins of the margins. In her review of research on working-class masculinity and schooling, Sara Delamont (2000) is critical of those whom she identifies as mostly middle-class, mainly male, researchers who mythologise and lionise the resistance and protest of the same working-class boys they hid from in the school playground. There are no heroes or lions in this study; indeed the deeper the men's investment in street protest masculinity, the greater the costs accumulated for both themselves and everyone closest to them. Consequently, as I argued in chapter 7, *Vulnerable Masculinities: Absent Men and Imagined Futures*, the more they added to and amplified their own exclusion, the more the cracks in this masculinity began to reveal profound vulnerabilities.

The language of vulnerability is not associated often enough with aggressive masculinities of working-class men (prisoners) and perhaps this is partly Delamont's point. This study, however, shows how versions of protest masculinities sustained over long periods in various sites of exclusion reveal particular vulnerabilities. Most explicitly, these vulnerabilities are

evident in the prison itself where ten informants held 'vulnerable prisoner' status. In revealing the fragility and vulnerability behind masculinities constructed in sites of exclusion, like prison, I have shown how several of this 'vulnerable cohort' went from being highly respected by other prisoners to embodying subordinated masculinities themselves. In these subordinate positions, these men became the victims of violence and denigration by other mainstream prisoners who used them as a resource for doing dominant prisoner masculinities. I have argued how these same main location respondents, 'back stage' and alone in their cells, understood the fragility and difficulties of maintaining and living up to prison masculinities and the ease with which, like the ten men in the vulnerable cohort, they might quickly find themselves excluded from the dominant group or incarcerated in the vulnerable and marginal prison space.

Through this study I have also revealed another form of vulnerability, one that is not so explicitly defined but one that runs through all the respondents' gendered and classed trajectories. I found that the more respondents sought masculine acceptance or respectability on the streets or in other sites of exclusion, the further they distanced themselves from or failed to be the men they claimed they want to be. Spending more time inside than 'on the out', as the majority of participants had, meant being excluded from, or unable to meet, the most basic cultural expectations of working-class masculinity. Regardless of revered or subordinated street or prison masculine status, nearly all respondents, as shown across chapters 6 and 7, carried a great deal of shame for not fulfilling masculine obligations towards those they cared about. Decades of maintaining destructive masculinities

contributed to their failures as fathers, providers and protectors, which meant disqualification from the gendered ideals that the vast majority desired to live up to. In chapter 7 I argued that such significant losses and the emotional cost or consequences of continued absence from major life events on the outside revealed a particularly vulnerable side to many of the respondents.

A concerning aspect that extends the vulnerabilities of many informants was a belief that their past failings to be the men that they have thus far failed to be will be made up for upon release. Sadly, as I demonstrated in the closing empirical chapter, many were looking to the past breadwinner masculine models of their fathers and previous generations for imagined futures without crime or incarceration. After so long on the margins of the margins where, as I have shown throughout the study, resources for doing alternative 'respectable' working-class masculinities were almost non-existent, respondents' futures rest on the precarious foundation of a masculine model that even the most so-called 'respectable' working-class men are struggling to attain. More importantly, I argued that lasting vulnerabilities for most arise from their reliance on release from prison on a version of that traditional respectable working-class masculinity that they have failed to sustain time and time again in previous spells of freedom. It is with concern and sadness that I argue that there is little in the narratives of most that suggests that they are better equipped for their desired masculine roles of protectors and (legitimate) providers than on previous occasions. Arguably in an increasingly austere environment with deep and escalating cuts to already limited support services and welfare provision, respondents perhaps face their toughest challenge to date just staying on the margins.

8.4 Significance of the Research for Criminal Justice Policies

Burgeoning work in masculinities studies has provided a valuable lens for this research, bringing into focus the ways in which class, gender and place (neighbourhood) intersect in the construction of marginalised masculinities. This study, drawing on critical men's studies and transitions scholarship, shows how key sites interconnect to create, reinforce and maintain protest masculinities. The findings that I have reported here suggest that there is great deal of scope for investment and intervention across poor neighbourhoods, failing schools, impoverished prison regimes and workplaces to improve the life chances of working-class young men like those in this study.

8.4.1 Neighbourhood/Streets

I have shown here how important time on the streets and estate culture are in shaping early protest masculinities. Many respondents spent most of their early years on the streets, wanting to be with and looking up to their older peers. More investment in prevention and more creative measures to positively engage excluded young people might have helped deter some of these respondents from early criminal careers. One of the few positive aspects associated with the 'Transforming Rehabilitation' agenda of the previous Justice Secretary, Chris Grayling, is its advocacy of the utilisation of

'mentors' who have been through the system themselves and subsequently made positive changes in their lives. I propose that if this scheme were taken beyond the token gesture of these mostly voluntary mentor roles, there would be a real opportunity here for training and employing young people with offending histories from impoverished neighbourhoods to work with their younger peers who are at risk.

