Twenty-First Century Working-Class Girls' Imagined Futures:

A Child-Centred Socialist Feminist Research Project.

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Abstract

Gender and class inequality exist throughout UK society however topical debates often focus on the discussion of sexualisation of women, with other gendered and classed spheres of oppression fading from view.

Working with 11-and 12-year-old girls from working-class backgrounds this research adapts Mitchell's (1971) spheres of subjection to explore how young working-class girls imagine their futures in relation to media socialisation. Drawing on socialist feminism and intersectionality this revives class and gender debates whilst allowing for other vectors of identity, such as regionality to be explored. This explores how working-class girls imagine their futures, whilst understanding how they perceive media as a "norm" shaping agent of socialisation. The child-centred feminist standpoint epistemology focuses on hearing the girls' voices through co-participatory research methods.

Key findings demonstrate these working-class girls are highly media literate, who wish to challenge media representations, that exclude "girls like us". The girls are aware of gendered norms and how media renders girls like them invisible. The girls have a variety of "imagined futures", but their desire to be independent and autonomous, is tempered by their awareness of needing to balance their imagined futures in the public and private sphere. The girls are aware their lives will be a balancing act, between the public and domestic sphere, being feminine / attractive but not too sexy, challenging norms and fitting in. Mothers play an important role in the girls' lives, with

their "imagined futures" shaped by a desire to either be similar or different. Whilst media is not considered influential, the girls discuss it as influencing "others", and suggest this contributes to peer pressure they feel the need to conform to. Central to these findings is how gender, class and regionality intersect to create a specific life experience for the girls and offer a limited range of "choices".

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1 Introduction

This thesis investigates young working-class girls' (aged 11 and 12) perceptions of media socialisation in relation to their imagined futures. As will be discussed within this chapter, (Section 1.3), the focus of the thesis on this age range and working-class girls developed through the recognition of a gap in literature whereby young working-class girls have been invisible in academic research and discussions. My research took place between 2015 and 2017 in two state secondary academies in the Midlands. In total 30 girls (See Appendix 18 for details of the girls) took part in my research, in a mixture of focus groups and one to two interviews, with some participant-led interviews.

Central to the project is the examination of how working-class girls engage and negotiate their own reception of media texts, and how they perceive media as an agent of socialisation in terms of shaping how they imagine their futures. This engages with the dichotomy between the belief media has the power to shape societal norms and socialise working-class girls into particular life choices, and the autonomy of working-class girls to create their own interpretations of the media and construct their own imagined futures. Theoretically, my research is positioned within socialist feminism and conceptually adapts Juliet Mitchell's (2015) seminal four spheres of women's subjection, discussed from a socialist feminist perspective originally in 1971 in her book *Woman's Estate*, "…the labour situation will prescribe women's situation within the world of men…Women are exploited at work, and relegated to the home:

the two positions compound their oppression." (Mitchell 1971: p 99). Chodorow (1999) supports this view and maintains women's position as a mother endures as key element of the sexual division of labour, "Women's maternal role has profound effects on women's lives, on ideology about women, on reproduction of masculinity and sexual inequality,…" (Chodorow 1999: p. 11). It is through this reasoning the focus of my research encompasses not just working-class girls and their imagined future in the workplace, but also their imagined domestic futures, imagined futures as potential mothers, and how they negotiate the sexualisation discourse that dominates current social, academic and media discussions. A core theme running through these investigations is that of socialisation and if the girls perceive media has socialised them into how they imagine their futures, but also how they imagine contributing to the socialisation of children through their imagined role in the domestic sphere.

Whilst women are under-represented in the workplace, with women concentrated in lower-level work or "feminised" occupations, the greatest share of household chores and child-rearing falls to women. Inequalities faced by women that reinforce the dominance of men (patriarchy) have remained despite legislative developments (Equal Pay Act 1970; Sex Discrimination Act 1975; The Equal Opportunities Commission 1975).

Patriarchy, within this thesis is considered as a concept that reflects the male domination of personal and public life. As discussed by Millett (1970), within the so-called "Second Wave" feminist movement, patriarchy is seen as a system of power,

institutional and social, that is held by men and passed down through men, "…every individual man is always in a dominant position and every woman in a subordinate one…" (Walby 1990: p. 20). (See Section 2.2.2 for a further discussion of patriarchy). Patriarchy is often presented as the "natural order" of the world, "The division of labor between the genders is a social construction…but, like every established order, it appears to represent the so-called natural order of the world…"(Krais in Calhoun et al 1993: p. 161). This "natural order" maintains gender norms that situate women within the family, which in turn impacts on how women are seen outside of the family. "…Bearing children, bring them up, and maintaining the home – these form the core of woman's natural vocation, in this ideology…" (Mitchell 2015: p. 106).

Mitchell's (1971) four spheres of women's subjection; Production, Reproduction, Sexuality and Socialisation (discussed further in Section 1.2) have been adapted to frame my research objectives (see Section 4.2) and linked to working-class girls' perceptions of media as an agent of socialisation. This contributes to a number of academic debates (discussed further in Section 1.4), such as how young working-class girls perceive media socialisation; the imagined futures of working-class girls, both in the workplace and within the domestic sphere; and how working-class girls engage with and discuss the sexualisation of women and girls. This attempts to understand how working-class girls imagine their futures, when discussions about media and girls are usually framed by the sexualisation debate. Fundamental to these discussions are considerations of gender and class inequalities.

Discussions of class have been seen as "'uncool' in public debate and the academy" (Woods and Skeggs 2011: p. 1), with the existence of class being denied (Woods and Skeggs 2011). This diminished focus on class led to socialist feminism losing momentum in the 1980s with the working-class experiences often ignored, "…since the mid 1980s any discussion of class, and of working-class experience in particular, has become peculiarly unmentionable, politically and theoretically…"(Rowbotham and Beynon 2001: p. 3 - 5). Despite this class continues to have an influence on life choices, with advantaged young people in England 2.8 times more likely to enter higher education than disadvantaged young people (UCAS 2013). Neoliberal discourses suggest this "success" or "failure" is due to the individual's choice, effort, and ambition, thus leading to structural inequalities not being fully explored.

Within this thesis discussion of neoliberalism is particularly focused on how neoliberal ideology centres around the individual and individual choices, disregarding the structural challenges some individuals face. "Individuals are…seen as being solely responsible for the consequences of the choices and decisions they freely make…" (Thorsen and Lie 2007: p. 15). As argued by Hayek (1976), neoliberal thought perceives inequalities are the result of the individual's choices, rather than as the results of structural inequalities. When considering class and gender inequalities the term "choice" must be scrutinised (Brannen and Nilsen 2002), the neoliberal discourse around choice ignores the link between choice and privilege whereby choice is reserved for the privileged few who have the social and material means to facilitate these choices. My research offers a contribution to filling a gap in literature about

gender, class, imagined future goals and what frames working-class girls' imagined futures in the face of notions of choice. "…the socioeconomic conditions of late modernity have created unequally distributed opportunities and impediments for young women, it is the idea that good choices, effort, and ambition alone are responsible for the success that has come to separate the can-dos from the at-risks." (Harris 2004. p: 16). The "at-risks" are responsible for their own position, according to neoliberal thought, rather than a consideration of the class, gender, "race" or other oppressions that person may have faced. Despite the lack of focus on class, some academics (eg Wood and Skeggs 2008; Banet-Weiser 2018; Biressi and Nunn 2009; Tyler and Bennett 2010) have continued to explore the effect of class, with Biressi and Nunn (2009) suggesting class is ideologically loaded and creates judgement, criticism or praise.

My research engages with class and gender and draws on recent work by Savage et al (2013) to re-imagine ways of measuring class that accounts for cultural, economic and occupational factors. This explores the relationship between gender and class in positioning working-class girls outside of the "successful girls" or "can-do girls" discourse (Harris 2004; Banet-Weiser 2018), whilst also removing the middle-class focus on "aspirations". The "classed" language and focus on STEM careers, that are deemed aspirational and requiring higher education, creates an implicit, yet evident value on some "futures", whilst other potential "futures" are negated or neglected. Harris (2004) suggests the relatively newly emerging discourse around the "can-do" girl ignores the structural, material and cultural opportunities that lend themselves to

girls from privileged backgrounds being high-achieving. "…What is not highlighted, but is fundamental here, is that the material resources and cultural capital of the already privileged are required to set a young woman on the can-do trajectory…" (Harris 2004. p: 35). These girls have been the focus of discussion whilst working-class girls and their goals and futures are ignored. "The popular feminist that most clearly circulates in an economy of visibility privileges the white middle-class girls who fit the category of the "Can-Do" girls…"(Banet-Weiser 2018: p. 82). As discussed by Banet-Weiser (2018) the Can-Do girl is situated as at odds with the At-Risk girls, through the class, "race" and privileged position that favours those girls deemed "Can-Do". This prevalence of a body that is "…socially valued…" (Banet-Weiser 2018: p. 30) creates a judgement of which girl is worthy of being visible, empowered and therefore concerned about.

Theoretically my research reflects on intersectionality and the need to engage with wider individual differences than traditional socialist feminist arguments have considered. So-called "Second Wave" feminists were accused of neglecting differences between women, such as "race", sexuality, age, disability. "White Feminists must be intersectional and expand their understanding of Feminism beyond the realm of gender, to include "race", class, religion, sexual orientation, etc, in order for Feminism to successful achieve its mission to transcend socio-cultural limitations on women" (Lawrence 2017: p. 168). My research does not claim to be intersectional with the traditional focus on "race" as a key aspect of identity due to my volunteer sample of working-class girls returning a majority of white working-class girls. However, reflecting on intersectionality and using an intersectional perspective to critique

discussions does allow my research to consider the role of “whiteness” in the girls’ lives and how this intersects with gender and social class. The consideration of the lack of “whiteness” in discussions, the invisibility of the privilege “whiteness” offers, combined with the “white” dominance of the sample is an area for further research. In addition to this a further contribution from my research is the consideration of regionality. The girls’ discussions showed their awareness of their regional identity and how this intersects with gender and class to position them as outside of the “norm”.

Reflecting on the intersecting identities of the working-class girls in my study allows my research to acknowledge differences between the girls, in addition to understanding the common experiences they have through their gender and class position. Supporting the need to consider “race” in addition to class and gender, Brannen and Nilsen (2002) and Harris (2004) maintain girls have complex lives, where “…class and “race” inequalities continue to shape opportunities and outcomes…” (Harris 2004: p.9). “The concept of intersectionality is used as an analytical tool to explore how various categories of power asymmetries interact in the construction of subjectivity and material conditions of subjects, and thereby contribute to social exclusion and political injustice” (Crenshaw 1994 in Rigoni 2012: p.836). Collins and Bilge (2016) support this and suggest, “Intersectionality is a way of understanding and analysing the complexity in the world,…When it comes to social inequality, people’s lives and the organization of power in a given society are better understood as being

shaped not by a single axis of social division…but by many axes that work together and influence each other." (Collins and Bilge 2016: p. 2).

Alongside reflecting on social class today, another key concept that needs consideration within my research is that of "media". Girls interact and engage with various media forms and texts; for the purpose of my research the term media refers to both traditional forms of media (such as TV, radio, music, film, newspapers, magazine, advertisements) and more recent developments in media (such as the internet, social media platforms including YouTube, messaging apps, and picture editing tools). As shown in Appendices 1 - 8, the discussion of media use in my study does not clearly demonstrate a dominance of certain media texts, rather as individuals, the girls enjoyed a range of media. However, it is clear how media habits have moved towards digital platforms (Ofcom 2016).

This chapter consists of the following sections: Section 1.1 outlines women's social position and introduces some of the issues facing women and girls in their imagined futures, identifying the position of women in the workplace, the domestic sphere, as parents, and as sexualised objects (See Sections 1.1 and 1.2.4 for a discussion of objectification). Section 1.2 explores social class in Britain today and recent discussions about how to perceive class boundaries (Savage et al 2013). Section 1.3 outlines my research participants, schools and locations. Section 1.4 explores key contributions from my research and how this contributes to academic debates and the

understanding of working-class girls and their media reception. Section 1.5 outlines the structure of the thesis and the framework for the following chapters.

1.1 A Women's problem

Socialist feminists from the so-called "Second Wave" feminist movement (Mitchell 1971; Rowbotham 1973; Benston 1969 in Hennessy and Ingraham 1997) argued women were oppressed in the workplace and in the home and faced the dual burden of work and domestic chores. This position of women has not significantly changed, with reports showing women put in "…more than double the proportion of unpaid work…" (The Office for National Statistics 2016). In addition to the lack of change within gender roles in workplace and the home, women are also bombarded by messages about appearance and beauty, as highlighted by Wolf's (1991) discussion of the "beauty myth", which offers a "false choice" between representing themselves as "sexual or serious" (Wolf 1991 p. 273). In addition to this, Wolf suggests "The fixation on "beauty" of the 1980s was a direct consequence of, and a one-to-one check and balance upon, the entry of women into powerful positions." (Wolf 1991: p. 28-29)

The focus on women's appearance, and as discussed in Section 1.2.4, the objectification of women, has, whilst important, often distracted attention from the domestic and working position of women. The objectification of women and girls is discussed in Section 3.2, and as a theme runs through the discussions of how the girls perceive representations of women and girls' bodies. Objectification of women and

girls refers to the treatment of girls or women's bodies as objects to be looked upon, enjoyed and potentially sexually desired, with little consideration for the person that inhabits that body. As discussed by Bartky (1990) sexual objectification refers to women and girls being seen as primarily physical objects. The position of working-class women is further complicated by the intersection of gender and class, whereby working-class girls and women are often measured against middle-class norms, or their position is ignored, rendering them invisible. Arguably the recent banning of Formula One "grid girls" can be seen through this classist lens, with those "girls" that exhibit overt sexuality and objectify their bodies, judged as not conforming to middle-class acceptable femininity (The Guardian 2/2/2018). The following section considers key aspects of women's positions and reflects on the position of class within these discussions in an attempt to explore the position of working-class girls.

1.1.1 Women and work

Many occupations remain gendered with women disproportionately represented in "traditional" feminine occupations, and under-represented in other occupations or senior positions, "…the upper echelons of businesses and professions and politics are still masculine." (Walter 2011: p 209). Men dominate in cabinet-level posts, in parliamentary seats and in top positions in international agencies, in addition to benefitting from higher salaries whilst women take responsibility in the household (Connell 2005). Chisholm and Bois-Reynold (1993) highlight these differences and suggest, "...regardless of what individual girls and women may be able to negotiate and achieve for themselves in work and family life, the collective patterns of girls and

women's lives remain sharply different from those boys and men."(Chisholm and Bois-Reynold 1993: p.273). Terms employed to identify and explain how women are "failing" to reach positions of power include: glass ceiling, "a transparent barrier, that kept women from rising above a certain level in corporations…" (Morrison et al 1987: p. 13); "glass cliff" (Fine 2010); "glass wall" (Morgan 2015); or "sticky floor" (Berheide 1992). The focus of these terms is identifying the organisational, cultural and social structures that lead to discrimination, "What these terms and labels had in common was that they…looked at the barriers – the elements of the organizations' social and cultural architecture – that stopped women's (and ethnic minorities') employment mobility" (Morgan 2015: p 9).

In contrast to the position of women in the workplace and domestic sphere girls have been performing well in education with more women entering higher education than men (UCAS 2013). However, the picture of HE entry rates highlights the impact of class on the potential educational futures of both boys and girls, with lower levels of entry to HE for those young people that come from deprived backgrounds, with figures showing the relationship between young women that were receiving free school meals and future entry into HE. "…In 2013, the entry rate for the non-FSM group was 31.3 per cent for women,…In the FSM group the entry rate for women was 14.8 per cent…" (UCAS 2013: p. 73) This demonstrates the significant difference between young women from differing class backgrounds as supported by Evans (2009) and Strand (2014). Higher Education continues to be "…deeply and starkly divided on traditional class lines'…" (Walkerdine 2003: p. 237).

The position of women in the workplace is further discussed in Section 3.3, with my research exploring if working-class girls' imagined futures reflect the current positions of women, and how far they perceive media socialises them into these imagined futures.

1.1.2 Women and the domestic sphere

As mentioned above, not only are women experiencing inequalities in the workplace, but they continue to shoulder most of the domestic burden in the home (Vincent 2003). This is supported by Hochschild (1989) and Press and Townsley (1998) who suggest women continue to take responsibility for housework and children whilst combining this with work commitments. "…our analysis reveals that wives still perform the bulk of housework… most husbands do no housework, or only a few hours a week…" (Press and Townsley 1998: p 215). This, according to Poortman and van der Lippe (2009), is due to gendered beliefs about domestic duties and this division being perceived as a "natural" division of labour. This is discussed further in Section 3.4 and reinforces the need to consider all of Mitchell's (2015) spheres of subjection. My research explores the imagined domestic futures of working-class girls and how these girls consider their working and domestic lives, providing opportunities to understand, through the girl's voices, how they imagine their futures.

1.1.3 Socialisation of Children

The discussion above demonstrates how women continued to take responsibility for domestic work, including caring roles. It is through these roles that mothers are considered as taking responsibility for the socialisation of children (Mitchell 2015). However, it is often both parents that have been studied when considering children's aspirations (Eccles 2011; Brownlow and Jacobi 2000). Existing research has explored parental influences, and the notion of media influencing parents (a "media effects" approach), (Jacobs and Eccles 1985), rather than focusing on media socialising girls or how girls perceive the role of media, a debate to which my research offers a significant contribution.

The importance of the socialisation of children was highlighted by Gottfredson and Lapan (1997) who suggest children learn gender appropriate roles and normative behaviours early in childhood. Care et al (2007) supports the findings in Gottfredson's Theory of Circumscription and Compromise (1981) and suggests aspirations emerge as an integral aspect of children's development and are linked to common perceptions of gender roles and social status. "…the omnipresent system of male domination and female subjugation is achieved through socializing, perpetuated through ideological means,..." (Mitchell 2015: p. 83). Gendered ideology leads to girls narrowing their options whilst at school through subject choices and leaving themselves with the "remnants of choice" (Gottfredson & Lapan 1997; Archer et al 2010; Correll 2001). Choices, such as GCSE subjects and then A-levels are made at a time when according to Robison-Awana et al (2002) gender-role stereotyping reaches its peak. Additionally,

despite more girls entering higher education, as discussed in Section 1.2.1, the separation between “masculine” and “feminine” choices is evident; 72% of education graduates, and 73% of linguistic and classics graduates are women compared to 14% of engineering and technology graduates and 29% of maths and computer science graduates are women. (The Women’s Business Council 2013). My research explores how young working-class girls perceive media, alongside other agents of socialisation, such as their parents, as contributing to their imagined futures. This includes socialising them into imagined future work, imagined future domestic life and potentially socialising their own children.

1.1.4 Sexualisation of women and girls

The final sphere of subjection faced by women, as discussed by Mitchell (2015), is sexualisation. This topic has been the focus of significant academic and media discussions, whilst also dominating the representation of women in media. Arguably the contradictory nature of media coverage, both offering sexualised women and girls in media texts, whilst criticising women and girls that sexualise themselves hints at the complexity of messages that surround women and girl’s bodies. As discussed in Section 3.2, this is further complicated with the consideration of class and the particular sexualisation of working-class girls. The dominance of the sexualisation discourse was reflected in the girls’ discussion and reflects the focus in wider society. Wolf (1991) argues the focus on sexualisation and beauty is a result of women breaking through legal and material hindrances, and thus a direct patriarchal

retaliation that attempts to contain women. This raises the question of, can working-class girls imagine futures outside of, or despite, sexualisation of their bodies?