There are a number of advantages to this approach. As shown in this study, respondents were distrustful of outsiders and had little regard for those whom they associated with the authorities. Older peers who have been invested in through training and encouragement and 'employed' (paid) to work in organisations within their own neighbourhoods would provide much needed positive representations of alternative ways of doing masculinity. There are already some excellent organisations supporting peer interventions (for example, www.stgilestrust.org.uk; www.uservice.org), but sadly many of these voluntary organisations are facing significant pressures due to financial cutbacks as part of the current Government's austerity programme. Sadly, too, statutory services such as the Probation Service could do more to engage with and utilise peer intervention, but with too great a focus on risk, currently these roles in statutory organisations are often tokenistic, about appearances, rarely paid and seldom result in employment (see Fletcher and Batty, 2012; Kavanagh and Borrill, 2013 for a good overview on peer intervention). I suggest that employing older peers to work with their younger peers at risk is an area of policy intervention with great potential, needing considerable investment and much more openness from statutory organisations.

8.4.2 Undoing Masculinities in Schools

Schools are, as recognised in a vast body of scholarship, crucial sites for creating and maintaining masculinities. Arguably, better resourced and higher performing schools would have been in stronger position to challenge the troubling street protest masculinities of the respondents. Recent scholarship, for instance, has found evidence that suggests a ‘softening’ of masculinities in some schools in the UK and the US (Anderson, 2009; McCormack, 2012). This research, mainly carried out with sixth form students in high performing schools, found evidence of a shift from hegemonic masculinity constructed through aggressive homophobic and sexist posturing to a more inclusive masculinity constructed through the acceptance and even celebration of difference. The authors report this can be partly attributed to the fruits of feminist and queer scholarship and its diffusion into mainstream discussion and debates. The young people in these studies came from very different social environments to my respondents, but what is relevant and transferable is how an institutional learning space helped foster and reproduce a changing culture of masculinity.

The challenge and priority for policy, I suggest, is to invest in and better resource schools and youth organisations serving the types of impoverished regions like these participants came from, helping to disrupt and ‘undo’ destructive cultures of masculinity. The outpouring of scholarship since the 80s that has allowed a greater understanding of the complexities and cost of some aspects of working-class masculinist culture needs to be made much more accessible to those men it purports to represent. With the

current emphasis in the social sciences on 'knowledge exchange' and 'impact' a great deal would be gained from sharing more or training teachers, youth workers, prison staff, for example, to digest some of the vast research on gender and masculinity, with the aim of directly benefitting the young men (and women) with whom they work. Research on masculinity has generated resources for working with men and boys across a range of issues that include, for instance, violence against women (Flood and Pease, 2009; Jewkes et al., 2014) and so-called 'Good Lad' types of workshops that promote 'positive masculinity' to challenge sexist and homophobic behaviour in universities and colleges (see for example www.goodladworkshop.com). Culturally, too, the changing nature of masculinities is being confronted with events like the Being A Man festival (BAM) that facilitates academics, artists, celebrities and politicians to host seminars and workshops exploring the changing nature and future challenges for masculinities (see for example www.southbankcentre.co.uk). Teachers in schools, because of their influence in the construction of masculinities and the impact they have on long-term transitions, need to be motivated and supported, politically and through policy, to talk much more, and much more creatively (outside the standard optional citizenship subject), about gender, masculinities, economic change and changing sexual relations.

8.4.3 Prison

More than two thirds of the respondents were handed a prison sentence before the age of 21. Their gendered trajectories might have been very different had they been given more time to see if they would mature and

seek out avenues to construct an alternative version of masculinity and find employment outside the prison walls. If custody is to be imposed at such an early age then a key priority for policy must be to ensure young men like the men in this study are held in young adult prison spaces that are both safe and conducive to encouraging alternative and more productive masculine identities. As I have shown in this research, many respondents' early sentences in impoverished and violent young adult prison spaces only accelerated and prolonged destructive masculine trajectories. However, leading on from Lord Harris's 2015 damning independent review into self-inflicted deaths in custody of young adults and years of pressure from The Transition to Adulthood Alliance (see www.t2a.org.uk), the failings of the criminal justice system to adequately deal with young adults and the impoverished penal regimes they face are finally getting some political attention that has been lacking for decades. Confirming long-held concerns by several penal pressure groups, Lord Harris in his report, *Changing Prison, Saving Lives*, raised concerns about a criminal justice system that sentences 'distinctly vulnerable' (Harris Review, 2015, p. 81) young people as adults before the brain has fully developed and matured enough to take adult responsibility. He is critical, too, of inadequate young adult penal facilities that fail to meet the complex needs of this group.

Harris's report, and pressure from various organisations, has finally created the necessary waves and in September 2015 the announcement by Justice Secretary Michael Gove announced a complete review into the Youth Justice System. In the same month, Gove also announced a review into the provision of prison education to be undertaken by Dame Sally Coates. Prior

to this, in July of the same year, Bob Neil MP, chair of the Justice Select Committee, had announced an inquiry into the treatment of young adult offenders in prisons and other crucial parts of the criminal justice system, including maturity and the sentencing framework. Hours before this thesis was due to go to print the Prime Minister, David Cameron, announced the 'biggest shake-up of prisons since the Victorian era' (HM Government, 2016). Accepting the 'failure' of the current system as 'scandalous', he states: 'current levels of prison violence, drug-taking and self-harm should shame us all'. As part of his vision of a 'truly twenty-first-century prison' he has committed to creating six new 'reform prisons' by the end of 2016 and a league table system measuring performance of prisons across the estate. Governors, starting with those of the new 'reform prisons' and then rolling out more widely, will be given full autonomy on how they operate and spend their budgets (see HM Government, 2016).

Prison education and training features largely in this current government's prison 'overhaul'. Following recommendations in Sally Coates's soon-to-be published review of prison education, there is to be an end to regional contracted education provision, giving prison governors greater control over inmate learning. Prison education budgets, too, are to be protected. The respondents' experiences suggest this is an important area that would benefit from radical reforms. It is hoped that institutions having more autonomy in education and training provision and a more secure budget will mean a shift from the current failing core curriculum to a more meaningful and higher quality/level of education that will encourage inmates to be much more engaged and generate an aspiration to learn. In

transforming provision, prison governors and educators/training providers need to offer skills that have greater transferable value in the real labour market. I found many of the training workshops focused heavily on traditional masculine trades, such as painting and decorating and building/bricklaying. I suspect that the level of training on offer was more about providing the respondents with meaningful activity whilst inside, than equipping them with transferable skills and qualifications to realistically compete for this type of work in the construction industry.

Much more needs to be done to invest in training and learning resources that give prisoners more options for alternative avenues to constructing acceptable masculine identities once they are released. One way of doing this is to better prepare and train inmates to adapt to the jobs realistically open to them. Prison curriculum and training needs to be updated and better linked to the local service-dominated labour market conditions that face prisoners on their release. One exemplar charity that could be used as a model of good practice throughout the prison estate is the work of The Clink. With high quality restaurants open to the public, located inside the walls of four prisons, this charity trains and employs prisoners for work in the hospitality sector. Prisoners work and train for forty hours a week under real working conditions in a training restaurant, with the paying public as customers, to earn valued experience and accreditation that often leads to training/work placement upon release (see <http://thelinkcharity.org>). Linking prison training and education with the demands of the changing labour market is an effective method of providing inmates with transferable skills and central government policy-makers could

be doing much more to drive and initiate these types of innovative approaches to rehabilitation.

8.4.4 Workplace

Andy's extract, in chapter 5, outlining his experience of an interview to work in a 'Mind' charity shop, captures some of the tension and challenges men like these face fitting into the service-based/retail sector. With long criminal records, and without training or preparation whilst inside, they are seldom regarded as acceptable employees. Timpson's the cobblers, like The Clink, show that with the right approach and training, ex-offenders and public-facing industry can work well together. For the past decade this organisation has actively recruited prison leavers and through their work with over 70 prisons across the UK and three on-site academies located in prisons, Timpson's are the biggest employers of ex-prisoners in the UK. James Timpson, the son of the company's chairman, John Timpson, is the one behind the drive to recruit both men and women leaving prison, and although he acknowledges initial difficulties and some loss through dishonesty, he publically promotes the benefits of employing this group, highlighting their exceptional 'loyalty' and 'obsession with being on time' (see www.timpson.co.uk).

In recent years there have been political discussions and policy initiatives to encourage employment and broaden work opportunities among ex-offenders. During his time as Justice Secretary in 2010, Kenneth Clark actively appealed to firms such as Virgin and Marks & Spencer's to follow Timpson's lead and see the value in training, educating and recruiting (ex-)offenders. In 2012, Chris Grayling in his role as Employment Minister,

before succeeding Mr Clark as Minister for Justice, opened up the Welfare to Work Programme so that ex-prisoners who qualify for jobseekers allowance would be required to take part in the programme immediately upon release. Prior to this, claimants coming out of prison could be on benefits for between nine and 12 months before being referred to the work programme. As part of this scheme to try to get offenders promptly into the workplace potential employers are given financial incentives for offering and sustaining the employment of ex-prisoners.

Here it not the place to go into all of the difficulties and criticisms of the Work Programme (See House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts, 2013), except perhaps to note that the scheme has been found to be failing those, like these respondents, who are the furthest away from the labour market. Although official figures on outcomes relating to prison leavers and the work programme are scarce, the National Voluntary Organisation (NVO) reports that only 6.3 per cent of prison leavers found some form of work through this scheme in the year to March 2014 (see Suleiman, 2014). Even more alarming is that out of 1,013 work programme prisoners surveyed for an evaluation by the Department for Work and Pensions, 28 per cent reported having benefits stopped for failure to comply with the programme (George et al., 2014). The government's approach is not adequate and although organisations like Timpson's are doing excellent work, they can only make a small impact on what is big problem. Timpson's, for instance, one of the country's largest employers of offenders, employed 300 prison leavers in the four years up to 2015. When compared to the figure of 37,527 people who entered prison in 2013 and who were released up to

six months later (Prison Reform Trust, 2014) the true scale of the challenge of getting enough ex-offender-welcoming work placements is revealed. It is also important to note that some offenders are excluded from employment with Timpson's and other retail businesses that follow their model. Ex-prisoners with previous serious violent offences, or known gang ties, arson or sex offences are less likely to be taken on.