Hey (1997) highlights how class, "race", and heterosexuality impact on how girls attempt to negotiate their position within power structures in society. Girlhood is a crucial point when class, "race" and sexuality shape how girls "…learn how to take up their place in multiple and competing regimes of power…whilst the micro-social politics around notions of "beauty" have been noted…" (Hey 1997: p. 13). This supports the need to consider intersecting identities, whilst highlighting how girlhood is a crucial time where girls are attempting to understand their position (Egan and Hawkes 2008; Attwood 2009: McNair 2002). De Beauvoir suggests girls are socialised from an early age to adopt a passive, maternal, beauty-focused persona, "[girls are]….already sexually determined, this is not because mysterious instincts directly doom her to passivity, coquetry, maternity; it is because the influence of others upon the child…and thus she is indoctrinated with her vocation from her earliest years." (De Beauvoir 1997: p. 296). My research explores this from the working-class girls' own perspectives and attempts to understand how they perceive their futures, and how far they believe sexualisation and the beauty doctrine socialises them.

1.2 Social Class in Britain Today

The following section explores social class in Britain today, whilst Chapter 2 focuses on the theoretical position of my research and engagement with socialist feminism. Central to my research is the role of class in shaping working-class girls' imagined

futures. As discussed in Section 1, the focus on class significantly disappeared in the 1980s, (Wood and Skeggs 2008; Biressi and Nunn 2009; Tyler and Bennett 2010), linked to Marxist criticism falling out of fashion, with some notable exceptions such as Skeggs and Rowbotham. However, sociological interest has re-emerged recently, with a re-evaluation of how to measure and categorise class. Traditional class labels do not provide a clear understanding of the contemporary class-based attitudes and behaviours in Britain, with the Nuffield class schema, developed in the 1970s, (codified in the UK's National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS-SEC)) being seen as outdated, as it does not effectively capture the role of social and cultural processes in generating class divisions (Savage et al 2013). "…The 'big class' concepts that are typically applied, whether from a neo-Marxist or a neo-Weberian standpoint, have to be recognized as having, at least in modern societies, no more than 'nominal' significance." (Erikson et al 2012: p. 212). This critique is supported by Thompson 1963 and LiPuma (in Calhoun et al 1993) who suggest class cannot be purely explained by economic or material possessions and needs to include a consideration of how class becomes embedded with cultural norms. This reflects Bourdieu's view of social, cultural and economic capital as contributing to the "habitus" of individuals and as discussed below, is developed by Savage et al (2013). It is through these cultural norms that media representations can be explored, alongside how working-class girls experience media, and how class may shape their imagined futures.

Savage et al (2013) developed a new model for British social class identifying social, cultural and economic factors, identifying seven classes that range from the "elite" to

the “precariat”. This class system reveals the polarisation of social inequality and how the traditional working and middle-class have become fragmented, suggesting class is a “…multi-dimensional construct” (Savage et al (2013: p. 223). The suggestion that working class identity has become fractured is due to, "…the displacement of industrial workers and the erosion of the labor [sic] union” (Stevenson and Ellsworth in Brown 1997: p.684). This is challenged by Jones (2012) and the British Attitudes Survey (2012) which claims a majority of Britons identify themselves as working-class. However, Young (2012) argues this identification as working-class may be an attempt to reject middle-class norms.

The connection between Bourdieu and Savage et al (2013) places the concept of class within the Marxist tradition, however, updates the categories for large scale quantitative measurement to consider aspects beyond the economic. My research refers to Savage et al’s (2013) research and took place in areas of the UK identified as consisting of a majority of the “Traditional Working Class” and “Emergent Service Workers” (Savage et al 2013). This offered the opportunity to sample from an area that would return a majority of participants belonging to the broad, contemporary “working-class”.

1.2.1 Social Class, Gender and Media

As class re-emerges as a site of debate, so has the intersection of gender and class in media representations. The depiction of the working-class as, “…bigoted, slothful, aggressive people who cannot look after themselves, let alone their children…” (Jones

2012: p. 121) normalises middle-class values and behaviours, whilst stereotyping the working-classes who are seen in opposition to these norms. "Celebrity chavs" from the working-class are, "… systematically reproduced as abject, gauche and excessive tragi-comic figures…" (Tyler and Bennett 2010: p. 376). Lawler maintains the white working-class are seen as problematically "white", with British media maintaining negative representations of the "white" working-class people that offer judgements of acceptable behaviour against which the working-class are appraised (Woods and Skeggs 2008; Jones 2012; and Biressi and Nunn 2009). Additionally, whereas British soap operas were once claimed to represent the working-class with the potential to offer alternatives these are now according to Jones (2012) shown from a middle-class perspective with often middle-class values present, whilst American teen soap operas tend to focus on the wealthy, for example, *90210* (past and more recent series) and *Pretty Little Liars*.

The gendered and classed representations in British media also offer a racial perspective, with white working-classes synonymous with the "chav" (Pickering 2013), whilst representations of working-class ethnic minorities are lacking. The "whiteness" associated with the working-class reflects the ongoing narrative of "decline and retrogression" (Lawler 2012: p.411). This "whiteness" is distinctive from the white middle-class representations and values that dominate the British media, "Middle-class taste is not particularised but instead universalised and normalised as 'good' taste." (Wood and Skeggs 2008: p. 187). The working-class "whiteness" depicted narrows the representations that are visible and available for white working-class girls

to identify with, or relate, to, but equally removes any suggestion of ethnic minorities from within the texts, thus leaving girls that come from minority backgrounds, that would also be considered working-class, invisible and without any point of self-identification. “The practice of whitewashing is particularly dangerous because of the way that these representations reify whiteness as both invisible and dominant…” (Lopez in Dines & Humez 2015: p.639). This is supported by Frankenberg (1993) who highlights how “whiteness” is portrayed as the “norm”, even though working-class “whiteness” is distinct from middle-class “acceptable”, there is an over-riding whitewashing. “…Whiteness appeared in the narratives to function as both norm or core, that against which everything else is measured…whiteness as defining a set of normative cultural practices against which all are measured, and into which all are expected to fit.” (Frankenberg 1993: p. 204). This discussion demonstrates the need to attempt to reflect on intersectionality, from the perspective of seeing and acknowledging “whiteness”, whilst approaching my research from a socialist feminist perspective.

The consideration of gender, class and media draws on Gramsci’s (1971) notions of cultural hegemony as a concept of power that prioritises middle-class values as “natural”. However, my research also wishes to explore the potential for working-class girls to reject or resist the messages contained within media-encoded ideology. Therefore, the concept of power discussed within this research is attempting to balance the power of structural and cultural institutions, the political economy of media (new and tradition) (Mansell 2003), against the power of working-class girls to

contest or subvert this power, and thus create their own meanings, identities and subjectivities (van Zoonen 1994). Societal "truths", knowledge and thus power relations create an expectation of working-class girls' futures that the girls must negotiate or conform to.

1.3 Research focus and Methodology

The focus of my research was 11 and 12-year old girls, and how they imagined their futures, including their perceptions of how media socialised them into these imagined futures. Much of the existing literature focused on Grade 8 (13 – 14-year-old) and above, for example, Crombie et al (2005); Burlin (1976); Buck et al (2007); Barone (2006) and Hanson et al (1996), therefore 11 and 12-year-old girls were invisible in discussions. Additionally, 11 and 12-year-olds are pre-GCSE options whereby girls often start restricting their options and lean towards gendered subjects (Dhesi 2011; Koul et al 2010; DeWitt et al 2013).

My research was undertaken in two state secondary academies, both in the Midlands. The first school (given the pseudonym Bebb's School) was accessed through an existing contact of mine, after I identified the location would provide me with a majority of the population from the Traditional Working Class and Emergent Service Worker categories (Savage et al 2013). The second school (given the pseudonym Mike's School) was contacted through identifying further areas identified as consisting of a majority of the population from the class categories of "Traditional Working-class" and

“Emergent Service Worker” (Savage et al 2013). (See Section 4.3.3 for a further discussion of sampling and Section 4.4.3 for further details about the schools).

My research adopted a child-centred feminist standpoint epistemology (discussed further in Chapter 4) with the focus on hearing the girls’ voices, and engaging with methods (focus groups, one to two interviews and participant-led interviews) that attempted to dilute power relations in my research and bring to the fore the girls’ views, concerns and opinions. (See Chapter 4 for a full discussion of the methodology).

1.4 Contribution from my research

My research contributes to gender and class discourses, initially by investigating working-class girls’ experiences and their imagined futures, but also by developing the renewed focus on class and how this intersects with gender. Intersectionality allows my research to explore the multiple identities and experiences of the individual girls (Collins and Bilge 2016; hooks 2000; Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach 2008) focused specifically on critical engaging with “whiteness” and exploring regionality as a vector of the girls’ identity. As Section 2.4 demonstrates, this allows for consideration of multiple vectors of the girls’ identities and explores how the girls perceive they experience oppressions (Wallis 2015). Approaching my research through a socialist feminist lens allows the focus on gender and class yet considers how material and cultural conditions interact (van Zoonen 1994). As discussed by Hebson (2009: p. 30) “…class operates on a daily basis that can reveal the pervasiveness of the ‘difference’ of class.” The following sections outline the specific contributions from my research,

and how these have been adapted from Mitchell's (1971 / 2015) spheres of women's subjection.

1.4.1 Girls and sexualisation

Much existing research into media and young girls has focused on sexualisation, with girls being considered both at risk and risky (Walkerdine in Wood and Skeggs 2011; Banet-Weiser 2018; Wood and Skeggs 2008). This discourse is reflected in the representations of girls and women discussed in Section 3.2.1, whereby, in particular working-class girls' sexuality is monitored by media in an attempt to shame or control it within the confines of acceptable middle-class femininity. "…culture of surveillance is complex and often marshals shaming as a disciplinary device: peer culture, celebrity culture, and norms of femininity routinely survey and discipline girls through increasingly elaborate systems of normative evaluation…" (Banet-Weiser 2018: p. 81). The key contribution from my research is hearing working-class girls' voices and how they negotiate and interpret the sexualisation of girls' and women's bodies. This allows my research to develop an understanding of the relevance of the sexualisation discourse to working-class girl's lives and how they both receive sexualised messages, but also how, and if, they can construct an imagined future for themselves outside of, or by means of re-interpreting, this discourse.

1.4.2 Girls and their imagined working lives

Research into occupational status, educational achievement and career aspirations has neglected the position of working-class girls. Whilst some research has critiqued the lack of consideration to variables such as class and "race", for example Care et al (2007), other research has focused predominantly on "successful girls", imagined according to middle-class parameters, (York (2008; Carrell et al 2010; Baker 2010). My research contributes to understanding how working-class girls, often excluded from "successful girls" or "Can-Do girls" narratives (Banet-Weiser 2018), imagine their futures. My research focus attempts to remove the middle-class tone and judgements attached to working-class futures, whereby middle-class professions and university education are deemed aspirational and the only futures worth considering. The findings contribute to understanding how the girls negotiate their gender and class positions, media, and other agents of socialisation, in attempting to imagine a working future.

1.4.3 Girls and their imagined lives in the domestic sphere

My research contributes significantly to discussions about working-class girls' imagined futures, by attempting to understand how they imagine their futures both in the workplace and in the home. This includes how working-class girls perceive their potential futures as mothers or partners, including a consideration of assumed heterosexuality by the girls. This is a significant contribution to existing discussions about working-class girls and their imagined futures and allows an understanding of

how working-class girls imagine combining their work and home life, and their perception of media socialising them.

1.4.4 Girls and media

Duit and van Zoonen (2011) highlight how concerns about the perceived influence of media, particularly those focused on the sexualised images of girls in the media, meet the political needs of the Government and their ability to blame the individual, whilst ignoring the viewer's power to reject, negotiate and develop their own understanding and reading of the media texts. Much research on media and young girls has suggested viewing stereotypes through media has an impact on children's development of gender (Smith et al 2010), suggesting media is a powerful agent of socialisation (Byerly and Ross 2006).

My research approach and co-participatory methods contributes to discussions by focusing on hearing working-class girl's voices and centralising the opinions of the girls, and how they perceive media. This allows working-class girls to express how they engage with media, what they perceive as important in media representations, and to demonstrate how they negotiate and at times attempt to subvert and challenge media messages.

1.4.5 Key arguments from my research

In addition to the contributions to academic discussions discussed above, my research is focused on three key arguments which frame my discussions and findings.

1.4.5.1 Mitchell's spheres of oppression and media

A key argument that frames both the approach to research and the findings, is the engagement with Mitchell's (2015) spheres of women's oppression. My research objectives have adapted these spheres of oppression to explore how the girls imagine their Production (work outside of the home), Reproduction (work within the home including mothering and domestic lives) and Sexualisation (gender, class and the body). My research argues there is a need to consider all the imagined futures of working-class girls, highlighting working-class girls do not experience their imagined working futures in isolation, but rather the potential work the girls imagine is framed by their imagined domestic futures, their experiences of sexualisation and the media objectification of women's bodies. As argued by Mitchell, "…the liberation of women can only be achieved if *all four* structures in which they are integrated are transformed – Production, Reproduction, Sexuality and Socialization. A modification of any of them can be offset by a reinforcement of another (as increased socialization has made up for decreased reproduction). This means that a mere permutation of the form of exploitation is achieved." (Mitchell 2015: p. 120). As discussed above, and further developed in Section 2.4.1, in addition to adopting this socialist feminist perspective there is a need to consider the intersection of structures that also work with class and gender to oppress individual women. The imagined futures of working-class girls are

shaped by their class and gender position but also my research allows for an awareness of additional structures that work to oppress working-class girls, and shape how working-class girls perceive their imagined futures.

1.4.5.2 Sexualisation trap

A key argument from my research is that the sexualisation of women and girls, although important, is not the only thing that should be the focus of research when discussing girls and media. As discussed by Wolf (1991) the focus on women's appearance and the sexualisation of women, ignores other elements of girl's and women's lives. Wolf suggests this is the, "…ultimate anti-feminist goal of the beauty myth…"(Wolf 1991. p. 274). Falling into the sexualisation trap does not allow an understanding of other inequalities and pressures working-class girl's face. My research argues there is a need to look beyond sexualisation to understand girl's and women's lives.

1.4.5.3 Imagining life beyond sexualisation

A final key argument from my research is the need to explore how far working-class girls can imagine a life beyond sexualisation. Due to the focus on sexualisation in academia and media, there is a need to explore how far girls perceive this socialises them into what they imagine for their futures. It is important to explore how working-class girls create a space to imagine futures that are not purely shaped by sexualisation. This provides an opportunity to identify how far the sexualisation discourse inhibits young girls imagining futures not shaped by their looks or body.

1.5 Summary

As outlined above my research engages socialist feminism, and specifically from a socialist feminist perspective revisits and adapts Mitchell's (1971) spheres of oppression that women experience, in an attempt to develop an understanding of the imagined futures of working-class girls. However, in an attempt to overcome criticisms of past socialist feminist perspectives, and with an awareness of the multiple facets of oppression women face, my research seeks to embed an intersectional awareness, to inform the discussions around class, gender, and the range of identities working-class girls have. Collins (2000) argues intersectionality examines the interactions of racism, sexism, classism and heterosexism, taking this forward in my research I have been able to explore the differences the working-class girls in my research experience, including regional identity, alongside critiquing the invisibility of "whiteness" in the girls' discussions. By situating my research in socialist feminism, the work centralises the importance of debates about the role of class and how working-class women and girls are often invisible from media and research, and also allows for an examination of the issues through the common bond of class and gender. As discussed by hooks, "The only genuine hope of feminist liberation lies with a vision of social change which challenges class elitism….Given the changing realities of class in our nation, widening gaps between the rich and poor, and the continued feminization of poverty, we desperately need…a visionary movement would ground its work in the concrete conditions of working-class and poor women…" (hooks 2000: p 43).

1.5.1 Structure of thesis

1.5.1.1 Literature and Theoretical discussions

The thesis starts with a discussion of the theoretical considerations that have shaped both the subject and the approach to my research (Chapter 2), including the reasoning for engaging with Mitchell's (1971) socialist feminist approach. This chapter examines the engagement with socialist feminism and reflects on the relevance of this approach today. This considers the historical origins of socialist feminism and the importance of this movement within so-called "Second Wave" feminism, before moving on to explore how class fell out of favour, socially and academically, with the rise of neoliberal and post-feminist discourses that fragmented the feminist collective voice and turned the focus to individualism and choice. Through this discussion the chapter offers an opportunity to interrogate the notion working-class women and girls have the same choices as middle-class women. My research attempts to learn from the intersectional movement and allow this research to explore class and gender, whilst not ignoring the intersection of other identities the girls may have. I am aware some aspects of the girls' identities may not be discussed within a focus group setting, for example, sexuality (See Section 7.1.1).

Chapter 3 moves on to explore existing literature and identify how my research contributes to academic discussions and fills existing gaps in the study of British working-class girls, their imagined futures and media. This highlights how recent discussions of class, gender and media has focused on the sexualisation debate. Key

contributions from my research include developing some understanding of the imagined futures of working-class girls in terms of their working lives and domestic lives, grounded in the four spheres of subjection as discussed by Mitchell (1971).

1.5.1.2 Methodology: Chapter 4

Chapter 4 outlines the methodology of my research and the child-centred feminist standpoint epistemology approach adopted. This chapter explores my research design, with a discussion of how participants were sampled, the characteristics of the participants, methods used to ensure the voices of the working-class girls were prioritised and ethical considerations when working with young people. This chapter demonstrates how my research design was developed to meet my objectives of my research, but also centralised the notion of researching with young working-class girls and allowing for their voices to be heard, including the adoption of co-participatory methods.

1.5.1.3 Empirical Chapters 5, 6, 7

The following three chapters are the empirical chapters. Chapter 5 is focused on understanding how girls perceive media representations and the dominance of the sexualisation discourse. This chapter focused on Objectives I, II and V, providing the girls with an opportunity to discuss media consumption, representations, self-representation through social media and sexualisation. This topic was one of the areas the girls most wanted to discuss, possibly due to the dominance of the sexualisation

thesis in media and society at the moment, and how as young girls they are framed within the “at risk” category, from hyper-sexualisation and loss of innocence. This chapter demonstrates how the girls negotiate their own responses to media, whilst trying to find the balance between sexualisation and maintaining popularity. The pressure to perform femininity appropriately was in evidence during these discussions, however, the girls did not perceive media as to blame for this.

Chapter 6 focused on Objectives I, III, and V with an exploration into how the girls imagine their working futures, and what they perceive as socialising them into these expectations. This offered an insight into the desires and goals of the girls for their working lives, including consideration of the gendered nature of work, how these girls show an awareness of this, and how they reach these imagined futures.

Chapter 7 offers answers to Objectives I, IV and V, by developing an understanding of how the girls imagine their futures within the domestic sphere. Throughout this Chapter and Chapter 6, the interwoven threads of conversations show the girls do not imagine a working future, without consideration of the expectations of them as girls, and their potential role as mothers and homemakers. Both of these chapters demonstrated how the girls often spoke with a feminist tone, showing a wish for equality, however, acknowledged this was lacking. The girls demonstrated their awareness that combining work and home life often required a balancing act that was specific to their gender and class position.

1.5.1.4 Conclusion

The final chapter reflects upon the findings of my research, the contributions from my research and my research limitations. This highlights potential areas for further research that could develop the themes identified here. Although not central to my objectives, findings emerged that contributed to an understanding of media use by young working-class girls (Appendices 1 -8). This is a key area for further research to explore how and why young people, particularly young working-class people, engage with media as they do, from their perspectives, rather than measuring quantitative data into media use. This chapter concludes with a summary of the key contributions this research offers.

As discussed above, key contributions from my research focus on igniting debates about class and focusing on the intersection of class, gender and region, and how these create and limit the space for working-class girls to imagine their futures, both working and domestic, whilst attempting to understand how media is perceived as a socialising agent. Methodologically the focus on hearing working-class girl's voices as they discuss their imagined futures and articulate their perceptions of media representations is a significant contribution and fills gaps in research. My research promotes a research approach that works with young people and allows participation in the research process, with an attempt to empower the research subjects, rather than researching "on" young girls. This research is a starting point, in an attempt to explore young working-class girls' imagined futures, and how Mitchell's spheres of subjection continue to intersect to shape their lives.

2 Engaging with socialist feminism today

2.1 Introduction

This chapter demonstrates why a socialist feminist theoretical and research approach is necessary for my research to develop an understanding of the relationship between working-class girls, their imagined futures and media. Socialist feminism allows my research to interrogate the intersection of gender and class and attempt to understand the double oppression working-class girls face. This chapter explores historic debates about class and gender, and, demonstrates the opportunity for a socialist feminist perspective to re-emerge within media and cultural studies, one that is informed by contemporary intersectional considerations.

In Britain, the very word "socialism" had fallen out of fashion, and from prominence in the public sphere, in the final decades of the twentieth century, just as feminism was giving way to "post-feminism". This dissolution of both collective class and gender narratives, into individualised ones, coincided with the rise of Thatcherism, part of the broader ideological sweep of neoliberalism, in which society was supposedly fragmented by individuality. Neoliberalism was, according to Mudge, born as a result of the earlier "welfarist, statist, and Keynesian systems of thought:…'social democratic politics'" (2008: p. 705). The social democratic perspective favoured state support and welfare for those in need, whereas a key neoliberal principle is, :…the superiority of individualized, market-based competition over other modes of organization."(Mudge 2008: p. 706-7). The contemporary re(surgence) of Jeremy Corbyn's version of Labour

(both as a party and as a social movement) is beginning to return “socialism” to public discourse, just as, finally, a “fourth wave” of feminism attempts to grapple with some of the problems of “post-feminism”. This chapter demonstrates how class, gender, “race”, sexuality, and regionality cannot be seen as separate concepts but rather powerful structures that intersect to oppress women. This speaks to research by McKenzie (2015) and Skeggs (1997), which explored class, gender and locality (respectively, on a council estate in Nottinghamshire, and a small Northern town in England) and how these vectors of identity interact McKenzie’s research focused on mothers on mixed race children, with a range of ages, whilst Skeggs’ research focused on women that were initially on three caring courses (younger women predominantly) but followed these women for 11 years throughout their progression into work. This discussion suggests research must allow for the complexity of identities whilst maintaining some form of collective experience, to challenge inequality and dominant discourses. This focus of the above-mentioned research further allows a gap in the literature for my research with young working-class girls not having been the focus, and their experience of regionality not explored.

This chapter reviews the historical theorisation of social class and gender in relation to one another, in order to consider what theoretical underpinnings are necessary, for an analytical engagement with the social worlds of young working-class girls in Britain. The state secondary schools chosen for my research were deliberately selected from working-class areas of Britain, as identified in the BBC British Class Survey (Savage et al 2013), outside of London, and, based on my existing regional school contacts. These

were in areas where the majority of the participants were white, British-born working-class girls (See Section 4.4.3 for a discussion of the sampling). Media has often demonised white working-class girls which requires further discussion and research to understand how class and gender underpin the experiences of these girls. Further research is necessary to expand the study to include the experiences of working-class girls from a greater variety of ethnic backgrounds.

This chapter starts by reflecting on the emergence of class and gender debates, initially focusing on class from a Marxist perspective and the development of an analysis of class oppressions. Marx's discussions of class inequality examined how society's material and ideological power imbalance maintained the position of the working-class. Marxist thought however was widely criticised by feminists for not exploring the intersecting role of gender inequalities.

The chapter examines the emergence of early socialist feminist thoughts, developing, in part, through Engels' early consideration of the role of women and their place within the family. This explores how the developing socialist feminist perspective perceived the position of women, confined to the family, as crucial to maintaining women's inequality. This early socialist feminist focus shaped my research focus, seeking to understand how working-class girls' imagined futures are shaped by their position within and outside of the home.

The chapter discusses socialist feminism within the so-called "Second Wave" feminist movement, and, demonstrates how the socialist and feminist arguments from that time period (the 1970s and early 1980s) share common ground (Ehrenreich 1976), based on conflict and oppression. MacKinnon argues "Marxism and feminism are theories of power and its distribution: inequality…" (MacKinnon 1982 in Humm 1992; p117). This section explores how socialist feminists challenged the "capitalist patriarchy" (Eisenstein 1977: p. 203), and, developed an understanding of the double oppression of working-class women due to their class and gender position (Bryson 2004). This considers how media reinforces the patriarchal and class discourses that support the power and dominance of the upper and middle-classes.

The chapter highlights the need to consider an intersectional perspective (Collins and Bilge 2016; Rose 1993, Yuval-Davis 2006) to understand women's position. Drawing on so-called "Second Wave" black feminist critiques of the feminist movement, for example The Combahee River Collective, intersectionality (a twenty-first century iteration) allows for the exploration of a range of voices and identities to demonstrate how identities intersect. This discussion explores how intersectionality (Crenshaw 1991) can be engaged with alongside the focus on class and gender to create a space for young working-class girls to be heard. This incorporates a need to consider regionality to explore the specific experiences of the working-class girls in my research.

The chapter reviews how social class can be measured or defined, engaging with Savage et al (2013) and the discussion of the changing nature of class. The chapter

intends to reach a working theoretical toolkit that builds on the foundation of Mitchell's spheres of subjection, engaging with Savage et al's (2013) class structures, which reflect Bourdieu's concept of habitus, to offer the opportunity to engage with cultural and social capital as well as the economic capital. Despite most of the participants in my research being from a white British background, this does not exclude my research from adding to the socialist feminist perspective Crenshaw's (1991) concept of intersectionality, which allows the focus to be on gender and class, but, acknowledges other multiple intersecting vectors of identity, and how these contribute to experiences of inequality. This discussion of intersectionality highlights the need to theorise "whiteness" and how the girls in my research do not acknowledge "white" privilege. An additional contribution is the intersection of regionality which explores the girls' experiences their identity as outside of the London / South centric media messages that dominate. This chapter seeks to arrive at a contemporary working praxis useful for the analysis of young (white) British working-class girls' imagined futures and their engagement with their mediatised world.

2.2 Historical reflection on social class and gender

To frame the discussion and theoretical approach of this thesis, it is important to reflect upon the origins of class and gender debates. Early origins of class debate are found in Marxist thought, with the focus on the inequality of power relations between the classes. "…every form of society has been based,…on the antagonism of oppressing and oppressed classes…" (Marx and Engels 1888/2015: p. 19). Marx and

Engels drew attention to the inequality between classes, with those in power with wealth and material goods in a position of control and dominance over those without this power or wealth (Arthur 1974). "The physical instruments of production were seen as giving rise in a direct and more-or-less compulsive way to new social relationships, institutions, and cultural modes." (Thompson 2013: p. 209). As discussed by Arthur (1974) the position of the working-class is, "…the condition of life forced upon him,.." (Arthur 1974: p. 85). This discussion was developed by Engels (1884/2010) who suggested the proletariat are "victims" of the oppressive system and lack power to move between classes, instead they are "sacrificed" for the benefit of the ruling class. My research with working-class girls demonstrates how they are aware of their class position, despite not referring to the word "class" per se. This awareness of their position influences how they perceive media and imagine both their working and domestic futures. This can be reflected upon by the findings of my research, whereby the working-class girls in my study do not limit their imagined occupational futures to the confines of "working-class" jobs, but, are aware of the challenges they may face in achieving their desired goals and show an awareness of obstacles they need to overcome. (See Section 6.3.4)

Class subordination remained the necessary and primary driver of class-struggle for male-dominated Marxist thought despite Engels considering the role of gender in relation to private property. Marx (1867/2013: p. 245), perceived a "natural division" between men and women, which later garnered criticism from feminists who highlight the lack of acknowledgement that women hold a unique position in society, subjected

to inequalities both through their class and gender position. Mitchell (2015: p. 78) highlights this criticism, "…the problem of women becomes submerged in the analysis of the family - women, as such, are not even mentioned!". The invisibility of gender in early Marxist class discussions highlights the need to consider capitalist and patriarchal inequalities as offered by socialist feminism (Section 2.2.1).

Marxist thought did consider women as a potential reserve army of labour, suggesting women's position within the domestic sphere allowed the potential to step out of this in times of need. "Women function as a massive reserve army of labor…The "cult of the home" makes its reappearance during times of labor surplus and is used to channel women out of the market economy…" (Benston 1969 in Hennessy and Ingraham 1997 p. 21). This is supported by Engels (1845/1993) who suggests the competition between the workers for employment (and thus women as excess workers) is one of the best weapons the bourgeoisie can use against the proletariat. Exploring working-class girls' imagined futures, both domestic and public, offers an insight into how the girls see their position in the workplace, and if this is secondary, with their primary position being in the home.

Engels (1884/2010) highlighted how the monogamous family is based on the supremacy of the man, suggesting, "…The modern individual family is founded on the open or concealed domestic slavery of the wife,…" (Engels 1884/2010: p. 105). This suggests women will only achieve equality when able to fully take part in Production with domestic duties requiring less attention (Engels 1884/2010). The view that by

entering the world of Production women will be liberated is criticised as too simplistic. "Engels effectively reduces the problem of woman to her capacity to work...If inability to work is the cause of her inferior status, ability to work will bring her liberation:.." (Mitchell 2015: p. 79). Women's position in today's society, whereby women continue to take the greatest responsibility in the domestic sphere, but combine this with work, is evidence entering the world of work is not enough to remove the inequalities faced by women. Socialist feminism explores the position of women further and considers the home and work as contributing to women's oppression.

2.2.1 Origins of Socialist Feminism

So-called "Second Wave" Feminists (Brown in Bunch and Myron 1974; Mitchell 2015; Crompton 2006) critiqued the views of Marx and Engels, and drew attention to their primarily economic focus, "...the classical socialist literature on the problem of woman's condition is predominantly economist in emphasis,…" (Mitchell 2015: p. 82).

So-called "Second Wave" feminists often theorised patriarchy as a totalising system of male dominance, whereby the power relationships in society are characterised by men dominating and women being subordinate (Bhasin 2006), both in terms of private and public spheres (Walby 1990). Patriarchy is "…a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women" (Walby 1990: p. 24). Socialist feminists from the "Second Wave" combined this analysis with the Marxist analysis of capital to develop the socialist feminist approach that combines patriarchy with capitalism as discussed by Eisenstein who suggested there is a mutual

dependence between capitalism and patriarchy. "…This system of oppression…is what I have chosen to call capitalist patriarchy." (Eisenstein 1977; p 203). This is supported by Hartmann (1976 in Humm 1992) and Willis (1977) who argue patriarchy is pivotal within capitalism, "…the mutual dependence of patriarchy and capitalism not only assumes the malleability of patriarchy to the needs of capital, but assumes and malleability of capital to the needs of patriarchy.." (Young 1980 in Hennessy and Ingraham 1997: p. 97). This demonstrates the complexity of discussing socialism and feminism whereby these systems of oppression can be seen as intersecting and, at times, conflicting, which can be further explored through an intersectional analysis whereby some women (middle or upper-class) may have more cultural and economic capital than a working-class man. Engaging with socialist feminism allows my research to gain an insight through the girl's interpretations about how they understand and engage with media representations of class and gender, and how they perceive their futures in relation to the dual oppressions they face.

The naturalisation of women's position in the home, linked to a woman's ability to give birth, is underlined by De Beauvoir (1997) who highlighted that women's role as a mother, is fundamental in the development of inequalities. "…A central concern of socialist and Marxist feminism therefore has been to determine the ways in which the institution of the family and women's domestic labour are structured by, and 'reproduce', the sexual division of labour." (Humm 1992; p 87). Socialist feminism is interested in the intersection of gender inequalities, due to women's physiology, and the class inequalities, due to capitalist needs, that working-class women were

subjected to.

Rowbotham (1973) argues women have to adopt and fashion Marxism to meet their needs, "In order for Marxism to prove useful…we have at once to encounter it in its existing form and fashion it to fit our particular oppression." (Rowbotham 1973: p. 45). The emergence of socialist feminism acknowledged the middle-class focus of earlier feminist movements, such as the leadership of the suffragettes, and the need to understand how working-class women experience specific conditions. Mainstream feminism has been written with a focus on the middle and upper-classes, with an invisibility of the working-class's role within history; socialist feminism attempts to re-set this balance. "…the 'middle-class' composition of Women's Liberation is not an unhappy fact…but an intrinsic part of feminist awareness. The most economically and socially under-privileged woman is bound much tighter to her condition by a consensus which passes it off as 'natural'." (Mitchell 2015: p. 22). Working-class women and their position is potentially the most subversive to capitalism because their position "….spans production and reproduction, class exploitation and sex oppression…". (Rowbotham 1973: p. 124).

Socialist feminism developed from an understanding that socialist thought did not go far enough in terms of answering the "woman problem", by focusing on the relationship between gender and the economy. As argued by Zaretsky (1976) despite women working, the role of unpaid labour within the home still often falls to the women, suggesting there continues to be a need to reflect upon and argue for equality

for women in the workplace but also in the domestic sphere. Socialist feminism argued women should be compensated for the unpaid labour they undertake as this is beneficial to the capitalist state, for example, Wages for Housework. "At all times household work is the responsibility of women. When they are working outside the home they must somehow manage to get both outside job and housework done…" (Benston 1969 in Hennessy and Ingraham 1997 p. 21).

Socialist feminism offers the opportunity to scrutinize women's position outside of the "public" economy, "…it falls to Marxist feminism to explore the relations between the organization of sexuality, domestic production, the household and so on, and historical changes in the mode of production and systems of appropriation and exploitation" (Barrett 1980 in Humm 1992: p. 1113). This argument remains relevant today, with evidence that women continue to take responsibility within the home whilst often combining this with paid employment. (Pocock 2005; McDonald et al 2011; Brown et al 2008). (See Section 3.4).

The ideological messages received through media reassert both patriarchal and capitalist ideals and through adopting a socialist feminist perspective, my research can explore working-class girl's perceptions of this. The following section examines how socialist feminism developed through the so-called "Second Wave" feminist movement, and how the intersection of class and gender presents challenges and opportunities to understand the position of working-class girls and women.

2.2.2 “Second Wave” feminist movement

Throughout the so-called “Second Wave” Feminist movement (1970s and 1980s) socialist feminism emerged and focused on the interaction of class and gender (patriarchy and capitalism), to explore how these two structures of power work together and are “…mutually dependent." (Eisenstein 1977: p. 203). The voices of middle-class women had dominated feminist arguments, whilst the voices of the working-class women were silenced. “From the onset of the movements women from privileged classes were able to make their concerns “the” issues that should be focused on…They attracted mass media…” (hooks, 2000: p. 37). Not only were privileged women able to make their concerns heard, but as history has been written, the priority has been given to women from the middle and upper-classes, thus rendering women from ethnic minorities or the working-class invisible. This continues to be the case, as demonstrated in news coverage of the anniversary of women achieving the right to vote (https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-44427627).

Socialist feminism provided an opportunity to focus on issues important to working-class women, and, as claimed by Rowbotham (in Humm 1992), working-class women understood the double layer (patriarchal and capital) of exploitation and oppression. This appreciation that working-class women often experience labour within the family differently to middle-class women is crucial to understanding the position of working-class girls and women in society. “…the debate about domestic labor has brought to light the “forgotten” labor that is done at home, which takes place through a specific, seemingly “natural” division of labor between women and men…” (Krais in Calhoun et

al 1993: P. 157 – 158). Drawing on this enables my research to appreciate the imagined futures of the working-class girls but also the potential pressures and expectations that may shape their goals.

Critics of socialist feminism come from both sides of the debate, with suggestions that Marxism dominates discussions to the detriment of consideration of the position of women, whilst feminism is accused of detracting from the focus on class and prioritising gender. Zaretsky (1976) suggests socialists do not distinguish between the oppression experienced by women and more generally the working-class. This concern is highlighted by Hartmann who critiques socialist feminism and claims Marxism and Feminism is an "…unhappy marriage…". (1976 in Humm 1992: p. 105). Young (1980 in Hennessy and Ingraham 1997) critiqued the focus of some of the socialist feminist debates and suggested focusing on the family as the primary source of patriarchal oppression, leads to a lack of focus or discussion about women's oppression outside of family. As discussed in Section 1.2.4 the academic focus recently has been on the sexualisation of girls and women and has neglected women's oppression outside of this objectification. Approaching my research from a socialist feminist perspective allows me to revisit the position of women in the workplace and home, as well as their sexualisation, as experienced by working-class girls.

This is particularly relevant when considering debates about the beliefs and "aspirations" of working-class girls such as Gaskell (1975) who maintains working-class women hold more traditional gender role perceptions. "Beliefs about the division of

labour in the home are more traditional among girls from lower status homes, despite the fact that their own mothers are more likely to work. Beliefs about the desirability of change in sex role relationship are also more conservative among working class girls." (Gaskell 1975: p. 460). My research is framed by these considerations whereby working-class girls imagine futures surrounded by media and societal messages about the "ideal". Due to this, it was essential my research sought to find a framework that would consider not just the imagined working futures of working-class girls but also the imagined futures of these girls within the domestic sphere and their role as carers for children. This led to Mitchell's four spheres of women's subjection being adapted to create a framework within which to situate my research, providing an opportunity to consider the unique experiences of working-class girls and how they negotiate and interpret their imagined futures.

2.3 Juliet Mitchell's four spheres of women's subjection

Mitchell (2015) highlights how early socialist theory did not explore the complexity of women's lives, whereas using the spheres of subjection offers a way to move socialist feminism past this point. "Past socialist theory has failed to differentiate woman's condition into its separate structures, …To do this will mean rejecting the idea that woman's condition can be deduced derivatively from the economy (Engels), or equated symbolically with society (early Marx). Rather, it must be seen as a specific structure, which is a unity of different elements...the unity of woman's condition at any time is in this way the product of several structures, moving at different paces..."

(Mitchell, 2015: p. 100-101). This is supported by Ehrenreich (1976 in Hennessy and Ingraham 1997) who suggests socialist feminists, "…while agreeing that there is something timeless and universal about women's oppression, have insisted that it takes different forms in different settings, and that the differences are of vital importance." (Ehrenreich 1976 in Hennessy and Ingraham 1997: p. 67). Mitchell's contribution to socialist feminism offers an understanding of the complexity of women's position and experiences in society.

As mentioned above, to understand young working-class girls' imagined futures, it is not enough to focus on their work futures, but also how this interacts with all aspects of their imagined futures. This includes domestic futures and their role in socialising children, which have been considered the predominant role for women, as critiqued by socialist feminists. This also needs to consider the rise of the sexualisation discourse, that has been the focus of much recent feminist debate and consider how this impacts on working-class perceptions of the future. Alongside this, the classist tone that runs through the sexual and domestic representations of women, requires centralising gender and class, as two intersecting identities, in academic debates. Mitchell's spheres of subjection, which call for women's position and oppression to be studied through women's role in Production, Reproduction, Socialisation of children and Sexualisation, offers a framework for the development of my research's theoretical stance. Mitchell suggest these elements, "…cannot merely be considered in isolation; they form a structure of specific inter-relations. The contemporary family can be seen as a triptych of sexual, reproductive and socializatory functions (the

woman's world) embraced by production (the man's world) – precisely a structure which in the final instance is determined by the economy…Economic demands must be accompanied by coherent policies for the other three elements…" (Mitchell 2015: p. 148 – 149).

Mitchell (2015) suggests the position of women within the home and lack of position in the workplace have to be studied together because of the ideological links between the two. It is through this discussion of women's position my research acknowledges that to attempt to understand young working-class girls' imagined futures the structures that are inter-related in their lives need to be studied together; this will allow an insight into how the girls imagine balancing their lives and their priorities. Societal structures need to be examined as do the messages from media and society that support gender and class roles also need to be considered. This allows an understanding, through the girls' voices, of the complexity of their experiences, how they negotiate the messages they receive, and imagine a future for themselves that attempts to navigate and balance the ideological assumptions that accompany their class and gender.