This study has shown that criminal justice polices need to consider measures to significantly broaden and add to these inventive programmes created by the private sector, so that entrenched and serious offenders, like many of these informants, are given a chance and encouraged to find work upon release. Timpson's took a big risk to convince their customers that ex-offenders could be trusted with keys to their homes. The government and policy makers need to show the same level of commitment and invest much more in opening doors to employment for men like the respondents of this study.

8.5 Significance for Geography and Social Science

This research contributes to the small body of work in geography that explores the space of the prison in the formation and reproduction of marginalised identities. Geographers have explored the intersection of gender, race, place and incarceration in the USA (Gilmore, 2007; Shabazz, 2009). UK geographers Judith Pallet and Laura Piacentini (and colleagues) in research with women prisoners in Russian colonies, have explored the

interplay of space, place and gender in the construction of femininities, analysing the effects of distance and locality as a means of highlighting pains of imprisonment (see Moran et al., 2009; Pallot and Piacentini, 2012; Piacentini et al., 2009). In the UK, Carceral Geography has gained momentum in recent years. Much of this work focuses on the nature of carceral spaces, the spatial geographies of carceral systems and the relationship between the carceral and increasingly punitive state (see www.carceralgeography.com). The significance of my study for geography is that it adds to this work through offering a rare lens into prison in the UK, showing how place intersects with class and gender in creating trajectories to incarceration. What this study shows is that in this particular impoverished place in the UK, and the institutional spaces within it, class and gender intersect to better prepare most of these respondents for the prison space rather than the workplace. This study adds, too, to the growing body of work on the geographies of masculinities (see Berg and Longhurst, 2003; Gorman-Murray and Hopkins, 2014; McDowell, 2003b; Nayak, 2003b; Van Hoven and Hörschelmann, 2005) and offers a lens into varying dominant and subordinated masculinities across different UK penal spaces.

Finally I should like to suggest that one of the strengths of this study in contributing to geography, indeed to the social sciences as a whole, is the insight that my 'insider' status brought to the study. My experiences of having encountered similar spaces to the respondents helped in hearing particular aspects of their voices, most especially recognising their vulnerabilities, in ways that is not often presented in research on working-class boys and

prison masculinities. As I argue in chapter 3, this is not privileging my position in comparison with an ‘outsider’; rather, I hope that the respondents’ stories, explored and filtered through my own unconventional personal experience—growing up on impoverished estates in Greater Manchester, early expulsion from education, crime, incarceration and over a decade of working with marginalised (young) men but ending up as a graduate student in Oxford—adds to and enriches the body of increasingly diverse academic narratives in the social sciences.

8.6 Limitations and Future Research

There are some limitations and areas in which this project could be extended through future research. Importantly this qualitative study cannot claim to be representative of all working-class men across the UK (or indeed male prisoners). It offers an insight into the classed and gendered trajectories of 30 prisoners at a particular time and in a particular place. A further limitation of the study was that although a small number of the respondents (less than a third) admitted to a level of substance misuse that would have contributed to their prison journeys, it was not the intention of this project to focus on drug-using careers. The key reasoning behind not focusing on drug using/drinking careers was that although many admitted recreational binge drinking and drug using, few admitted to being addicts; those that did claimed to be already well entrenched in crime and incarceration before their using spiralled out of control. More importantly, and far too often especially in recent policy thinking and throughout the author’s own lived and work

experiences, substance misuse is presented as a catch-all 'agency' explanation for social exclusion and as such obscures the role of institutional structures in creating and reproducing poverty and exclusion (see Duncan-Smith, 2006; Harkness et al., 2012). The priority here was to explore how the respondents navigated their structural disadvantages and how institutional spaces were complicit in their classed and gendered trajectories to incarceration. Perhaps upon reflection I would have liked to focus more on substance use, both alcohol and drugs, and a future area to extend this research, following Marsh and Macdonald (2002) and Webster et al. (2004), would be to explore the role of drug careers as an alternative transition in deindustrialised and deprived regions.

There are a number of other areas that the study has opened up for future research. This study might be extended through a comparative analysis that explores how girls/women navigate impoverished street and institutional spaces, including prison. Another comparative area of interest would be to explore how less conventional prisoners (men from more affluent or middle class backgrounds) navigate the prison space. Because of restrictions in a project of this scale, follow-up interviews were unfeasible. However, following a group like these respondents out of the prison gates upon their release and documenting the challenges they face finding work, taking up masculine obligations within their families/neighbourhoods and their efforts, or not, to avoid crime and incarceration is an area that would extend this study and be beneficial in informing and advocating for future policy change in supporting ex-offenders.

8.7 Final Thoughts

In what has been a considerably bleak study, words of optimism to conclude are difficult to find. The Teesside School's work on transitions is at pains to point out that young people, growing up under the same structural economic disadvantages experience varying, albeit mainly 'poor', transitions. Of course the majority of people growing up in the same environments as these respondents do not end up in the local prison. Undisputable, however, is that it is men from deprived neighbourhoods that fill prisons like Hull. Currently, out of the 30 men whose experiences are captured in this study, perhaps Jamie, with his supportive family and existing social capital established through his training and work as a qualified electrician, is the one who is most likely to find a different way of doing masculinity. Matt, too, after several prison sentences, found an alternative avenue working as a manager for the railway and his resourcefulness may well benefit him again in finding and sustaining legitimate work upon release. This study has comprehensively charted the respondents' gendered and classed trajectories to, in most cases, revolving-door incarceration and although it is difficult to see how this cycle might end for many, I cannot claim with any certainty, at least without follow-up interviews, what future avenues to masculinity respondents, including Matt and Jamie, will take. My own lived and work experiences, however, leave me reluctant to write these respondents off as having no way out of their current position.

Had I, like these respondents, been interviewed on my last prison term, I could never have imagined the future in which I find myself today.

Rachel Thomson et al. (2002), and others (Shildrick and MacDonald, 2008) talk of 'critical moments' as events that an individual 'sees as having important consequences for their lives and identities' (p. 339). They are events when some form of interaction occurs (either with a professional, family or associate) or an incident (bereavement or victim of violence) that changes life trajectories for better or worse. Reflecting on my own biography, there is clear set of events that led to the critical moment that instigated change. After a year into my last prison sentence I was, despite much resistance on my part, moved from Manchester local (Strangeways) prison, to a training prison in Thetford, Norfolk which had a poor reputation and was a long way from home. After a short time in this institution I was made aware of a specialist therapeutic unit for prisoners who wanted to address offending behaviour-related issues. With no other agenda but to try and secure early release, I applied and was accepted. It was whilst on this unit that I met senior prison officers (one of whom was the Governor of Hull at the time of this study) and their staff team, whose attitudes, actions and approach to prisoners convinced many of us that we were more than just a number.

During all the previous times that I had been incarcerated I had never considered attending prison education for many of the same reasons the respondents identified, but on this unit education was compulsory. I was encouraged by officers to try it out and remunerated at the same rate as the paid work in the main prison workshops (this was unusual because education always paid less than prison wages). Education was run by a volunteer, a retired teacher, who freely invested her time with the sole drive to open up the rewards of learning to those in her class. Meeting this

teacher, Maggie, who was not constrained by the prison core curriculum and who tailored learning to the interests and needs of the room, was a critical moment for me. Her particular specialism was convincing those of us with low self-belief and negative schooling experiences that we were teachable and we had something of value of to say. It seems fitting to reference Maggie here, as I am sure I was neither the first, nor the last, to use her classroom as a gateway or avenue to an alternative way of doing masculinity. I was paroled and left the unit with more hope than when I was sentenced. In my final weeks in prison I was supported to move to a new location and from this halfway house I was encouraged into higher education and this journey started there.

Behind this biographical disclosure there is a tentative attempt at a message of optimism relating to the men of this study. Most of those who surrounded me in the early years on the streets of our neighbourhood or during periods 'inside' could never have predicted this route out of crime and incarceration. Because this study was based within a prison it was only ever going to feature those men still stuck in criminal and prison masculinities. Perhaps, however, some of these respondents, that seemed so locked into destructive masculinities, will encounter their particular 'critical moment' and find a way of living up to, or beyond, their own imagined futures.

Appendix 1

Respondents Background Information

Name	Age	Area	Schooling	Attainment	Home type	Mother's work	Father's work
Jamie	21	Hull	Exclusion from mainstream. Final years in Exclusion Centre.	Some low to mid level GCSE's	Family home	Cleaner/ Public House Owner	Factory/ Public House Owner
Glen	21	Hull	Exclusion from mainstream. Final years in Exclusion Centre.	Low level GCSE's	Mainly family home/last year of schooling in children's home	'local shops'	(step dad) Hotel worker
David	22	Hull	Exclusion from mainstream. Residential Boarding School	None	Children's home	Bar work	(step dad) Plumber
Pat	23	Grimsby	Exclusion Centre	None	Family Home	Long term Benefits	Long term Benefits
Gibson	28	Hull	Exclusion from mainstream. Residential Boarding School	None	Family home	Benefits	Absent
Danny	29	Hull	Mainstream	None	Family home	Factory work	Factory work
Dennis	29	Hull	Residential Boarding School	None	Family home	"mum always worked"	labourer
Matt	29	Scunt-thorpe	Mainstream	Low level GCSE's	Children's home	Part time	Engineer
Bruce	32	Hull	Residential Boarding School	None	Children's home	Cleaner 'all her life'	Unknown
Jack	32	Hull	Residential Boarding School	None	Children's home	Benefits	Mainly absent – armed forces