2.4 Theorising Class, "Race" and Gender

Although the socialist feminist perspective offers a perspective from which to explore working-class girls' imagined futures, this does not fully engage with the complexities of girls' identities. A major criticism of socialist feminism is that it lacks a consideration

of the role of “race” in shaping women’s oppression. Black Feminism highlighted the oppressions faced by women from ethnic minorities that were not acknowledge by white women, in the earlier feminist movements. “…Privileged white middle-class women who were a numeric majority though not necessarily the radical leaders of contemporary feminist movement often gained prominence because they were the group mass media focused on as representatives of the struggle…” (hooks 2000: p. 9 – 10). This led to media and many feminist arguments focusing on the struggles of the white middle-class women whilst neglecting working-class and ethnically diverse women. “…women from privileged classes were able to make their concerns “the” issues that should be focused on…”. (hooks 2000: p. 37).

This focus on privileged women initially led to the development of the socialist feminist perspective, to consider class inequality, however this continued to neglect women from ethnic backgrounds. “…the working-class and socialist movements had failed to encompass the issues of race-based and gender-based oppression and argued that this failure reflected theoretical shortcomings ultimately traceable to Marx.” (Wallis (2015: p. 608). Meanwhile, Mouffe (1992 in Butler and Scott 1992) argues feminism faces the challenge of theorising the multiplicity of subordination experienced in women’s lives. The “double jeopardy”, discussed by Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach (2008: p. 378), acknowledges the oppressions experienced by people with multiple subordinate-group identities.

Through these discussions it is evident Mitchell's socialist feminist perspective may risk ignoring the intersecting identities of the working-class girls that result in a cumulative disadvantage for some girls. This invisibility of "race" from socialist feminism, has included an invisibility of "whiteness" within research. There is a need to consider intersectionality and incorporate this awareness in to my theoretical position. This also needs to consider "whiteness" and particularly the invisibility of the working-class girls "whiteness" when discussing representations or experiences of their class and gender. This enables my research to consider the complexity of the girls' identities and develop an understanding of the perceptions of the structural and cultural inequalities experienced by these working-class girls. Engaging with intersectionality does not dilute the primary focus on gender and class, but rather attempts to understand these markers of identity within the context of other vectors of identity rather than seeing them in isolation, as discussed below.

2.4.1 Intersectional considerations

The origins of intersectionality developed from black feminist social movements (Collins and Bilge 2016) whereby intersecting inequalities were highlighted and discussed. Crenshaw coined the term in 1989 suggesting intersectionality allows fragments to be acknowledged and negotiated within group politics.
"…intersectionality might be more broadly useful as a way of mediating the tension between assertions of multiple identity and the ongoing necessity of group politics." (Crenshaw 1991: p. 1296). Ken (2008) suggests there is a need to examine how forms of oppression interact.

This is supported by Collins and Bilge (2016) who suggest intersectionality allows an understanding of the complexity of the world and the axis that work together. This focuses on the differences between women, primarily "race" or ethnicity, but more recently has addressed sexuality, age, disability, class and attempts to understand how these unique elements are constructed and interact to inform differing life experiences and create unique identities and power relations (Barnum and Zajicek 2008: Gill 2009; DeFrancisco and Palczewski 2014; Parent et al 2013; and Collins 2000). "A pivotal idea running through the various strands of Black and Third World feminist thought is that "race", gender, and class are interlocking and interdependent formations of domination, and that these dimensions of social life are experienced simultaneously…".(Rose 1993; p 91).

In an attempt to understand the oppression faced by working-class girls that impacts on the choices they make intersectional analysis needs to be developed, as "…all the forms of oppression, are interrelated..." (Wallis 2015: p. 605). and key to this is to identify the key structures that maintain and support their oppression and inequality. "Intersectionality first and foremost reflects the reality of lives. The facts of our lives reveal that there is no single identity category that satisfactorily describes how we respond to our social environment or are responded to by others." (Shields 2008: p. 304). This perspective highlights the need to engage with intersectional approaches whilst building on the socialist feminist structures of oppression (Mitchell 2015), to attempt to understand the lives of the working-class girls through their voices. This

allows my research to consider the multiple identities the working-class girls have, that contribute to the unique way the girls experience their worlds. Alongside valuing the multiple vectors of identity the girls have, there is a need to understand the collective experience of working-class girls. This view is supported by Collins and Bilge (2016) who suggest despite individual differences, there remains a need for these individuals to form a collective to challenge social structures and oppressions. My research offers an opportunity to acknowledge the differences between these working-class girls and how this may impact on their imagined futures and experiences, however the integration of socialist feminism allows the collective oppression, experienced due to class and gender, as a shared experience to be investigated. Anthias (2012: p. 129) suggests the degrees of importance of one or the other categories vary within different societal arenas. At this point in society and culture it is important to research the inequalities experienced by working-class women and girls, both in their treatment in media, their experiences in society, and their imagined futures, whereby middle-class norms dominate. The following two sections explore further aspects of these working-class girls' identities that are considered within my research.

2.4.1.1 Regionality

The predominantly white working-class girls in my research have intersecting identities and therefore, although the focus is on their experiences from a gender and class perspective there needs to be an acknowledgement of how other identity markers, such as "race", sexuality or location may impact on their experiences. "…We can never single out gender from, for example, "race" and class in any neat and absolute way,

since these structures are in constant transformation and only relatively autonomous from each other…". (Gunnarsson 2011; p 34). As discussed in Section 5.3, location is a necessary consideration due to the girls' awareness of the centrality of London in media representations that shows a particular view of Britain. As intersectionality is focused on the "….interrogation of power in society and the structural precursors of oppression." (McGibbon and McPherson 2011: p. 61), it is important to consider how the girls' geographic position and therefore regional identity marks them as potentially different from the London centric norm often shown in media or renders them geographically invisible. Discussions of intersectionality have not fully developed a focus on regionality within the UK, rather has focused on region in terms of transnational or global regional differences. Skeggs (1997) and McKenzie (2015) respectively explored the impact of location on their participants' lives and identities, with Skeggs focused on a town in North West England and McKenzie focused on St Ann's estate, Nottingham. Both explored gender and class and, through discussions, how the regions the women lived in impacted on their lives, experiences, and sense of belonging or being excluded. However, there remained a gap in literature and an opportunity for my research to explore how the 11 and 12-year-old working-class girls in my Midlands study in the 2010s experienced their class and gender in relation to their regional identity, alongside how this shapes their imagined futures and experiences of media.

As argued by Armstrong and Connolley (1989), class interacts with gender, "race" but also regional and national contexts, and therefore how class is experienced in one

location in Britain may be different to the experiences in other areas. This is supported by McKenzie (2015) who suggests the adult women in her research, based in St Ann's, Nottingham, gain a sense of belonging from the estate, alongside "….feeling excluded from what they called 'normal society'…" (McKenzie 2015: p. 158). This demonstrates how regional identity and hyper-local identity has an influence on the experiences of people, with working-class girls and women experiencing region and city-district as an additional aspect of their classed and gendered identities. Britain has distinct regional identities, despite London often being the most visible, therefore my research allows an understanding of how the girls' regional identities intersect with their class, gender and other vectors of identity. "…class has to be reconceptualized through race and gender within regional, national, and international contexts…Class is dynamic and relational; it is the basis of change. Gender, race/ethnicity and regionality/nationality interact with class in various ways with one being more salient than another at different points in time" (Armstrong & Connolley, 1989: 5). The need to explore the impact of region is also highlighted in research by Christian and Namaganda (2018) who demonstrated race, gender, class and region categories intersect when studying domestic worker regimes, and by research into the gendered wage gap, by Chapman and Benis (2017) who demonstrated that region has an impact on the US wage gap. This suggests region may have an impact on the experiences and imagined futures of the working-class girls in my research, and therefore throughout discussions this needs to be considered. The focus of my research on gender and class contributes to overcoming some scholarly criticisms of intersectionality, as discussed in Collins and Bilge (2016), that suggest intersectionality

underemphasises structural analyses, whilst centralising identity. The acknowledgement of the girls' individuality and perceptions of media and their futures, and how this is shaped by gender, class, and regional experiences allows for the structural position of the girls to be considered. This offers a new consideration in terms of intersectionality, whereby gender and class are the focus, but regionality is another aspect of identity that need to be considered. In addition to regionality the following section discusses "whiteness" in terms of intersectionality and the invisibility of "whiteness" that often persists in media and academia.

2.4.1.2 Considerations of "Whiteness"

My research did not intend to centralise "whiteness" as a key vector of identity, and there is not an opportunity to fully discuss "whiteness" and theories of "white" privilege. However, due to the position of the girls as predominantly white working-class, and the lack of diversity in my sample (as discussed in Sections 4.4.3, 4.6 and 8.4), there is a need to acknowledge and explore the position of "whiteness" in my research and particularly in relation to the girls' potential privilege due to their social position as "white". As discussed by Probyn (2004) often feminists do not see themselves or represent themselves as "white"; therefore it is important to acknowledge "white" as part of my intersectional discussion and as a factor that potentially plays a role in shaping the experiences of the working-class girls, that would not be applicable to other ethnic groups. As discussed by Warren (1999) research on "whiteness" entered academia in the 1990s, with the focus on examining the location of privilege being "white" offers, whilst, "…critically understanding the power and

privilege embedded in the cultural center of whiteness.” (Warren 1999: p. 186) Warren argues there is a need to study “whiteness”, because if this is not questioned and examined “…we only serve that powerful center and work to keep its power, granted partly by the very invisibility and unmarkedness it has thus far enjoyed…” (Warren 1999: p. 1999). There is a need to consider how the “whiteness” of the girls in my sample is experienced and how the girls perceived their position in media and society through their class, gender and “whiteness”. The girls’ experiences as white working-class from the Midlands offers an insight into how these girls experience the intersecting elements of their identity. Additionally, the visibility of the girls’ “whiteness” to themselves and each other offers an insight into their own perceptions of their identity and inequality or privilege.

Engaging with “whiteness” attempts to challenge the position of “whiteness” as normal or invisible. “To be normal, is to be white.” (Dyer 1997: p. 12). “Whiteness” has been perceived as the “norm” whilst other ethnic groups are then inscribed as the “other”. “Recent engagements with the problematic of whiteness have sought, to a large extent, to make whiteness strange, to re-inscribe it within a general economy of racial identities. In this way whiteness becomes one racialised position amongst many rather than the norm against which others are measured” (Ganley 2003: p. 13). The normativity of “whiteness” is also highlighted by Roediger (1991) and Lewis (1998) who highlight “white”occupies a normative space, within which there is, “…very little perception of privilege amongst white men or women…” (Lewis 1998: p. 13). This positioning of “whiteness” and the need to engage with the predominant “whiteness”

of my sample offers my research an opportunity to see how the girls perceive their position as white working-class, and to explore if “white” privilege is considered within their identities.

As discussed above “whiteness” has been positioned as the “norm” and therefore is often invisible in relation to the “other”. “”White” is a relatively uncharted territory that has remained invisible…yet endures as a largely unarticulated position.” (Nakayama and Krizek 1995: p. 291). Nakayama and Krizek (1995) argue the lack of investigation and examination of “whiteness” has therefore not explored the ideological position associated with being “white”. The invisibility of “whiteness” “…guarantees its unstratified nature.” (Nakayama and Krizek 1995: p. 299), which then resists recognition of power relations linked to “whiteness” and racial privilege. Dyer (1997) maintains “whites” are disproportionately represented, and placed as “the norm”, which leads to “white” people not defining themselves, or representing themselves, as “white” but rather focusing on their gender, class, sexuality or (dis-)abled-body. “Many white people take their identity for granted…” (Bhopal 2018: p.32). This is invisibility of “whiteness” and lack of need to identify and recognise it is supported by Lewis, “The difference for whites is that they do not even have to recognize their own whiteness in order to benefit from it.” (Lewis 1998: p. 4). As discussed, “whiteness” is at once invisible and yet present in power relations, allowing those that benefit from their “whiteness” to be blind to it, as the privilege “whiteness” offers has not been questioned by those in possession of it. There is a need to incorporate considerations of “whiteness” in to my research, to explore how the girls’

“whiteness” is recognised, or not, and experienced, in relation to their position as working-class girls. My research offers an opportunity to explore if the girls in my study see “whiteness” as the “norm” and therefore “race” is invisible to them, whilst offering an opportunity to understand which vector of their identity is seen as dominant in how they experience their lives and imagine their futures.

Probyn (2004) suggests white women have often focused on the “women” aspect of their identity, therefore, often white women do not acknowledge their privilege of being “white” but rather consider their lack of privilege due to their gendered position. Their gender focus has tended to deny their white privilege, and whilst it is necessary to understand not all “whites” share equally the privilege of their colour, it is necessary to accept “white” is a privileged position racially. Probyn (2004) identifies other aspects of a person’s identity may reduce the privilege that person is given, for example, “Queer and class can also help to soften the hard edges of privilege.” (Probyn 2004 no page number as e-journal). However, research has suggested “whites” consider themselves in relation to other “whites” and perceive their social position or privilege irrespective of their ethnic identity, thus neglecting any acknowledgment of their “whiteness”. “…with respect to…the social identities of whites, regional, political, and lifestyle boundaries between whites have as much or more salience than interracial boundaries with non-whites. Whites construct their social identities primarily in relation to other whites…” (Wray in Eindinger and Schmitt 2019: p. 48)

However, it is argued by some academics (Wray in Eindinger and Schmitt 2019; Bhopal 2018; Strand 2014) that "whiteness" does not privilege all "whites", and those in classed or gendered positions do not experience "whiteness" as a significant privilege. "…the benefits of white skin privilege are scarce to non-existent for whites on the lower rungs of the social ladder…" (Wray in Eindinger and Schmitt 2019: p. 39). This supports the need to consider "whiteness" in relation to the white working-class girls in my research and how they experience their intersecting identities. Strand (2014) supports this and calls for an intersectional approach to understanding educational attainment, as data linked to educational attainment cannot be explained without a consideration of "whiteness", "...interpretations…based exclusively on social class, ethnicity or gender do not explain the complexity of the data." (Strand 2014: p. 27). Strand (2014) maintains the intersection between class and "whiteness" explains the disproportionately low attainment among White British students, whereas focusing purely on class would not account for this.

The relationship between class and "whiteness" is also evident when considering media representations of the white working-class. According to Lawler (2012) the white working-class are now marked as problematically white, or linked to "extreme whiteness" in media, which hides the "whiteness" of the middle-classes. "The disreputable figure of the 'chav' …snaps at the heels of the 'white working class'…" (Bottero in Sveinnson 2009: p. 11). This is further supported by Nayak (in Sveinnson 2009) who suggests the white working-class "chav", is presented as different from the "…other 'ordinary' white youth." (Nayak in Sveinnson 2009: p. 31), with the suggestion

that “ordinary” is the middle-class “norm”. Therefore, the white working-class must negotiate the “chav” representation, which reflects the perceived lawlessness of the working-class (Section 3.2.1). “Acceptable forms of whiteness are based on the perception of conforming to society’s expectations……An example of non-acceptable whiteness is seen in the use of the word ‘chav…based on describing those from working-class background as being uncouth, unworthy and unkempt…” (Bhopal 2018: p. 43 - 44). My research provides the opportunity to see how the girls negotiate representations of the working-class as linked to the “chav” stereotype, which is synonymous with working-class “whiteness”. The following sections explores the current position of gender and class in Britain today and examine the need to reignite debates about class that neoliberal discourses have eradicated.

2.5 Analysis of social class and gender in Britain today

As discussed, social class faded out of fashion, both academically and societally after the so-called “Second Wave” Feminist movement, “By the late twentieth century, however, the working class had been largely eviscerated as a visible social presence.” (Savage 2003: p. 536). The result of this was the pervasion of middle-class norms and expectations. Savage (2003) highlights how the middle-class colonised the empty social and cultural space, with the middle-classes norms and values becoming regarded as universally “normal”, “good” and “appropriate”. The disappearance of class was in part due to the rise of neoliberal and post-feminist discourses that refuted the relevance of “grand” theories and focused on individualization and choice.

2.5.1 Neoliberal and post-feminist discourses

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s feminism as a “grand” theory was critiqued whilst post-feminist arguments suggested feminism was over, replaced by the neoliberal focus on individualism and choice. As outlined in Chapter 1 “neoliberalism…generally refers to the systemic privileging of a ‘free market’…” (Bhopal 2018: p.1), whereby success or not is considered down to the individual choices made, rather than structural inequalities that inhibit equal access to the market. Post-feminism belonged to the neoliberal school of thought (Pomerantz et al 2013; Kearney 2012; Banet-Weiser 2018), with post-feminists shifting the discussion about gender from inequalities and oppression, towards a discourse of individualism and empowerment. “Postfeminism can be characterized as a set of ideas, elements, feelings, and emphases that operate as a kind of gendered neoliberalism…” (Banet-Weiser 2018: p. 20). This suggests girls and women can choose their futures and are empowered to perform their femininity as they wished. Class was argued to be obsolete, whilst, “…‘postmodernism’ – seemed to render the conventional concerns with social structure and inequality outdated and misguided.”(Flemmen (2013: p 326). This does not mean class was not evident as a problem, but rather it was denied or problematised, due to the domination of middle-class values, expectations and norms.

People’s lives were considered as shaped by self-design and individual performance rather than societal structures and choices enabled empowerment (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002). The discourse of choice has permeated research with women

(Jacques and Radtke's 2012), however this shift from the focus of socialist feminist views of patriarchal and capitalist exploitation (Rowbotham in Humm, 1992) to the post-feminist views of the 1990s that neglect the structural inequalities that exist and may limit "choice". Post-feminism developed as a contemporary gender ideology, "…Propped up by the (imagined) success of the women's movement, a sex-positive (and racially exclusive) feminist legacy, and the ever-expanding neoliberal celebrations of autonomy, individualism, and consumer choice, post-feminism surfaces as a more attractive alternative to previous forms of gender politics." (Butler 2013: p 41). The loss of focus on the social and political as discussed by Gill (2007) emphasises the loss of focus on the structures in society that shape gender and class experiences. This leads to the suggestion the individual is responsible for their own situation and has the ability to choose and shape their experiences, rather than acknowledging the political and social structures that shape society and impact on groups that experience inequality. This particularly changes how the position of working-class women was discussed, class was missing from the agenda, and as discussed by Gill (2007), post-feminism requires women to be presented or to present themselves as active, autonomous, self-regulating, with the ability to act upon their own free will.

Post-feminism therefore would suggest working-class women are responsible for their position in society, and able to "choose" to transform themselves to meet the norms. Post-feminism and neoliberalism place the blame on the individual for their position in society. "…postfeminism and girl power ideology is about tension and contradiction, about the individual pleasures of consumption and the social responsibilities of

solidarity…"(Banet-Weiser 2007: p. 141). This lacks regard for the specific conditions of working-class women or girls' lives, and, ignores the oppressions and inequalities they face, "…People from different classes, acting rationally, will act in different ways – even if they have the same individualised attitudes – because the opportunities and constraints they face are quite different." (Duncan 2005: p. 51).

My research seeks to bring the focus back to the structural class and gender inequalities that shape the "choices" working-class girls have or perceive they have. This reframes the debate about the imagined futures of working-class girls, with the focus on how they experience their gender and class and negotiate the messages they receive about their position in society, to construct a vision of their imagined futures. This seeks to challenge neoliberal ideas of choice and suggests working-class girls are restricted by the constraints of society that is constructed along gendered and classed lines (Basit 1996; Gottfredson and Lapan 1997; Brownlow et al. 2000; Bimrose 2001). McRobbie (2009) supports this and argues the neoliberal focus on individuality and personal freedom, ignored how individuals remain restricted by a constructed society. "Social, structural problems still exist, but the responsibility or blame now shifts from society to the individual. Any unsatisfactory or unequal situation in a woman's life is judged as nothing other than the effect of her own choices..." (Chen 2013: p. 446). "Choice" must be seen through a gendered lens, where females have a feminised range of choices, constructed within fairly rigid sex / gender norms.