Mick	32	Scarborough	Residential Boarding School	Low level GCSE's	Children's home	Housewife	Joiner
Hough	33	Hull	Residential Boarding School	None	Family home	Benefits	Labourer. Mainly on benefits
Neil	33	Hull	Exclusion Centre	Low level GCSE's	Family home	Royal Mail	Plumber
Victor	34	Hull	Exclusion Centre	None	Children's home	Housewife	"away at sea"
Chris	34	Hull	Mainstream	None	Family home	Absent	Builder
John	35	Hull	Mainstream	None	Family home	Disabled	Carer for wife
Ashley	35	Hull	Mainstream	Low level "grades"	Family home	Oil Rigs	Post office
Dean	35	Hull	Residential Boarding School	None	Children's home	Not disclosed	Standby boats
Ian	37	Hull	Mainstream	None	Family home	Housewife	Cash in hand labouring
Henry	37	Hull	Mainstream	"ok" GCSE's	Family home	Housewife	(step dad) builder Foreman
Malcolm	38	Hull	Mainstream	None	Family home	Benefits	Road worker
Buster	38	Hull	Mainstream	None	Family home	Nurse	Factory worker/ then self employed
Jim	39	Hull	Mainstream	None	Family home	Benefits	Mainly absent – standby ships
Richard	39	Hull	Exclusion centre	Low Grades	Family home	Checkout cashier	"bit of cash in hand"
Charlie	40	Hull	Exclusion centre	None	Family home	Housewife	Fisherman
Carl	41	Hull	Mainstream	None	Family home	Housewife	Factory foreman
Scott	42	Grimsby	Mainstream	None	Family home	Housewife	"Heavy engineer"
Andy	44	Hull	Mainstream	None	Mainly family home/ last year of schooling in children's home	Long term illness	Oil Rigs
Wayne	44	Hull	Mainstream	"1 CSE"	Family home	Cleaner	Mainly absent
Leon	44	Hull	Mainstream	Some CSE's	Family home	Benefits	Absent

Appendix 2

Post Schooling Data

Name	Work experience	Relationship/dependants	Age first incarcerated	Prison experience	Prisoner status/location
Jamie	Fully work active post schooling: Armed forces. Qualified Electrician	Partner and daughter	21 years	First time. Only served time as adult prisoner	Main population
Glen	Sporadic work post schooling: sales and health food store	Partner and daughter	21 years	First time. Only served time as adult prisoner	Vulnerable Prisoner. Segregated VPU for own safety
David	Occasional cash in hand roofing work	Relationship ended due to long-term sentence. No dependants	15 years	Several prison terms: served time as Juvenile, young adult and adult prisoner	Main population
Pat	Never Worked	Partner and four step children	15 years	Several prison terms: served time as Juvenile, young adult and adult prisoner	Main population
Gibson	Never worked	Partner and early years step daughter	15 years	Several prison terms: served time as Juvenile, young adult and adult prisoner	Main population
Danny	Never worked	Partner, baby recently deceased.	15 years	Several prison terms: served time as Juvenile, young adult and adult prisoner	Main population
Dennis	Cash in hand block paving	None mentioned	15 years	Several prison terms: served time as	Main population

				Juvenile, young and adult prisoner	
Matt	Work active post schooling: wielding, fork lift and railway foreman	Partner and children	16 years	Several prison terms: served time as Juvenile, young and adult prisoner	Main population
Bruce	“ a few jobs after school”: abattoir and factory work	None discussed	15 years	Several prison terms: served time as Juvenile, young and adult prisoner	Vulnerable Prisoner. Segregated VPU for own safety
Jack	Brief factory work	None discussed	15 years	Several prison terms: served time as Juvenile, young and adult prisoner	Vulnerable Prisoner. Segregated VPU for own safety
Mick	Short training as mechanic post school and cash in hand building work	None discussed	17 years	Several prison terms: served time as Juvenile, young and adult prisoner	Main population
Hough	Short spell of cash in hand scaffolding and building work	None discussed	15 years	Several prison terms: served time as Juvenile, young and adult prisoner	Main population
Neil	Short spell plumbing training and casual agency work	Son with estranged partner	18 years	Less than five prison terms: served time as young adult and adult prisoner	Main population
Victor	Second hand shop and few casual cash in hand roles	Step children	16 years	Mainly long term prison sentences: served time as Juvenile, young and adult prisoner	Vulnerable Prisoner. Segregated VPU for own safety
Chris	Worked on	Step children	15 years	Got a long	Main

	construction sites "down south"			term prison sentence as child and served several terms since: served time as Juvenile, young adult and adult prisoner	population
John	Sporadic low paid cards in and cash in hand jobs	None discussed	21 years	Under five prisons terms. Served time as adult prisoner	Main population
Ashley	Worked for Uncle's building firm and pipe fitting factory	None disclosed	21 years	Several prison terms. Served me as an adult prisoner	Main population
Dean	Helped his father out a few times and "few factor jobs".	None disclosed	15 years	Several prison terms: served time as Juvenile, young adult and adult prisoner	Vulnerable Prisoner. Segregated VPU for own safety
Ian	A lot of cash in hand employment working with father	Partner and son	17 years	Several prison terms: served time as Juvenile, young adult and adult prisoner	Main population
Henry	No post school employment – worked "first proper job" in mid thirties for social enterprise scheme linked to prison	Step daughter from estranged partner	16 years	Several prison terms: served time as Juvenile, young adult and adult prisoner	Main population
Malcolm	Short spell in factory work	Son to estranged partner	18 years	Life sentence; served as young adult and adult prisoner	Vulnerable Prisoner. Segregated VPU for own safety
Buster	Landscaping and factory work	None	14 years	Several prison terms: served time as Juvenile, young adult and adult prisoner	Mainstream
Jim	Worked standby boats and labouring	Son and partner	15 years	Several prison terms: served time as	Main population