Another common discourse that emerged with post-feminism, and further refuted the continued need for a feminist movement, is the suggestion that girls have succeeded, or due to feminism have become the "winners" in society. This is supported by Baker (2010), who highlights there has been a focus on the success of girls within education, emphasising how girls are doing well at the cost of boys, however this has ignored other inequalities faced by women. This "mythologised commentary" (Baker 2010; p2) sees girls as the "winners" whilst boys have borne the brunt of their success. This is supported by Genz and Brabon (2009); Hall and Rodriguez (2003); and McRobbie (2004, 2009) who argue feminism has been constructed as irrelevant in girls' lives because the battle for gender equality has been won. The discussion of "can-do girls" or "successful girls" arguably focuses on a particular "type" of girl and is measured against competitive success traditionally associated with boys. "…can-do here means to be economically empowered. All of the women who "can" in the CoverGirl ad are clear examples of economic success…Success here is understood as what has typically been understood as *masculine* [original italics] success…" (Banet-Weiser 2018: p. 50). However, when considering the imagined futures of girls, as discussed in Section 3.3.1, there continues to be unequal uptake of professions, with occupations remaining clearly gendered, women are under-represented in senior and management positions (Walter 2010; Connell 2005), and women continue to take the primary responsibility in the home (Vincent 2003; Press and Townsley 1998). Due to these inequalities, class and gender cannot be ignored, and therefore my theoretical approach calls for the re-engagement of socialist feminism with the integration of intersectionality to understand how class and gender intersect with other vectors of identity.

My research can learn from post-feminist discourses of women being active agents, this argues the girls are active in their interpretations of media. Exploring the intersection of class and gender is crucial to understanding how young working-class girls engage with media and negotiate their own interpretations in the face of middle-class norms. This is also relevant to discussions of "whiteness" whereby media focuses on a "white" norm. Alongside this, it is necessary to give these girls a voice to explore how they perceive the role of norms in society and media, in their lives and their imagined futures.

2.5.2 Refocusing on Class and Gender

Drawing on the discussions earlier in this chapter it is important to consider where social class and gender as a debate is today. Whilst class did go out of favour, some feminist and sociologist academics have brought the focus back to class (Skeggs 2005; Flemmen 2013; Savage et al 2013). A key contribution to the refocus on class has been offered by Bourdieu (2010), who Skeggs (2005) suggests is useful in putting class back onto the feminist agenda. Bourdieu's discussions of social class have clear links to Marxist ideas, but move away from Marx's focus on economic struggles to include a discussion of social inequalities, that "…offers insights into the subtleties, complexities, and unconscious psychological aspects of social class…" (Wagner & McLaughlin 2015: p 205) This contribution to socialist feminism offers further understanding of the complexity of women's position in society and how working-class women are not just exploited in terms of access to economic capital, but experience layers of inequality

and are exploited culturally also. “Bourdieu’s theorisation of social class highlights the sensitivity of our cultural antennae to the qualitative, subjective, micro-distinctions through which social class location is expressed and understood. By displacing linear representations of class in favour of a theory of social space in which power is distributed in the form of different types of capital, the borders and boundaries of social class are opened up, made more fluid.” (Walkerdine et al 2001: p. 38). This is recognition of class being multidimensional does not claim Savage et al (2013) explores all of the complexities of capital and class.

Bourdieu’s focus on cultural processes has led to interpretations by Savage (2008) for a “de-centred concept of class…” (Flemmen 2013; p 332), whereby class is seen as the result of overlapping and intersecting fields. This allows for a complex understanding of class that can be more suitable to understanding women’s position within capitalism, particularly as working-class women may have different levels of the different types of capital compared to working-class men. This links to Savage et al (2013), who have proposed different classes within the UK, based not only on economic, but also cultural and social interests (Section 1.3).

Further to understanding the complexity of class is the need to explore how working-class girls are socialised. Lareau (2003) and Walkerdine & Lucey (1989) suggest class influences socialisation, whereby, from a relatively early age, children acquire, or do not acquire, behaviours appropriate (or not appropriate) for educational and occupational success, as cultural capital is transformed into educational capital

(Bourdieu, 1977). Through this development of educational capital class differentials in educational and occupational attainment are maintained through the unequal cultural capital possessed by parents in different classes, which is passed from parents to children. (Crompton 2006). It is useful for socialist feminism and particularly my research to use Savage el al's (2013) Bourdieusian approach to class rather than take a truly Marxist (economic) perspective on the development of and inequality within classes. This allows the cultural and social inequalities that shape classes and therefore could arguably shape expectations the girls have for their futures. My research explores how the girls experience oppression and power imbalances economically, and attempts to understand how the girls perceive themselves through cultural representations. "Social subjects comprehend the social world which comprehends them…" (Bourdieu 2010: p. 484). This research gains an insight into how working-class girls comprehend the world and their imagined futures, whilst interpreting how the world (culturally) comprehends them.

This insight allows my research to understand this through the girls own perspectives, whereby they interpret the ideology that pervades society around class and gender. Dominant groups can control the ideology of what is valued and appropriate in society, and, find those lacking in capital as lacking or insufficient in status, therefore, "...social order is maintained through a dynamic process of coercion and consent whereby dominant groups produce…hegemonic ideologies, and subordinated groups…consent to structural conditions that may be oppressive given the power of hegemonic ideologies." (Cooky et al 2010; p 143). This socialisation, via agencies such as media,

may suggest working-class women and girls should be self-regulating. The Gramscian notion of hegemony, or ideology taking the form of "common sense" suggests, "…Dominant ideology becomes invisible because it is translated into 'common sense'…" (Van Zoonen 1994: p.24). This may impact on how girls perceive themselves and their imagined futures, and how they are socialised into their class position. Power relations are clearly at play, with dominant discourses establishing how women "should" be, whilst Bourdieu's discussion of habitus is equally present with the representations of "chavs" (discussed in Section 3.2.1). "…By consciously or unconsciously internalizing hegemonic cultural meanings and by performing certain social practices by force of habit, a dominated individual can come to accept meanings and adopt practices that reflect and reinforce the power of those who dominate…."(Allen 1999; p 133).

2.6 Engaging Socialist Feminism today

My research takes a socialist feminist perspective in approaching research with young working-class girls, however, what this chapter has demonstrated is how other theoretical perspectives inform or are "spoken to" in an attempt to develop a clear understanding of how class, gender, power, "whiteness", regionality and the agency of young girls can be accounted for. The question is therefore posed as to what socialist feminism could look like today or at least how this research interprets this approach. This chapter has shown how socialist feminism must learn from intersectionality and the ideas of diversity and difference, rather than assume to speak for working-class

women as an entire entity. This has included a consideration of "whiteness" which when discussing the findings allows an examination of how the white working-class girls did not "see" their "whiteness", or the privilege this offers. "Intersectionality is inextricably linked to an analysis of power,…" (Cho et al 2013: p.797) and therefore exploring the influences on the power relations working-class women are subjected to strengthens the theoretical approach. Working-class women and girls experience power and oppression through their shared collective position but also through difference. Therefore, an intersectional socialist feminism would be a more fitting label, highlighting the necessity of appreciating the complexity of female identities that are encompassed under the "umbrella" structure of working-class.

However, in engaging with intersectionality the focus on class must not be lost. Class "…has a strategic or binding function that does not pertain to any of the other lines of oppression: it brings together, potentially into a coherent force, *all* the constituencies that are held down by the single most concentrated power in contemporary society, that of capital itself." (Wallis 2015: p. 610). This is supported by Reay (2005) and Ebert (2005) who suggests class is the primary concept in the fight for equality, arguing although "race", gender and sexuality are sites of power struggle, the division of labour has made them so. This is further reinforced by Wallis (2015), who maintains the holders of class power, those in the ruling or elite classes, have decision-making prerogatives, which, "…set the parameters for what is allowed or expected in every specific domain of the society…" (Wallis 2015: p. 611). The dominance of class is supported by McRobbie (2009) who argues ideals of aspirational femininity link women to class and

consumption. The messages that demonstrate women have to undergo self-improvement to meet the middle-class ideals, continue the oppression of women while maintaining profit, through consumption, for the bourgeoisie. Due to this, there continues to be a need for socialist feminism that centralises class within its theoretical discussions, to understand how this interacts with gender, "race", and sexuality, in the oppression of women. Drawing on Mitchell (2015) there is an opportunity to explore working-class girls' oppression within the economic and domestic spheres, allowing for an understanding of the collective experiences these girls have. Whilst also exploring media engagement to understand the intersections of "race", gender, class, regionality and sexuality in popular culture to identify the layered complexities of media texts. (Stern 2012; Banyard 2011).

2.7 Summary

The discussions throughout this chapter have demonstrated how the intersection of gender and social class continues to be a relevant area of research and a measure upon which social inequalities are evident. As is demonstrated in the following chapter (Chapter 3) class influences many aspects of the individual's life including occupation, family, educational achievement and health. "…it starts with production—every aspect of "race", class, and gender has been and is produced under particular social, historical, political, cultural, and economic conditions." (Ken 2008: p. 155).

A key contribution from this research to the feminist theoretical debate is marrying socialist feminism and intersectionality in an attempt to overcome the monolithic version of power as discussed by socialist feminism, whilst revivifying the importance of class-bases analysis within work on feminist engagement with girls and media. It is argued by hooks, “The only genuine hope of feminist liberation lies with a vision of social change which challenges class elitism….Given the changing realities of class in our nation, widening gaps between the rich and poor, and the continued feminization of poverty, we desperately need a mass-based radical feminist movement that can build on the strength of the past…a visionary movement would ground its work in the concrete conditions of working-class and poor women…”(hooks 2000: p.43). Combining socialist feminism and intersectionality allows my research to go beyond these structures and appreciate the working-class girls’ experiences of oppression and inequality with additional consideration of “whiteness” and regionality whilst focusing on the collective oppression of class and gender. In addition to the integration of socialist feminism and intersectionality, my research learns from post-feminism, in terms of understanding the working-class girls are to be seen as active agents that can make choices, however, refutes notions of choice as unrestricted by the girls’ class and gender. My research attempts to understand young working-class girls as central to a complex system of power that they are subjects of and active agents within. This allows for an investigation into the power of media to play a role in socialising the participants, whilst at the same time allowing them agency to resist or subvert these messages, and at least critique and question the norms that are presented. This approach allows for an acknowledgement of the differing levels of habitus (Bourdieu

2010) the girls have, or have an awareness of, to be able to gain a greater insight into the negotiations the girls have with media messages and how their imagined futures are shaped.

As Coole (1993) suggests, there is a need for a range of approaches that are complementary rather than mutually exclusive. The discussion within this chapter has shown there is a need to adopt an approach and theoretical focus that merges a version of socialist feminism, informed by Mitchell's spheres of subjection, with an intersectional awareness and an acknowledgement of the agency that allows the girls to negotiate and resist dominant ideologies.

3 Media, gender and social class

3.1 Introduction

My research is situated within discussions about what it means to be a girl in society, how media plays a role in depicting normative notions of femininity, constructing a "natural order of the world" for working-class girls, and how working-class girls perceive this socialises them into the choices they make for their futures. Middle-class values are the "norm" and pervade media. "We were also aware of how values and cultural practices traditionally associated with the middle-class, and reliant on access to forms of cultural capital, were increasingly becoming the normative…" (Skeggs 2009: p. 629)

The findings from my research explores the imagined futures of the working-class girls and how they perceive media socialisation. Media representations and academic discussions have focused on the sexualisation of girls, and the working-class is often depicted through the "flawed" working-class celebrity. As discussed by Sanders and Munford (2008), girls segmented themselves into a present and future selves, with their present selves focussed on relationships whilst their future selves emphasised independence and autonomy. My research considers the girls' present selves through discussions of imagined future selves with a focus on how they perceive media socialises them.

As discussed in Chapter 2, class is embedded in the socialisation and sexualisation of women in society and cannot be discussed as a separate entity or extrapolated into a separate section within this discussion. Capitalism and patriarchy work hand in hand, perpetuating the oppression of women. "…the capitalist class, whether directly or through state institutions, inserts itself into every social question—and every issue of policy…" Wallis (2015: p. 615).

This chapter starts by discussing existing research that has explored the objectification of women, and construction of femininity in media (Gill 2007; Wilson et al. 2013; Wolf 1991; Le Grand 2015). Section 3.2 demonstrates how the focus of much academic and societal debate has been concerned with the objectification and sexualisation of girl's and women's bodies. These hegemonic media messages seek to secure an acceptable version of femininity that conforms to middle-class norms, whilst negating or demonising working-class girls and women. This section acknowledges the particular space in media for white working-class girls and how these bodies are assigned codes that clearly demonstrate their lack of control, class and discipline. The dominance of the sexualisation discourse in media and academic debates has quashed other considerations of the position of working-class girls and women. This section contributes to my research by highlighting that although the girls wanted to talk about media sexualisation, this is one aspect of their present and futures, and the other elements have disappeared from discussions.

The chapter explores the relationship between gender, class, work, and media. The position of women in the workplace continues to be a site of inequality, from the lack of equal pay to so-called "feminised" occupations and under-representation in senior positions. In addition to the position of women in the workplace, academics have explored girls' "aspirations" for their futures, however, this often approaches the topic with a middle-class tone ignoring the differing experiences of middle-class and working-class girls (Gordon et al 2005; Harris 2004; Allen and Hollingworth 2011). This section examines how media representations reflect the inequalities of women in work (Chen 2013; Smith et al 2012), and how class is often missing from academic debates, with middle-class voices prioritised (Hamilton and Powers 1990).

Section 3.4 discusses the position of women as carers and within the domestic sphere, addressing Mitchell's (1971) Reproduction and Socialisation of Children spheres of subjection. This engages with research that discusses the gendered nature of domestic work and the dual roles women adopt in an attempt to combine work, housework and childcare. This draws on early socialist feminist arguments that demonstrated women entering the workforces would not solve the problem of inequality, because women continue to take the primary responsibility for the home and children (Bland et al 1978; Pocock 2005). This considers the role of media in reflecting and constructing women as the primary carers in the home, irrespective of the women's role in the workplace. This acknowledges the lack of research into how working-class girls imagine their domestic futures, whilst highlighting how media creates a vision of the "ideal" domestic sphere (Hamilton and Powers 1990).

Section 3.5 addresses the role of media as an agent of socialisation. This section explores academic research that has focused on the relationship between media and young girls. A key element of this discussion is the early view of media being an "influence" on young girls, and therefore girls being "at risk" (Levin and Kilbourne 2008; Downs and Smith 2010). Media represents girls as both "desirable" and "at risk", and this section seeks to evaluate some of these discussions and assert my position in seeking to understand the girls' interpretation of media whilst understanding the girls are active agents in decoding media messages (Brown 1997; Hall 1973; Duit and van Zoonen 2011). This explores media as a socialising agent, that normalises middle-class values and moralises about the behaviours and performances of working-class girls. This chapter summarises where the gaps in existing research lie and how this has been used to develop the focus of my research.

3.2 Media, social class, sexuality and women's / girl's bodies

One of the key discussions about women and girls, that has dominated both academic and media debates, is the Sexualisation of women and girls and how media perpetuates the myth of the ideal female body. This focus links to Mitchell's (2015) discussion of Sexualisation as one of the spheres of subjection that women are exposed to. Sexual objectification reduces women and girls to their role as sexual beings, which limits the credibility women are awarded in other spheres. As discussed by Bartky (1990) objectification is when a woman is primarily viewed as a physical

object of male sexual desire. Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) explore this further and suggest this objectification may lead to women internalising this view and self-objectifying themselves, with their self-worth based on appearance.

According to de Beauvoir (1997), this focus on women's or girls' sexuality limits the potential of the girl through an indoctrination of their position. "…Through the pursuit of an ever-changing, homogenizing, elusive ideal of femininity…female bodies become docile bodies…Through the exacting and normalizing disciplines of diet, makeup, and dress…we are rendered less socially orientated and more centripetally focused on self-modification. Through these disciplines, we continue to memorize on our bodies the feel and conviction of lack, of insufficiency, of never being good enough." (Bordo 1997: p. 91). Whilst girls are focusing on their looks, or being encouraged to focus on their image, this restricts what else the girls can focus on. Media is seen as an active contributor to the objectification of women whereby media has created a version of the "ideal" woman.

3.2.1 Constructing women

Media constructs a version of women that is both narrow in focus and conforms to an ideal, (Section 3.3 and Section 3.4) however this section examines how media and academic debates have most recently focused on sexualising women. Renold and Ringrose (2013) emphasise that childhood sexuality is framed through the discourse of sexualisation, with young girls being sexualised from an early age. This sexualisation has dominated the focus of academic debates with suggestions media messages and

society encourage girls to objectify themselves, "…the lie to which the adolescent girl is condemned is that she must pretend to be an object, and a fascinating one,…Make-up, false hair, girdles, and 'reinforced' brassieres are all lies. The very face itself becomes a mask: spontaneous expressions are artfully induced, a wondering passivity is mimicked;…" (de Beauvoir 1997: p. 381). This view of the construction of sexualised femininity which McNair (2002) refers to as "striptease culture" intensely focuses on women's bodies, "…the intense focus on women's bodies as the site of femininity is closely related to the pervasive sexualisation of contemporary culture…" (Gill 2007: p. 150).

Traditional media, such as women's magazines, TV and films perpetuated the construction of the perfect women's body with further objectification of women through "lads mags" which sexualised women for male voyeurism, leading to suggestions pornography has infiltrated mainstream media, (Gill 2007b). "…as porn has seeped into mainstream culture the line has blurred…it is clear they [lads mags] believe that somehow in recent years porn has come true, the sexually liberated modern woman turns out to resemble,…the pneumatic take-me-now-big-boy-fuck-puppet of male fantasy after all." (Turner 22 October 2005: *The Guardian Weekend*). Concerns around the cultural objectification of women are not confined to pornography, or "lads mags", but have more recently been discussed in relation to video games (Wilson et al 2013), which have been shown to represent women in a hypersexualised way, with an unrealistic or disproportionate body in dressed in revealing clothes. (Glaubke et al 2001).

These representations, in British and American media show an "ideal" woman, a sexualised (white) thin ideal, which is normalised through media representations across a range of media forms, whilst also being culturally and socially appropriated. The beauty myth, as discussed by Wolf (1991) highlights how media and society focus on a particular "ideal" feminine body, usually white, usually thin, usually young. "…the thin, White, blonde Barbie doll physique dressed in tight-fitting, revealing clothing captures predominant expectations of women's beauty…This beauty ideal is normative, even though it is not the norm." (DeFrancisco and Palczewski 2013: p. 83). Academic debates have attempted to explore how far these beauty ideals relate to women's self-concept and reflect the ideals women strive to achieve (Tiggeman and Slater 2014) (discussed in Section 3.5).

There is an absence of diversity within these representations, for example race, class, (dis)-ability, sexuality, and where attempts are made to show difference this is often situated against the measure of the feminine norm (Section 3.2.2). The beauty ideal does not just focus on the size and shape of women's bodies, but also represents youth as desirable. The female ideal that emerged through the 1990s is "…fetishized juvenile sexuality…" (Tincknell 2005; 99), whereby a combination of sexuality, idealised body shape and youth is combined to create the "desirable woman", who often looks more like a girl. This narrow, idealised notion of beauty is unachievable for many women and girls and ignores all forms of diversity such as "race", sexuality, class and

disability. "…whiteness comes to be an unmarked or neutral category,…white culture as the unspoken norm." (Frankenberg 1993: p. 197)

There is also a focus on image and self-objectification through social media sites such as *Instagram* and *Facebook*. Goldman (1992) suggests women are shown as actively choosing to objectify themselves through social media. Berriman and Thomson (2015) highlight young people's media use is focused very much on the visual, with the body and appearance centrally framed by visual practices. This visual focus is reflected by the self-representation of women and girls, where they often self-sexualise and present themselves in hyper-sexualised images similar to gender representations in advertising (Tortajada et al 2013). These images often meet traditional expectations of attractiveness (slim, white, conventionally attractive, sexually desiring) and are within the confines of traditional notions of heterosexual attractiveness. Aubrey et al (2017) suggests many young people perceive self-sexualisation as a way of becoming sexually empowered with Smith (2017) suggesting Miley Cyrus' sexual performances can be an exhibition of power (discussed further below). This is especially relevant if young people see their favourite celebrities participating in their own self-sexualisation and encouraging "…a sexualizing gaze." (Aubrey et al 2017: p. 363).

However, despite the suggestion young people are encouraged to self-objectify, young girls are critical of other young girls adopting this sexualisation on social media. "…adolescent girls and young adult women are in a no-win situation. If they enact a sexy presentation, they risk negative evaluations…If they do not comply with the sexy

mandate, they may lose out on the social rewards associated with sexiness including attention from boys and men". (Daniels and Zurbriggen 2016: p. 9). This demonstrates the contradictory discourses that surround the objectification and self-objectification of women and girls' bodies, with girls being subjected to negative responses whichever way they represent themselves. These discussions suggest girls have agency and choice when considering how to represent themselves, but this "choice" is framed by expectations and judgements from others. Girls cannot escape the patriarchal gaze that examines how they present themselves (Hey 1997) and girls check each other against these standards. "The girls in my study…could not avoid the superordinate intense scrutiny of hegemonic masculine culture. In very many respects they did the work of that culture amongst and between themselves…" (Hey 1997: p. 131).

Not only do the girls scrutinise each other according to the patriarchal gaze, but as argued by Myers and Raymond (2010) and Magnesson and Marecek (2012) they assume a heterosexual discourse throughout their critiques of each other and their self-presentations. Pre-teen girls made assumptions that boys will be part of girls' interests and had already learnt a heteronormative discourse (Myers and Raymond 2010) and although some of the girls in Myers and Raymond's study may be, or become, lesbians they had learnt how to perform heteronormativity and be seen as an "appropriate" girl. Teenage girls "…drew on discourses of heterosexuality as they negotiated developmental pathways between the ages of twelve and fourteen years…" (Gulbrandsen 2003: p. 114). My research offers an opportunity to hear working-class girl's voices, when considering representations by other women or girls

and when discussing how they “choose” to present themselves, including the thread of assumed heterosexuality, that potentially impacts on their imagined domestic futures. This allows for a greater insight into the decisions the girls make on their own social media sites, whilst surrounded by the sexualisation discourse.

The academic discussions around pornography, objectification, and self-objectification ignore class or the intersection of class and gender, within texts. There has been little consideration of the differing experiences of working-class and middle-class girls, both within the experiences of media that objectifies women, or self-objectification (Bordo 1997; Bartky 1990; Fredrickson and Roberts 1997). Girls from different backgrounds understand, experience, and negotiate objectification in distinctive ways, because despite academic discussions lacking the focus on class, media representations have a classed lens through which women and girls are presented. This is demonstrated by Charles (2012) who highlights that the hypersexual young femininity in media, often represented as empowering and successful in line with post-feminist and neoliberal discourse, is classed. “…the parameters of what constitute power and success are highly regulatory, and exclusive to bodies that are often white, middle class and (hetero) sexually desirable.” (Charles 2012: p. 320). This is supported by Banet-Weiser (2018) who maintains the “empowered” girl is “typically white, middle-class, and entrepreneurial…” (2018: p. 28). Therefore, white middle-class girls may experience and negotiate media messages from a privileged position of power and visibility, whereby other girl’s bodies are subjected to alternative readings and inscriptions.

The consideration of empowering representations of femininity can be further explored through the representations in the 1990s whereby media texts mainstreamed messages of “girl power”. “The media-promoted brand of girl power does not merely suggest that girls can do anything…It also strongly suggests that playing with femininity…can be positive and empowering…” (Hains 2007; p. 197). Hopkins (1999 in White 1999) supports this and suggests “girlpower” combines youth, vitality, sexuality and self-determination, with a girl that has control over her own identity. “…The idea of girlpower encapsulates the narrative of the successful new young woman who is self-inventing, ambitious, and confident.” (Harris 2004 p: 17) This message of empowerment continues in media today, with music stars, and reality TV stars often adopting the “empowered” message, for example Miley Cyrus, Beyonce, Kim Kardashian. However, as discussed by Charles (2012) some girls may understand these messages in different ways, whilst “girl power” has been critiqued as an illusion that complies with, “…long-standing, patriarchal, mainstream ideals for women’s appearances…The outcome is a hegemonic perpetuation of the beauty myth...” (Hains 2007: p. 198 – 199). “Girl power” suggests empowerment and self-expression but within the confines of heteronormativity, capitalist consumption and patriarchal representations. These heteronormative, white and middle-class ideals are demonstrated through shows such as *Sabrina the Teenage Witch, Charmed, The Vampire Diaries, Pretty Little Liars,* alongside teen pop idols of the time such as *Britney Spears, Christina Aguilera* and *Jessica Simpson*. “…economy of visibility privileges the white middle-class girls who fit the category of the “Can-Do” girls…”(Banet-Weiser 2018: p. 82). Young girls from a working-class background are in a position whereby

the image of empowered, yet idealised and traditional (white, young, middle class, thin, heterosexual), femininity does not reflect their experiences, "…we need to think about…Whose body can be a socially valued version of femininity…who is deemed worthy of empowering…" (Banet-Weiser 2018: p. 30). Where there are depictions of girls / women from a working-class background, often their fame and wealth eclipse their class origins, for example, Geri Halliwell from *The Spice Girls* and Cheryl from *Girls Aloud.* The "girl power" discourse has been framed by neo-capitalist ideology, and only offers working-class girls freedom within the constraints of idealised femininity. "Nonwhite people, nonheteronormative, nongender conforming individuals and communities, and the working class are subject to intense surveillance as a way to enforce social discipline…" (Banet-Weiser 2018: p. 25)

It is not only class that is ignored when considering media messages, the dominant representation prioritises the "white" Western beauty ideal, "…the priority given to selected images of Whiteness…convey the message that Western beauty is superior to any other racial form…" (Lemish 2010: p. 55). Gill (2009) argues the sexualisation of women's bodies is both shown through a class and racial lens, with the women in British media primarily being represented as white "…white middle-class girls are hypervisible…but also are constantly harnessed for a host of ideological campaigns because of that visibility…" (Banet-Weiser 2018: p. 83). There is a clear distinction between the sexualised yet "respectable" white middle-class woman and "slutty" sexuality of white working-class women, with markers such as education or wealth necessary for the display of femininity that can hold together sexuality and

respectability (Skeggs 1997). As discussed in Sections 1.2.1 and 2.4.1.2 "whiteness" dominates media messages in part through the invisibility of "whiteness" (Frankenberg 1993; Ganley 2003; Dyer 1997) and "whiteness" is part of the construction of "respectable femininity". "…white people create the dominant images of the world and don't quite see that they thus construct the world in their own image; white people set standards of humanity by which they are bound to succeed and others bound to fail…" (Dyer 1997: p. 9).

This representation of respectable white middle-class femininity versus the unrespectable working-class can be linked to the virgin/whore dichotomy, whereby working-class girls have to negotiate ways of exhibiting femininity whilst not being perceived as too overtly sexual (Lowe 2003). Girls are told they should look sexy but not be sexual (Walkerdine 2011 in Wood and Skeggs 2011), and girls are either perceived as "…either pure and virginal or promiscuous and easy." (Crawford and Popp 2003: p. 13). Girls experience conflicting messages from media where, "…they are depicted as sexual objects yet defined in terms of sluts and whores when they express their sexuality…" (Crawford and Popp 2003: p. 24). Youdell (2005) suggests working-class girls have to try and navigate these messages, whilst also exploring their own sexuality. However, the classist nature of the virgin/whore dichotomy, evidenced by media and societal messages, does not relate to middle-class girls in the same way as it does for working-class girls, due to their assumed class. Working-class girls and women are subjected to different treatment by media and society through the structural inequalities faced by middle-class and working-class women. "The women

of this study emerge as subjects through the nexus of structures, power relations and capital transfers which produce frameworks of representations and values which establish what it is to be a White working-class woman…The representations of working-class women (historically and contemporary) are more likely to be products of fear, desire and projection than of knowledge and understanding." (Skeggs 1997: p. 160-161). Working-class women are represented in a complex manner, with issues of sexuality, risk and lack of respectability all packaged into these representations, with evidence of societal "fear" at the lack of containment of "these" women. Through normative messages working-class women are encouraged to monitor and contain themselves (discussed below).

Against the normative representations of middle-classness, the most visible contemporary portrayal of working-class identity in British media is displayed by the construction of the "chav" (Section 2.5.2). "…aesthetically, performatively, and morally different, in opposition to the normative middle-class subject…"chav" comes to represent everything about whiteness that the middle classes are not. …" (Hollingworth and Williams 2009: p. 479). This stereotype of the white working-class is associated with the consumption of products that identify class and hierarchal boundaries, (Le Grand 2015; Hayward and Yar 2006). Media treatment of the female "chav", adopts a gendered and classed tone that ensures working-class girls are relegated to representations of a "…'slutty' and 'filthy' femininity,…" (Le Grand 2015: p.5), associated with teen pregnancy, dysfunctional families and non-respectable working-class backgrounds that sets them far from the middle-class norms. The white

working-class are shown as problematically "white", or linked to extreme "whiteness" in media, which hides the "whiteness" of the middle-classes (Lawler 2012). Whilst some "chav" celebrities have challenged the negative working-class representations, "…[Katie] Price and [Cheryl] Cole identify with the "chav" myth yet refashion its meanings to incorporate positive versions of a working-class identity…" Cocker et al (2015: p. 519), many working-class representations, particularly in reality TV shows, there is a dominance of the negative "chav" stereotype.

These discussions demonstrate how particular groups of women are represented as the "norm", whilst other women are invisible or "othered". "Women of color and poor women in particular tend to be represented in ways that reinforce their otherness." (Launius and Hassel 2015: p 130). Due to the focus on the sexualisation debate, working-class girls and women have, at times, been ignored, or alternatively there has been a focus on the representation of the "chav", with which few white working-class girls identify. The representation of the "ordinary" working-class girl, one that does not exhibit the excess of the "chavette" or "ladette", the hyper-sexuality of the whore / virgin dichotomy, or the hyper-femininity associated with shows such as *Love Island*, distinctive from the middle-class representations of femininity, is invisible. My research attempts to fill this gap in literature by exploring the gendered and classed representations of working-class girls, through the girls' own voices.

3.2.2 Maintaining femininity

The following section explores how media and society work to maintain the preferred femininity, with a particular focus on how media is considered to socialise girls into their femininity. It is claimed by Macdonald (1995) and Egan and Hawkes (2008) media representations of femininity have not significantly changed throughout the century. The middle-class consider the working-class to be, "…bawdy and immoral," (Egan and Hawkes 2008: p. 278) which is reflected in media. Examples of these representations are seen in television shows such as *Big Brother, Wife Swap, Jeremy Kyle, How Clean is your House, How to Look 10 Years Younger, Shameless, Little Britain*, and recently *Benefits Street*, alongside tabloid newspapers that draw attention to collective ridicule and judgement (Wood and Skeggs 2011). While there are exceptions to these shows such as those that parody working-class depictions (*The Royle Family),* many shows, and related news coverage, often reduce the working class to an "underclass" of benefit dependents, and a threat to "normal" or "civilised" (middle-class) society. Reality television shows "…reinvigorate class antagonisms…[that] play out on the women's bodies, homes, cooking skills and ability as mothers, as notions of good taste and cultural capital." (Gill 2007b: p. 153). Skeggs (2009) suggests these shows are structured to demonstrate how working-class standards are shown as lacking whilst middle-class standards are depicted as aspirational. "…working class are exposed as inadequate and in need of training…" (Wood and Skeggs 2011: p. 2). Working-class women are represented as, "…disgusting in their disrespectability and excess,..." (Lawler 2005, pp. 435–436), however when these women are shown to be trying to improve (eg *Ladette to Lady*) the women are further ridiculed, shown as stupid and

needing more, "….discipline to moderate their tastes and practices towards the strategic goal of making the right impression,…" (Wood and Skeggs 2008; p.187). This is supported by Albury and Lumby (2010) who suggest judgements about clothing and behaviour of working-class girls, show how media and society work to maintain an "appropriate" femininity, that complies with middle-class norms, and thus judges the working-class as lacking (Section 3.2.1). The working-class are lacking respectability and are then positioned by society as needing to attempt to "become" respectable. "…respectability is usually the first casualty for young working-class women. Hence, they are positioned as the unrespectable very early on in their lives – their position in society is one of disrespect, and they have to work extremely hard to try and move themselves from this position…" (McKenzie 2015: p. 69) This is supported by Skeggs (1997) who maintains working-class girls and women are concerned with appearing respectable due to the fact they are represented as lacking it, whilst the middle-classes that dominate representations are presented as "respectable" and thus are of value. "Respectability is usually the concern of those who are not seen to have it…It would not be something to desire, to prove and to achieve if it had not been seen to be a property of 'others', those who were valued and legitimated." (Skeggs 1997: p. 1).

This is now reinforced by girls policing each other through social media, with girls "…exercised as each other's critics and self-regulators by the search for compliance with numerous gender, class (and "race") specific dimensions of 'normality'." (Hey 1997: p. 132). The view of girls moderating other girls is additionally evidenced by "popular girls" in school who are seen as "…enacting the dominant or "best" form of

girlhood…" (Magnusson and Marecek 2012: p. 92). The "popular girls" show other girls what activities they should be interested in, what to wear, use of makeup and the importance of a focus of heterosexuality. These arguments draw on Bourdieu's notion of social capital (Albury and Lumby 2010), with "popular girls" or mediated girls providing working-class girls with an example of femininity that should be aspired to. However, it is argued working-class girls are not, "…passive and compliant girls simply being initiated into their gender roles. Rather they are actively involved in making sense of and defining their own social realities." (Connolly and Healy 2004: p. 521). The focus on the agency of working-class girls actively participating in constructing their own version of femininity allows consideration of how girls may be doing so through subversive practices, such as highlighting their lack of conformity to middle-class norms and resisting the restrictions of acceptable femininity. My research allows this to be explored through the working-class girl's voices and attempts to understand how far the girls see media and society as maintaining femininity and if they conform or attempt to resist this.

The self-representations shown by young vloggers and bloggers on social media (such as Zoella and Tanya Burr) offer an updated version of femininity that suggests girls can "have it all", whilst conforming to the middle-class "norms". These suggest girls can be successful, empowered (through having a voice and being popular) and feminine. However, these young women fit the thin, white, middle-class ideal, whilst representing themselves in way that suggests femininity comes naturally and easily. "…the codes by which top-ranked fashion bloggers represent themselves veil the labor,

discipline, and capital that go into the production of the digital self." (Duffy and Hund 2015: p. 9). For many of the vloggers, maintaining femininity becomes their lucrative career, and the notion of empowerment comes through the focus on "…sexuality, appearance, and consumerism." (Brinkman et al 2014: p. 13). The relationship between girls and social media celebrities has been explored (Berryman and Kavka 2017), with girls claiming they enjoy YouTube vloggers as they "get to know" the vloggers. Rasmussen (2018) discusses this parasocial interaction with YouTube celebrities, and suggests, this was demonstrated through YouTube users expressing "…feelings of knowing the speaker and feeling as though the speaker was their friend". (Rasmussen 2018: p. 289). According to Ferchaud et al (2018) this is established through self-disclosure on the part of the YouTube celebrity, in an attempt to be perceived as authentic, and thus building a relationship with their audience. However, this intimacy is developed through the "gendered self-commodification" (Berryman and Kavka (2017: p. 318) of the vlogger, with this promotion of femininity accused of pressurising young girls to present themselves in a way to show popularity, look cool, or desirable (Ofcom 2017; Tiggeman and Slater 2014; Archer et al 2007)

Arguably working-class celebrities could be considered in a position of power and offering a challenge to middle-class dominance within the public sphere (Marshall 1997). "…celebrity is a primary contemporary means to power, privilege, and mobility" (Gamson 1994: p. 186). However, the treatment and constant scrutiny of some of the working-class women does not appear to situate these women in positions of power, other than temporarily, until media wishes to strip them of it,

almost as an example to other working-class women that may attempt to achieve this status (Raisborough et al 2012; Tyler and Bennett 2010). "Today, the widespread scorn and derision directed at celebrities is aimed predominantly at a particular kind of female celebrity. This celebrity is either an ordinary girl whose fame is a result of appearances on reality TV shows, or she is a pop star who has been on a drug- or alcohol-fuelled course of self-destruction. The gendered politics of the treatment of these female celebrities is questionable, and it acts to mask a deeper class prejudice which has resurfaced in recent years…" (Williamson 2010: p. 118). This media coverage continues to maintain an acceptable middle-class femininity, whilst ensuring working-class women are shown what may happen should they attempt to enter into or subvert this. Examples such as Jade Goody of *Big Brother* fame, or recently Megan Barton-Hanson of *Love Island* fame, are critiqued for not complying with middle-class values or showing an overtly sexual persona that does not comply with "acceptable femininity". My research allows working-class girls' interpretations of these representations to be heard, and to explore how working-class girls understand and decode mainstream femininity, whether this is from a position of compliance or attempts at subversion. Research has explored the gendered and classed nature of specific media programmes (Woods and Skeggs 2008 / 2011), however, this has not focused on the girls' voices and explored how working-class girls engage with media messages or the dominance of middle-class norms, that exist throughout media focused on young people.

3.3 Media, social class, women and work

The following section moves on to explore the position of women in the workplace, initially discussing women and work, then considering the middle-class focus of much research. This examines how media creates a normative view of women and work, reinforcing patriarchy and capitalism. "The power to impose the notion of the family, childhood, femininity, sexuality as apart and distinct from the general harsh, competitive world outside in which only men are strong enough to rule, serves to reinforce and maintain capitalism." (Rowbotham 1973: p.56). This is reinforced by de Beauvoir (1997) who maintains women that are professional or intellectual are often reproached for losing sight of their femininity.

3.3.1 Women in work

The position of women and inequalities experienced in the workplace, are shaped as girls make decisions about their education and progression after school into higher education because girls often choose subjects stereotypically aligned with their gender (Dhesi 2011). This gendered belief impacts on how girls perceive their ability in subjects, (Koul et al 2010) with girls underestimating their ability in non-traditionally feminine subjects (Correll 2001; Crombie et al 2005; DeWitt et al 2013). Research by Collett and Avelis (2013 cited in Price 2013) demonstrated girls were more likely to suffer from "imposter syndrome", all of which constitutes potential reasons why girls are "self-selecting" into traditionally feminine occupations or "self-limiting" their progression. In addition to this it is shown by Archer et al (2012) that girls who are

good at science often have to choose one of two identities to adopt; a “science” persona (academic and non-girly) or a “feminine” persona, which maintains their heterosexual appeal. McRobbie (2009) discusses what she called the “Post-Feminist Masquerade”, the idea that the focus on the image of femininity detracts from careers, and how girls have to assume a “hyper-femininity” to maintain heterosexual attractiveness. Research discussing gendered educational and occupational choices do not often focus on the difference between working-class and middle-class experiences, despite statistics pointing to significantly different entry rates to higher education for those young people from an “advantaged” background compared to young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Class influences progression to higher education (Section 1.2.1), “Achievement at 16-plus has a strong relationship with social background…” (Plummer 2000: p. 26). Evans (2009) and Barone (2006) suggest family-based altruism and a commitment to the maintenance of the family ties and obligations maintain class and gender inequalities. Working-class girls may wish to take up opportunities within education, however, this is balanced by their understanding of “their” world and the commitments they have within it, suggesting goals and expectations are adapted to fit with this social world. This social world is created through parental expectations, role models, the structure of society and potentially media. This highlights the complexity of decisions made about occupations by girls and acknowledges girls are confronted with a range of barriers or wider considerations that impact on their “choices”. Although some discussion of class exists within research about working-class and higher education,

there is a predominance of middle-class ideologies, with discussions of “aspirations”, particular focus on STEM subjects, and little consideration of the structural reasons why the girls make the decisions they do (Section 3.3.2). My research allows consideration of the imagined futures of young working-class girls, including their expectations or desires for education, and attempt to understand what shapes these goals, from the girls’ own perspectives.