				Juvenile, young and adult prisoner	
Richard	First worked as security guard aged 27,	Step children and partner	17 years	Fewer than five prison terms. Served time as Juvenile, young and adult prisoner	Main population
Charlie	Trawler man from 16 to 21	Children to estranged partner	15 years	Several prison terms: served time as Juvenile, young and adult prisoner	Main population
Carl	Worked in same factory as dad for a time after school	None discussed	22 years	Fewer than five prison terms. Served time as an adult prisoner	Vulnerable Prisoner. Segregated VPU for own safety
Scott	Sporadic welding work	Wife and older children	42 years	First prison sentence	Vulnerable Prisoner. Segregated VPU for own safety
Andy	YTS tyre fitter and fish factory	Partner and older children (grandchildren)	17 years	Several prison terms: served time as Juvenile, young and adult prisoner	Main population
Wayne	Short apprentice at British Aerospace	Daughter with estranged partner	17 years	Fewer than five prison terms. Several prison terms: served time as Juvenile, young and adult prisoner	Main population
Leon	Active employment – butchers, factory work, own security company for door staff	Children and partner	17 years	Two prison terms. Served as young adult and adult prisoner	Vulnerable Prisoner. Segregated VPU for own safety

Appendix. 3

Statement of Purpose

My name is Dave Maguire I'm a Ph.D. student at the University of Oxford, thank you very much for agreeing to take part at this stage. Before I start I would just like to clearly outline what the research is about, why I am doing it and who will have access to the information collected as part of the research process.

Core Aim

The key aim of this project is to explore the ways in which our ideas of masculinity (how we act as boys & men) influence(ed) our experience of schooling, employment, offending and prison.

Reason For Research

If successful this study will be submitted for a Doctor of Philosophy Degree. More importantly, I've always been interested in gender, specifically masculinity, and how different versions of masculinity are created at different times and in different situations/spaces/ institutions according to class and race. It is hoped that once finished some of the findings from this research will have an impact upon educational policy or inform practice when working within a social care setting.

Who Has Access to the Information?

With your permission interviews (and focus groups) will be audio recorded and all the information collected will be transcribed into notes, analysed and then written up and presented in various types of documents or reports. It is important to note that the finished product of this study will be kept on the electronic database belonging to the University and or possibly other electronic resources. Furthermore, part of this study could be published in professional/academic journals.

Anonymity

Importantly, all the information you give me will be anonymous; this means that I will remove any identifying features such as your name, your current institution or anything else that could possibly identify you.

Confidentiality

I'd like to reassure you that all the information given as part of this research process will be treated as confidential, unless, of course, it comprises the safety and wellbeing of yourself and others and/or the security of prison.

Abort

I just like to make clear that we can stop the interview/group at any point should you feel like a break. Alternatively, you are free to withdraw from the interview process completely at any time. **Do you have any questions?**

Appendix 4

Interview Guide

Interview Guide:

1. Home:

1A: Background

Can you tell me about where you grew up?

Location

Type of family/ home

How many in the household?

1B: Parents

Can you tell me about your parents?

1. Education/employment
2. Views on education (compulsory/ HE)
3. Parents expectation of you in school/ after leaving school
4. Relationship with father/mother

1C: Within the home

Can explain how the family was organised within the home?

1. Housework
2. Entertainment
3. Activities with parents
4. Weekends
5. Watch/ support sport etc.

2. School

2A: Formal curriculum

What do remember about secondary school?

1. School work
2. Favourite subjects
3. Relationship with teachers
4. Attendance
5. Academic Achievement
6. Behaviour and participation in class

2B: Teachers/ professionals

What are the main memories of your teachers?

1. Did you have any favourite teachers?
2. What subjects did the male/female teachers teach?
3. Do you remember the gender of your head teacher/head of year?
4. Did the teachers treat boys/girls differently?
5. Were you ever separated from the girls for any particular subject/activities?

2C: Attitudes & influences of the peer group

Can you tell me about the friendships you had whilst at school?

1. Did they work hard at schoolwork?
2. Did you & the group have any role models?
3. Did you participate in school sports?
4. Did you all come from similar financial backgrounds?
5. What were the attitudes towards other boys in the class?
6. Were there any boys in your group or school who came from different family backgrounds

7. Did you experience bullying? What type of people got bullied?
8. Did you and your friends ever truant/ what did you do?

2D: Sexuality

Can you talk about the way in which sex was understood or discussed within the group?

1. What were the attitudes towards girls/ women?
2. Would you and your friends ever discuss personal sexual experiences?
3. Was there ever any kind of boasting about the number of people members of the group might have slept with?
4. What were the attitudes towards same sex relationships?
5. Was anyone ever bullied because they were thought to be gay?
6. Were there any other activities, apart from same sex attraction, that might lead to someone being labelled gay, effeminate, and sissy?
7. Did you ever have any fear of being labelled gay?
8. Did you and your friends ever discuss how you felt, fears anxieties emotions?

3. Outside of school

3A: Peer group – streets

Can you talk about the friends you spent time with outside of school hours (evenings, weekends and holidays)?

1. What kind of things did you do to pass time / entertain yourselves?
2. Where would you meet and hang out?
3. Did you or your friends drink or use any other substances?
4. Did you or your friends ever commit any types of juvenile crime?
5. Where any of you ever arrested and convicted of a crime whilst at school?
6. Would you do anything in particular to be one of the lads or to stand out as one of the lads?

7. How important was it to be seen or accepted as one of the lads?
8. What kind of activities would command respect amongst your peers?
9. Did you ever feel pressure to join in?
10. Did you watch or play any sport?

4. Life after school

4A: Work and/or Further Education

Can you talk about what you did when you left school/ your employment history?

1. At what age did you leave school?
2. Did you leave school with qualifications?
3. Did you continue into FE/HE?
4. Was it easy to get a job after leaving education?
5. What kind of work?
6. Did you change jobs regularly?
7. How well paid were the jobs that you were in?
8. Did you ever feel valued in any of the jobs you did?
9. Did they offer any training/long term stability?
10. What did/do you do for leisure/ after work?
11. What was your relationship like with your co-workers?

4B: Social life

Can you talk about the people you socialised with?

1. What would you describe as a good night out?
2. Did drink or drugs play a part in your social life
3. What was the role of women within the group?
4. Did you ever get into fights / how often/ who with?
5. Did you attitude towards same sex relationships alter with age?

6. Were any feeling, anxieties or emotions ever discussed amongst friends/colleagues?
7. Were there any things that you did with your friends that would make you stand out as one of the boys?
8. Was there anything that could jeopardise your standing as one of the boys in the peer group?

4C:Relationships

Can you talk about the relationships you have had with women?

1. Marriage /how long?
2. Long term/ short term relationships
3. Have you lived with any partners? (How was/is the home organised, work etc?)
4. What type of work does/did your partner(s) do?
5. Do you have children? (If yes see question on father hood)
6. Is there a common cause as to why any of the relationships have broken down?

5. Offending/Police

5A: In trouble with the Police

Can you talk about when you started getting in trouble with the police or any other type of authority? Age of first offence/what was it for and how has your offending progressed up to your present situation?

1. What are your views/experiences of the police?
2. Have the police used any particular types of names to address you? Have they ever been abusive/aggressive?
3. In your experiences have you ever identified any differences between male and female police officers: how they respond to you – in terms of respect etc.?
4. Is there anything that stands out in your memory about being in police custody?

5. How would you sum up the role of the police?

6: Incarceration

6A: Time spent

Can you talk about your experience of incarceration?

1. Frequency of incarceration
2. Types of prison (high security/open)
3. Locations/distance from home/family

6B: Prison Time

Can you explain in as much detail as possible a typical day in prison?

1. **Gym** – if mentioned explore – how important, how much time spent there, what do you lift etc. Is this important to your acquaintances?
2. **Employment** – explore pay, motivation, relationship with non discipline staff, preparation for employment upon release, how money earned is spent
3. **Education** – what are the options, feeling amongst prisoners about education and those who attend, opportunities.....
4. **Unstructured time** – association, what is it, sports, games, how long....
5. **Time in cell**, - how long, how time spent.....

6C: Relationship/Interaction with other prisoners

How would you say you get on with the other prisoners?

1. Are there some prisoners you get on better than with others?
2. Is the type of offence/offending important within prison?
3. Is there anything that would lead you to avoid other prisoners?
4. What kind of behavior generates respect/fear within the prison environment?
5. What kind of things makes prisoners vulnerable?
6. What is prison like for those who are seen as vulnerable/weak?

7. Have there been times when you have felt threatened within the prison environment?

6D: Clothing

What are your views/feelings about having to wear prison clothes?

1. Is it still important to look smart?
2. Are there ways of getting the tidiest/smartest items

6E: Relationship with staff/professionals

How would you describe your relationship with prison officers?

1. Do you get on better with some officers more than others?
2. What is it that you find difficult about some of the officers?
3. Is there any noticeable difference between how male and female prison officers do their job?
4. What are the things that you respect in an officer/ is it easier to respect male or female officers?
5. Has there ever been cause for you to be disciplined by the prison staff?
6. What kind of punishment sanctions have you experienced as a result?
7. What is your relationship like with the non-discipline staff?
8. Would you think of those whose job it is to risk assess you or evaluate you for early release?
9. Is there a particular type of person/masculinity that you present in these situations?

6F: Outside / relationships

What are the things you miss most about the outside world when in prison?

1. Family?
2. How important is it to maintain family contact?
3. Explore paternal roles if they have children

4. Explore prison/professionals support maintaining family responsibilities/contact
5. Partner– do they miss the physical contact? – Explore more if appropriate...

7. Release

What would you like to see happen when you are released?

1. Work opportunities
2. Area/accommodation
3. Reporting/license restrictions

8. Ideas of manhood

What qualities do you think make a man?

1. Do you have any male role models or anyone you look up to and why?
2. Is there anything about being a man that you don't like?
3. What qualities make a woman?

9. Final thoughts

How did you find the interview?

Can you think of anything else that I could have asked?

Do you have any questions?

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