Walter (2010) and Banyard (2011), highlight despite potential opportunities, women have not made the progress that may be expected. Banyard (2011) suggests all women irrespective of where they are in the career spectrum are still discriminated against, “Sexist attitudes and outdated stereotypes continue to shackle women and restrict their opportunities.” (Banyard 2011: p. 76). Preston (1999) supports this and further suggests integrating women into occupations does not provide the answer, because either the occupation becomes “feminised” (and hence devalued) or women fail to achieve equal status with male co-workers. This highlights a lack of real progress, not only in the UK but internationally, where women are under-represented in key positions of power, lacking equality in terms of income and are the main contributor to the household in terms of labour (discussed in Section 3.4.1).

When considering the diversity and experiences of a range of women, working-class women are further discriminated against. Walkerdine et al (2001) maintains social class must be considered when discussing gender in the workplace because middle-class women have different experiences and opportunities compared to working-class.

"…on the whole those women who are experiencing some convergence with men and those who are experiencing polarisation in the labour market do not come from the same social class." (Walkerdine et al 2001: p. 61). This is supported by Hamilton and Powers (1990) who maintain working-class women have not experienced improvements in their working lives and they often combine employment with motherhood. "Both the individual and structural dimensions of social class contribute to inequality in wages and job status." (Harlan and Berheide 1994: p13). This supports socialist feminist claims there is a need to consider the contribution of motherhood and the roles within the domestic sphere when attempting to understand women's position (Section 3.4).

In contrast to neoliberal explanations of women's position which focus on "choice" (Section 2.5.1) research that attempts to explain the position of women within the workplace (Johnston and Lee 2012; Correll 2001; Budgeon 2015) suggest "choice" is not an accurate understanding, as women's "choices" are really made under "…conditions of oppression and exploitation…" (Budgeon 2015: p. 308). Ball (2012) maintains "re-traditionalisation" is occurring, whereby "choice" is shaped by traditional ideas about gender that are being reinstated. This is supported by (Bimrose 2001; Fine 2010; and Baker 2010) who refute the notion of "choice" and highlight how claims of "choice" "…ignores the powerful historical forces and occupational socialization that influence women's job aspirations…individuals make choices in the context of what they perceive as available opportunities…" (Harlan and Berheide 1994: p.29). Chen (2013) argues neoliberalism encourages subjects to self-govern, which

means individuals “self-serve best by choosing to follow the normative line…” (Chen 2013: p. 444). Girls have an “illusion of choice”, that is in fact limited by societal pressure to conform to norms. My research allows for this discussion and factors affecting “choice” to be heard through the girls’ voices, whereby they can discuss their imagined futures and reasons for these futures, including factors they believe socialise them into their expectations.

3.3.2 Girl’s and their “aspirations” for work

Women’s positions within the workplace are affected by gender and class, with working-class women suffering greater inequalities than middle-class women. Research into the position of working-class women has often focused on the aspirations of these women and suggestions the working-class have lower aspirations than the middle-class (Allen and Hollingworth 2011; Gordon et al 2005). However, much of this research has adopted a classist tone, with the focus on “aspirations” in terms of careers, which assumes middle-class measurements of success and aspiration, presumes the focus should be on “careers”, and ignores the class structure as an impediment to young people’s goals. My research attempts to fill this gap by exploring the situation through a working-class approach that allows young working-class girls to consider all imagined futures rather than those which middle-class norms suggest are aspirational.

Research suggests working-class girls do not share the “aspirations” as middle-class girls. “…girls who come from lower class homes tend to have more traditional sex-role

ideologies." (Gaskell 1975: p. 460) Research by Chisholm and Bois-Reynold (1993) suggests the girls in their study understood their class and gender position, and this influenced their expectations. "…it is the *realism* of the London girls which shapes their orientations and plans, leading them to tailor their expectations and decisions around the 'inevitabilities' of gender in adult life..." (Chisholm and Bois-Reynold 1993: p. 267), demonstrating the structural factors that influence what young people may expect. However, Basit's study (1996) which focused on British Muslim girls that were categorised as working-class, showed almost all the girls in Basit's study had high career ambitions and aspired to occupations perceived as middle-class. This considers the impact of class and "race" and demonstrates class does not always impact on "aspirations", which can be further explored through my research, in addition to considering how other aspects of the girls' imagined futures may also shape their expectations for their futures.

Another theme of research that has dominated the discourse surrounding girls and aspirations or successes, is the "successful girls" discourse, as mentioned in Section 1.4.2. This is evident both within academic and wider societal discussions about the success of girls in education and how some girls are outperforming boys. However, this discussion takes a middle-class tone, with the focus on "successful" middle-class girls that are high-achievers, with these high-achieving girls making plans (Marks and Houston 2002). In opposition to the successful girls, there are the "at risk" girls, those who belong to the working-class or even the underclass, and are not reaping the benefits of outperforming boys, or the structural benefits of their class position. As

discussed by Harris (2004. P: 26), "Young women who are deemed to be at-risk are cut off from the imagined majority of successful girls… and are then treated as an underclass." Banet-Weiser (2018) highlights how these "at-risk" girls, are subjected to scrutiny due to their perceived position as "at-risk" whilst the "…economy of visibility privileges the white middle-class girls who fit the category of the "Can-Do" girls…"(Banet-Weiser 2018: p. 82)

Other academic discussions have explored factors that influence girl's educational performance and desires for their futures. Much existing research has explored the influence of parents and socialisation through the family and their potential future work (Oliver 1975; Smith 1980; Psathas 1968; Tangri 1972, Burlin 1976). Much of this research is dated, with a lack of agreement between academics as to how far fathers or mothers have a socialising effect. Those studies that suggest fathers influence work aspirations have not considered this may have been due to the fathers being more likely to be working outside of the home (Lapour and Heppner 2009). Corder and Stephan (1984) and Schroeder et al (1992) suggest the family socialises young people, whereas Starrels (1992), Boyd 1989, and Evertsson (2006) suggest children's values and attitudes to maternal employment are most likely to be influenced by their mothers, rather than the family in general. "Social learning theory predicts that if adolescents observe their mothers participating in the paid labor force, they should evaluate such behaviour as normal." (Weinshenker (2006: p. 846). Much of this research is based on middle-class families, therefore neglecting the imagined futures of working-class girls or the role of the working-class family. My research contributes

to this gap in research and explores, through the working-class girl's voices, their expectations for work. However, a further gap filled by my research explores how far these girls perceive they are socialised by media into their imagined futures, something which has not been considered. The following section explores the representation of women and work in media.

3.3.3 Women's work in media

Generally, women are under-represented in media, with men outnumbering women, both in front of and behind the camera, and in positions of ownership and control of media industries (Turner 2010; Downs and Smith 2010; Smith et al 2013; Lauzen 2016; Follows et al 2016; Gunter 1995). In addition to this under-representation, women are also often restricted to feminine and domestic roles (DeWitt et al 2013; Tincknell 2005; Carson and Pajaczkowska 2000). Smith et al (2012) claims family films are filled with stereotypes, with women shown in a fifth of the occupations on screen, these occupations usually lack power or prestige, and does not reflect women's participation in the workforce. "…the portrayal of occupation is largely gendered. Both family films and prime-time shows depict female characters as working less than their male counterparts…" (Smith et al 2012: p. 18). According to Fine (2010) this "naturalizes" the representations of women and maintains gender norms.

When women are shown within positions of power in media they are often reduced to a focus on the appearance and personal life of the woman (Byerly and Ross 2006; McRobbie 2009; Magor 2006; O'Neill et al 2015). Magor (2006) maintains women's

working lives remain secondary to other information about the women, such as the women's marital status or domestic arrangements, examples of this can be seen in media coverage of women such as Cherie Blair, Hillary Clinton, Angela Merkel, and more recently with the restructure in the UK Cabinet, whereby media coverage focused on the looks and domestic lives of female cabinet members (Daily Mail 15 July 2014). "…women parliamentarians are…persistently trivialized by media speculation over their private lives, domestic arrangements, and sartorial style:.." (Byerly and Ross 2006: p. 45). This is supported by Goren (2009) and O'Neill et al (2015) who argue women in politics are, "homogenised around traditional patriarchal views of what women are and what they should be." O'Neill et al 2015: p. 304)

However, Gill (2012) refutes the claims women are only shown in narrow roles within media and suggests, a "…single template of femininity to which to aspire has given way to something much more fragmented and complex..." (Gill 2012: p. 738). Despite a perhaps more varied representation of women Chen (2013) maintains women's genres continue to focus on, "…'free' women who invariably end up making the same choice prescribed by normative culture, willingly desiring the same normative heterosexual relationships and the same sexy, eroticised and fashionably adorned female bodily charm that always has been promoted by patriarchy and capitalism…" (Chen 2013: p. 443). The notion of "choice" in media reflects neoliberal and post-feminist ideas, yet "…constitute an idealized version of femininity remade through a language of choice and autonomy…" (Budgeon 2015: p. 305). These discussions demonstrate media reflects what is deemed appropriate, suitable and desired, and reinforces the idea girls

and women can work "at their own risk", but have to be very careful not to lose their femininity in doing so.

Research into occupational segregation, educational choices and factors that may impact on choices made by girls indicates clear links with socialisation, particularly the potential influences of parents, role models and pervasive cultural norms held about gender roles. There are highly complex variables that impact on girls' futures, such as perceptions of self and others, expectations, role models, ability, class, and "race", however the role of the media in contributing to socialisation, particularly focused on goals and desires for the future has not been fully explored. As demonstrated in this section media representations restrict women to a limited range of roles, often ridicule women that step outside of the "norm" and highlight desirable aspects of femininity, whilst portraying women through middle-class norms. My research explores how working-class girls perceive these stereotypes and if they believe media socialises them into their imagined working futures.

3.4 Media, social class, women and the domestic sphere

Socialist feminists in the so-called "Second Wave" feminist movement focused on this primary caring role women often have to fulfil and highlighted how responsibilities within the home reinforce class inequalities for women, (Pocock 2005; McDonald et al 2011; Bland et al 1978; Braun et al 2008). "Defined primarily through our destinies as wives and mothers – to be somebody else's private life – women are principally

placed, politically, ideologically and economically, in 'the personal sphere' of the family." (Brunsdon 1978 in Bland et al 1978: p. 23).

Not only does research point to women being responsible for the domestic sphere, but the decision to have children also significantly impacts on women's lives. Probert and Macdonald (1999) argue class shapes decisions about having children, with structural factors impacting on when women have children, with working-class girls with fewer opportunities in terms of work opting to have children at a younger age. This is framed by the "can-do girl" discourse whereby girls from advantaged backgrounds are expected to put off having a child until they are older with established careers. Kanji and Hupka-Brunner (2014) suggest women enter more segregated and family-friendly occupations if they want children, occupations that are most likely to be low-paid, feminised and populated by working-class women. However, Kanji and Hupka-Brunner (2014) maintain the wish to have children does not mean those women are less ambitious, but rather their career outcomes occur due to a socially constructed process. The following section explores the gendered and classed position of women in the domestic sphere, and how media reflect these roles of women, and normalises the dual burden women have.

3.4.1 Gendered and Class Homes

Gillies (2005) maintains although childrearing is often termed "parenting" now, this actually disguises the gendered nature of childrearing that continues to exist, with mothers taking primary responsibility for children, suggesting the role of women in the

home has not significantly changed since this was discussed by socialist feminists in the so-called "Second Wave" feminist movement. Gordon et al (2005) maintains girls continue to expect conventional heterosexual families in the future, with an assumption of marriage and children by the age of 35. This supports the need for my research to explore imagined futures, including the domestic futures of working-class girls, rather than focusing only on working futures outside of the home, to explore how far working-class girls expect "normative" family lives. In addition to this, research has shown young women expect to be the main carer for young children (Pocock 2005; Schroeder et al 1992), and plan to balance work and children, including working part-time to accommodate their children. This complies with the ideological representations of women as mothers and "naturally" situated to the household and children (Mitchell 2015; and Barrett and McIntosh 1991).

Due to this positioning of women in the home it has been suggested that mothers are role models and shape young girl's expectations for their futures (Arditti et al 1991; Ex and Janssens 1998; Boyd 1989). "...The more traditional the gender role attitudes of a mother, the stronger her tendency to emphasize a daughter's conformity, and the more traditional her daughter's attitudes appear to be." Ex and Janssens (1998: p. 182). Further to this Plummer (2000) explored, from a biographical perspective, the position of working-class girls and their mothers and suggested, "As far as we were aware, we were to inherit our mother's lives…They and other working-class women around us were our role models, the only women (other than schoolteachers) we really met in childhood." (Plummer 2000: p. 117). This suggests mothers are

socialising agents for their daughters and situating women in the domestic sphere contributes to the ideology of women's subjection.

This is supported by Ex and Janssens (2000) who argue class has an influence on ideas about motherhood, with working-class women preferring their role as mother compared to their role as worker (Jordan et al. 1992), whilst Duncan et al (2003) maintain working-class mothers connect with the "primarily mother" identity whilst middle-class mothers tended more towards the "primarily worker". Gordon et al (2005) study examining girls in the UK and Finland found, "Less than one-third of the middle class compared with more than a half of the working-class young women mentioned marriage, engagement or cohabitation." (Gordon et al 2005: p. 90). However, in contrast with this Sharpe's (1976) study on working-class girls from London, suggested these girls did not expect or wish to follow in their mother's footsteps, rather they wished to challenge the subordinate role of wife and mother. The imagined futures of working-class girls is complicated by what they perceive as potential conflict between domestic and working lives, as suggested by Anyon (in Walker and Barton 1983) working-class girls who wanted to work after leaving school perceived this would create a conflict between their role as mother and wife within the home, and worker outside of the home. This suggests an awareness that the balance between working lives and domestic lives creates conflict for working-class girls and, as suggested by Weis (1990), working-class girls need to seek a balance for the double bind of work and family. These discussions all provide a starting point to discuss and discover the imagined futures of young working-class girls, through their

own voices, with my research filling the gap in terms of what the girls imagine but also how they negotiate and discuss these futures. The following section explores existing research focused on media representations of the domestic role of women and how media restricts women to the home.

3.4.2 Constructing the "ideal" domestic sphere

Research suggests the perceptions of women confined to the domestic sphere continues to dominate media and potentially shape young women's perceptions of their futures (Hamilton and Powers 1990). "…it is difficult to see how a diverse population of young women will…sustain narratives about blending occupational success and motherhood…" (Harris 2004: p. 61). Harris (2004) suggests women who delay having a child in preference of pursuing a career, are represented as making a "good" choice. This societal perception and labelling as "good" or "bad" choices is reflected in media with young, teen mothers from working-class backgrounds demonised whilst maintaining the message of what is appropriate, along middle-class lines. Byerly and Ross, (2006) maintain women's magazines are, "…still pushing the same agenda [however]…the straitjacketing of women's lives and aspirations now masquerades as girl power…" (Byerly and Ross 2006: p. 50). The ideal wife or mother is often shown as part of the ideal nuclear family in media as suggested by Chambers (2000) and DeWitt et al (2013) drawing on traditional notions of what the family is "supposed" to be. Chambers (2000) suggests media offers three "types" of family, "…an ideal nuclear model… …a second category, a defective and unstable family is being scrutinized and judged as dysfunctional… trans-nuclear, hybridized family is

represented in a third category…"(Chambers 2000: p. 200). The nuclear family is situated clearly within the middle-class norms, and families that sit outside of this belong to the working-class and are measured against this ideal. The notion of the "…'yummy mummy'…" (Hadfield et al (2007: p. 259) further creates a white middle-class ideal that "other" mothers cannot live up to, suggesting they have failed at being appropriately feminine. Whilst family films stereotype women as either young and sexy, or domestic, with two archetypical female characters shown, "…the sex pot (young / sexualised) and the sex not (wife / mother)…" Smith et al (2012: p. 6). These limited roles for women, and the contrast between the "sexy" and the "domestic" reflects the sexualisation discourse (Section 3.2), and the confines of the perceived "natural" position of women in the domestic sphere. My research provides an opportunity to explore how the working-class girls in my study perceive these representations, and if they believe this shapes their role as an imagined future woman or mother.

Naturalising the role and position of women in society and maintaining the dominant ideology built on patriarchy and capitalism, is established through "…cultural "myths" that represent ruling class interests as suggested by Barthes (1973). This is supported by Biressi and Nunn (2009) who suggest middle-class values are shown through media as universal values that should be emulated. These universal values are shown as common sense and established as the norm. "... the absent phrase – 'middle-class culture'…We don't think of 'middle-class culture' as something separate – it simply *is* the overall culture..." (Mitchell 2015: p. 33 – 34). The dominance and normalisation of

middle-class culture contribute to the hegemonic notions of appropriate behaviour and values, and therefore contribute to power and inequality in society. "…ideology in media texts reinforces wider power imbalances…." (Couldry 2000: p. 8). The power imbalance experienced by the working-class is reinforced by media, with the working-class represented as "unruly", whilst the middle-class have the power to set the norms (Lawler 2005). There is a gap in research however when considering how media contributes to how working-class girls imagine their futures, this has not been explored. My research seeks to hear how working-class girls perceive media representations that confine women to the home whilst suggesting middle-class lifestyles should be emulated.

3.5 Desirable yet at risk: Girls and Media

The above sections have focused on research into the classed and gendered representations of women in work and the domestic sphere, this has also discussed the sexualisation of girls and women that has dominated recent discussions. A further area of research to consider, that plays a significant role in how we understand young girls and their media interactions, is that of girls being shown as desirable yet at risk. This dichotomy is based in the complexity of media messages and representations with girls or youth portrayed as desirable and consumption of beauty products emphasising youth as a key aspect of femininity. "Youth and (until recently) virginity have been "beautiful"…Aging in women is "unbeautiful"…" (Wolf 1991: p. 14). However, this is contrasted with the discourse of fear around girls and media consumption, with the

focus on the power of media. Research about young girls and media use tends to focus on the potential threat of media, particularly social media, to the development of young people. These fears include the impact of screen time on the socialisation of young people, sexualisation of young people, and the potential risk of online bullying (Gabriel 2014).

3.5.1 Girls at Risk

Early media theorists suggested media was powerful and could have a significant impact on audiences, especially children. The early 1930s was a significant moment in the development of media effects research (Tudor 1995). This was later followed by a move away from viewing media as all-powerful, to considering how media constructs a view of reality that is then understood by audiences, for example Cultivation Analysis (Gerbner and Gross 1976), and Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura 1977). Research from the field of psychology often refers to studies that adopt this view of media, with numerous studies linking media representations and girls' eating disorders or body dissatisfaction, for example American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (Downs and Smith 2010). "… adolescent girls…struggle with these media representations but are ultimately ill-equipped to critically analyse or effectively resist them." (Durham 1999: p. 193). Research often focuses on particular sections of the audience as most "at risk", children and girls particularly, but also the working-class who "…have been represented as insufficiently grounded in the appropriate moral and social codes to police their children's television viewing, while working class children are presumed to be particular vulnerable to imitating what they see on television

because of this lack of social capital." (Tincknell 2005: p. 93). Girls from middle-class backgrounds are protected by their "class" and therefore are positioned outside of the media effects concerns that focus on the "at risk" working-class girls (Youdell (2005).

The approaches discussed above consider working-class girls as powerless with powerful media messages able to "persuade" or "influence" them. My research does not wish to situate the working-class girls as powerless, but rather balances their own agency and ability to negotiate their own identity and position within society, with media that works to create "norms". "A feminist conception of power must also be able to examine power relations in terms of culturally encoded meanings and definitions…it must pay attention to the ways in which the feminist movement contests culturally hegemonic definitions and proposes alternate, subversive definitions…" (Allen 1999; p 132). This draws on Gramsci's notions of cultural hegemony as a concept of power, whereby a hegemonic system promotes dominant beliefs (Dow 1996), but also the potential for working-class girls to reject or resist the messages contained within ideology (Duit and van Zoonen 2011; Byerly and Ross 2006; Connolly and Healy 2004). This explanation is appropriate when examining the position of girls within society, and, can be used to examine how working-class girls engage with social norms. Societal "truths", knowledge and thus power relations create an expectation of their futures they must then negotiate and may well conform to. My research reflects on theorists that have been critical of the simplistic view of media effects, (Hall 1973; Morley 1980; Ang 1985; Wood 2007; Egan and Hawkes 2008; Duit and van Zoonen 2011), who suggest media effects theories ignore

differences within the audience, and the power or ability of the audience to construct their own meanings and understandings or negotiate meanings within the viewing experiences.

Theorists such as Hall (1973), Morley (1980), Ang (1985), Radway (1984) highlighted how audiences seek and gain different readings and pleasure from texts. "…re-examination of the pleasures afforded by classical Hollywood films has developed…with a clear acknowledgement that there is always more than one way to read a text…" (Carson & Pajaczkowska (2000: p. 238). In addition to this, Duit and van Zoonen (2011), Wood (2007) and Byerly and Ross (2006) highlight audience interaction with media and challenge assumptions all audiences respond to media in the same way. "…An analysis of how "race", class and sexuality might affect children's understanding of the media or how they engage with these images is missing…." Egan and Hawkes (2008; p. 316). The interaction between working-class girls and media messages is complex and needs to consider the social context of the girl's world and experiences. My research allows the focus of gender and class, through an intersectional lens, to explore media and young working-class girls, rather than ignoring differences in media engagement and understanding.

Most recent concerns about girl's media consumption are focused on social media, suggesting social media normalises expectations of appearance for young girls. This does not suggest young girls are copying but rather they are taught how they should present themselves and pressured to conform via social media. "…social networking

sites provide a pervasive and intense form of "appearance conversations"…" (Tiggeman and Slater (2014: p. 617). This is further explored by Lamb et al (2015) who argues when young girls are asked about their appearance or behaviour they often suggest "other girls" are conforming to the appearance norms but not themselves. The notion of "othering" distances girls from topics by suggesting "others" perform that behaviour, but not them. "…participants in our study may have separated their thinking about whether they personally are impacted by the media and whether *some* girls and women are impacted by the media." (Brinkman et al 2014: p. 13).

This third-person effect (Davison 1983), whereby audiences perceive media as influencing "others" but not "them", is also evident when research has attempted to understand young girl's attitudes to sexualisation in music videos. "In the view of those trying to evaluate the effects of a communication, its greatest impact will not be on "me" or "you," but on "them" -the third persons." (Davison 1983; p. 3). Girls perceive they are unaffected by sexualisation, but there is a need to protect younger girls, "Girls were unequivocal in the view that girls younger than themselves should not be exposed to 'sexualized' representations because of the likelihood they would emulate them and then behave in sexually inappropriate ways for their age….," (Jackson and Goddard 2015: p 250). This suggests the girls perceive themselves as better equipped to manage sexualised media representations. According to Duck and Mullin (1995) the third-person effect is most noticeable for media content or effects that are perceived as having a potentially negative impact. "…he or she may be likely to perceive oneself as not being influenced by such messages but think that others

may not be able to make such a distinction, may be more naïve, and therefore more influenced…" (Connors 2005: p. 6). This offers an opportunity for my research to further explore the working-class girls' perceptions of media and notions of sexualisation, "at risk girls" and how they perceive media socialisation.

My approach does not claim media does not have a potential role as an agent of socialisation (Section 3.5.2), but it offers an opportunity to consider if working-class girls perceive media as contributing to their imagined futures. "…media have an enormous capacity and potential to define what is real; to define our reality…" (Savigny & Marsden 2011: p. 154). Media may define the reality of young working-class girls and therefore create norms that shape the focus and imagined futures of these girls. This also provides an opportunity to understand media from a working-class girls' perspective rather than, as earlier research has done, perceive working-class girls as the ones at risk.

3.5.2 Socialising Media

Academics have explored how media creates "norms" by which people are shown how they should behave, this research has particularly focused on gender, whereas class is shown through middle-class norms, and has not been explored in the same depth, offering an opportunity for my research. Academics such as Kellner (in Dines and Humez 2015), Cooky et al (2010), Couldry (2000) and DeFrancisco and Palczewski (2014) discuss the power of the dominant media to construct frames, to create representations, determine who is seen, heard and normalized, and give a voice to

particular sections of society whilst silencing others. As discussed by Sternod (2011) media maintains and reinforces dominant beliefs, and portray these as "common sense", naturalising a particular image of the world, "…an ideology of the social…" (Couldry 2012: p 106). This is explained by Gauntlett as "…*influences* and *perceptions*, rather than *effects* and *behaviour."* (1998: theory.org.uk). Media is perceived as having some power to influence and create perceptions of the social world, that becomes naturalized and adopted as "real". When researching with working-class girls, it is essential to explore how these girls negotiate the ideology that is evident. "…the media are crucial symbolic vehicles for the construction of meaning in girls' everyday lives." (Durham 1999: p. 193)

Kennard et al (2016) supports these discussions suggesting media offers a normalising role for women, that may impact on women's views of their futures with the pressure to conform to gendered norms. "…media portrayals of women in gendered roles may have [an impact] on a woman's vision of her future…" (Kennard et al. 2016: p. 241). However, beyond normalising gender roles, Gamson (2011) argues social media normalised scrutiny and self-scrutiny with young people accustomed to being watched and judged. Linked to this Doring et al (2016) highlight how selfies allow young people to experiment with both stereotypical and non-stereotypical self-representations, however typically found, "Instagram selfies reproduce traditional gender stereotypes…" (Doring et al 2016: p. 961). Whilst Dobson and Coffey (2015) maintain culture requires young women to sexually objectify themselves, socialising girls into this behaviour. This argues young people are "choosing" to represent themselves in

gender typical ways which supports discussions by Hey (1997) about how girls are contributing to the dominance of patriarchal culture, through self-representations and scrutiny of others. However, it is not only through sexualisation that young girls are socialised according to Youdell (2005) who suggests how girls behave and present themselves is linked to representations and cultural expectations of them.

These findings do not suggest women and girls willingly take on media messages, but rather because the representations and cultural patterns in society are repeated, naturalized and presented as social facts, these become implicitly taken on board and accepted (Fine 2010). Suggesting media has the power to normalise and create a perception of gender that is difficult to challenge. Hall (2000 in du Gay), Duits and van Zoonen (2011) and Brinkman et al (2014) all point to girls attempting to resist media messages and construct a version of femininity that challenges norms and expectations. "…well aware of sexualization in the world around them, but they deny, accommodate or resist this,… Some respondents even explicitly used the terminology of feminism ('sexism') to condemn these images as wrong." (Duits and van Zoonen 2011: p. 502 – 503). This is supported by Lamb et al (2015) who suggested girls may adopt "sexy" images but label these as confident in an attempt to subvert dominant ideology around women accused of negatively sexy or "slutty" images. "these girls are neither passive, unconscious characters, manipulated or duped by the larger social context… resistant voices, gestures, interactions disrupt the regulatory fictions of idealized femininity,…" (Brown 1997 p. 700). Thus, suggesting the women and girls may acknowledge media representations and the narrow presentation of femininity,

however through this understanding and interpretation develop their own identities that can be seen as resistance.

One way girls reject representations is to resist identifying with images they see. "…identities are constructed through, not outside, difference…" (Hall in du Gay et al., 2000: p 17) This links to the notion of "othering" and the idea the dominant representations do not apply to "them". "Disidentification…marking one's position by denying that which either has been attributed to you or is likely or feared as attributable to you." (Anthias 2012: p. 123). Ofcom (2017) found a third of 8 – 11 year olds say there are not enough programmes that show children "like them", which as suggested by Anthias (2012) shows how individuals can construct boundaries of difference. Young girls can accept or resist dominant representations and can use this to show they are not the same as "others" represented in a similar way. However, Tsaliki (2015) suggests the self-regulation of young girls points to an internalisation of dominant tropes of idealised femininity, "despite an extraordinarily sophisticated vocabulary of critique – media representations still got to them, still had an ability to hurt them…made them 'feel bad' or 'feel sad' and/or made them long to look a particular way…" (Gill 2012: p.740).

In addition to the consideration of media as a socialisation agent, this is not the only socialising force young working-class girls experience. Existing research suggests peers (Durham 1999; Hyde and Jaffee 2000) are important in creating gender expectations, and "…exert a powerful pull toward gender role conformity…" (Hyde and Jaffee 2000:

p. 294). This is supported by research discussing social media and how young girls scrutinise each other and create a “pressure” to perform gender appropriately. However, it is not only peers that may socialise girls, with parents and education being considered (as discussed in Section 3.3.2). It is from these discussions my research attempts to explore working-class girl’s engagement with media, to explore how they perceive media socialises them, and how they feel they have the ability to resist media messages whilst being aware of the pressures of gendered and classed norms. This allows an opportunity to explore other ways the girls believe they are socialised and what they perceive is important in shaping their imagined futures. My research is situated within the school of thought that suggests girls are not powerless, they are media literate and aware of the constructed nature of media, whilst seeking to understand the “…role of the media in the formation of consciousness.” (Gauntlett 1999 in Ralph et al 1999; p.42 – 43).

3.6 Summary

Research has highlighted the representation of women within media alongside dominant discourses of class and gender. Debates continue about the range of representations offered and the potential influence these may have. However, it is evident from existing literature media continues to reproduce patriarchal and capitalist ideologies, concerning women’s consumption, improvement and behaviour, and that are classed and “raced”. Women are positioned traditionally within this ideology with a number of “reminders” about what women should do and “warnings”

about what may happen if women do not comply. This has been demonstrated by the treatment of women that work, whereby they are ridiculed for dressing a certain way, but also "warned" about losing their femininity, whilst the demonization of the working-class, and the "chav" stereotype demonstrate the expected middle-class norms to be adhered to. Working-class women's work in mainstream media is largely invisible (Adair 2005).

Existing literature has recently focused on the sexualisation debate, whereas my research contributes to the gaps in literature, as discussed above, that of working-class girls and their imagined working futures, but also working-class girls and their imagined domestic futures. The role of women in the home has largely disappeared from academic discussions, whereas my research engages with socialist feminist debates and the dual burden women face combining work and home life. As discussed in Section 2.3, central to this discussion is Mitchell's (2015) framework of the four spheres of subjection. Media continues to place women predominantly in the home, within the confines of middle-class norms. The contribution my research offers is to explore how working-class girls imagine their futures as potential mothers and partners, but also how they imagine managing the dual demands of work and the home, whilst considering how far the girls perceive media may socialise them into their expectations.

Despite the dominant representations and ideologies identified by previous research, my research does not wish to suggest media leads to working-class girls copying

images or mindlessly absorb the ideals. Rather, my research seeks to explore the dichotomy between the perceived media power, shaped by capitalist and patriarchal beliefs, discussed by socialist feminism, and the power of the girls to shape their own identity through resistance and negotiation with societal expectations, as discussed by some media theorists. This takes an intersectional approach to understanding media responses, with an acknowledgement of differences that may shape working-class girl's interpretation of media representations. My research seeks to challenge the "girls at risk" discussion and explore how girls can be critical and active in the creation of meaning. This contributes to the gap in literature, exploring through the girl's voices how they interpret media representations, allowing for discussion of sexualisation but developing this to consider representations of women in work and the domestic sphere. Revisiting socialist feminism is a "call to arms" for theorists to revisit and draw from the so-called "Second Wave" feminism when class was evident in discussions and to critique the culpability of capitalism in the position of women today, most importantly the position of working-class women today, who are often either ignored, silenced or demonised within culture and wider society. Academia offers a place for this to re-emerge and stand at the forefront of the criticism of claims "we are all equal" now or "class no longer exists".

4 Methodology Discussion: Researching with Young Working-Class Girls

4.1 Introduction

My research adopts a child-centred feminist standpoint epistemology specifically focused on giving a voice to silenced or invisible working-class girls and developing an understanding of their imagined futures, and their perceptions of media representations, as a socialising agent. My feminist approach to research puts, "…the social construction of gender at the center of one's inquiry …feminism argues the centrality of gender in shaping of our consciousness, skills, and institutions as well as in the distribution of power and privilege." (Lather 1991: p. 71). Approaching my research from a constructivist perspective, accepted that the girls would potentially see things differently to me, "…constructivists focus on the reflective and idiosyncratic nature of knowledge,…" (Moses and Knutsen 2012: p. 10). This would allow me to attempt to understand the girls' knowledge and understanding of the world, their imagined futures and media socialisation, rather than my interpretation of their experiences. "Understanding the world from the perspective of children and young people involves researchers recognizing that it is their respondents who are the 'experts'…keepers of knowledge and insights the researchers hope to glean." (Pattman and Kehily in Fraser et al 2004: p. 134).

Much recent research focused on young girls and media has explored "sexualisation", one of the spheres for oppression (Mitchell 2015), however the other three spheres

(Production, Reproduction, and Socialisation of Children) have been neglected from academic and social discussion. Returning to socialist feminist theory enabled me to develop a framework of enquiry which centres on working-class girls, girls that have been absent from much of the academic literature discussing the futures of young girls (Cannon et al 1988). An adapted version of the elements of a "woman's condition" Mitchell's (2015: p. 100-101) (Production, Reproduction, Sexualisation), all contribute to the final element of subjection "Socialisation of children", which discusses the girls themselves and how they perceive socialising their own future children. This allows for enquiry into young working-class girls' visions of their future selves as reflected (or not reflected) in media they consume. This consideration of imagined futures and the girls' perceptions of media socialisation looks beyond the usually discussed gender inequalities and attempts to explore from the girls' perspective why they imagine the futures they do.

In order to establish why young girls imagine the futures they do, both within the public and domestic spheres, and how they think about the media around them, I conducted focus groups and co-participatory interviews. These took place in two schools in the Midlands, both were located in areas with high levels of "Traditional Working-Class" and "Emergent Service Workers" (Savage et al 2013). My research took place between 2015 and 2017 and a total 30 girls took part. Details of the focus groups are discussed in Section 4.5. This chapter explores how and why focus groups were the best choice of method. As a feminist approach to research this needed to be responsive to the girls and allow them to lead discussions to account for how they

perceive the world (Gray et al 2015). "The research cannot thus be totally planned in advance but maintains its openness to the other,…" (Davies and Gannon 2015: p. 315). As discussed by Letherby (2003), my feminist approach to research informed both the theory and practice of my research and attempts to challenge the silences in mainstream research.

This chapter is structured in the following sections. Section 4.1.1 identifies my aims and objectives, shaped by Mitchell's four spheres of women's position. The chapter discusses my epistemological stance (Section 4.2), where my theoretical framework will be discussed along with my research philosophy that informed the structure of my research and how I approached researching with young working-class girls. The theoretical perspective of my research provides a framework that helps make sense of what is going on (Abbot and Wallace 1997). My theoretical perspective (Section 2.3) emerged from socialist feminist thought, which provides an "…overall orienting lens…that shapes the types of questions asked, informs how data are collected and analysed, and provides a call for action or change." (Creswell 2014: p. 64).

Section 4.3 explores the design of my research. This outlines the methodology, including use of gatekeepers, consent and assent, and outlines the participants that took part in my research. Section 4.4 explores the ethical concerns of researching with girls below the age of 18. This section discusses the issues of confidentiality versus child protection, how my research was designed, and researcher power. Ensuring research is ethical is a primary concern, and when researching with children this needs

further scrutiny to ensure the young participants are happily engaged with my research and protected from harm (Appendix 9). Section 4.5 discusses the methods used. The key method used were focus groups; however, these were informed by the media diaries the girls kept as these allowed the discussions to focus on media the girls engaged with. In addition to these methods my research developed into co-participatory research through some of the girls becoming involved in interviewing others girls. Section 4.6 reflects on some of my research limitations and considers the justification for the approaches chosen. The final section (Setion 4.7) outlines the analysis of the data, through the use of NVIVO, but also the use of Excel to develop a map of the girls media use and the girls backgrounds and imagined futures.

4.1.1 Research Aim

The aim of my research is to explore young working-class girls' "imagined futures" with respect to their relationship with media they consume. This seeks to understand the futures young working-class girls imagine for themselves and if they perceive media playing a role in their socialisation into these potential futures. This research focus developed from the desire to understand why many women and girls select gender traditional work in their future lives. Research carried out in this area has often adopted a middle-class tone, with consideration of career "aspirations", rather than exploring both the public and private imagined futures of the girls. Consideration of the imagined working futures cannot be fully explored without considering the imagined futures of girls within the domestic sphere and their imagined role in the

socialisation of children (Mitchell (2015). There has been a lack of focus on class in recent academic literature, and working-class girls are often vilified in media, with the ever-present notion of the "chav" (Jones 2012), or if not labelled the "chav", the notion of the underclass or "benefits scrounger" who cannot support themselves. This research aims to fill a gap in existing research and allow working-class girls voices to be heard within the debate.

My research objectives, outlined in Section 4.2, shaped the methodological choices made and influenced my research design. My research required a qualitative approach, with the focus on a method that would allow working-class girls voices to be heard. The choice of focus groups was designed to allow the girls to discuss their own perspectives on the issues, whilst attempting to give girls the security of a small group. The use of media diaries (Section 4.5.1), did not focus on an objective specifically, my research did not aim to primarily identify what media young girls were engaged with, however, it was necessary to identify this as the findings were central to understanding how the girls engaged with the representations shown in these texts, and if these texts were perceived as socialising the girls. A summary of media use by the girls is in Appendices 1 – 8.

4.2 Research Objectives

The aim of my research is to explore whether young working-class girls perceive media as socialising them into their imagined futures. This focuses on the following

objectives, in an attempt to understand the intersecting inequalities in working-class girls' lives and their perceptions of the role of media in socialising them;

I. To explore working-class girls' perceptions of media they consume, through their voices, and hear how they attempt to negotiate, resist and engage with media and dominant messages around femininity.
II. To explore how the sexualisation of women's bodies is negotiated and if working-class girls perceive this as socialising them into performing a dominant femininity or whether it provides opportunities for resistance.
III. To discover how working-class girls imagine their future working lives, and what they perceive socialises them into imagining these futures.
IV. To investigate how working-class girls imagine their future lives within the domestic sphere, including potentially having and rearing children, and what they perceive socialises them into expecting these futures.

4.3 Theoretical perspective: youth / female-centred research

This section discusses the theoretical perspective of my research and the key aspect of my research approach, being feminist and youth-centred. This section demonstrates how this has developed from the theory that has informed my research aim, that of socialist feminism, and the desire to be youth-centred and provide the working-class girls with an opportunity to be heard. I wished to avoid the girls being "researched on"

and avoid children being "…constructed…as inadequate and uncritical in their encounters with the mass media, which itself is misrepresented as forbiddingly powerful." (Gauntlett 1999 in Ralph et al 1999: p. 38). Informed by my standpoint, in the tradition of Duit and van Zoonen (2011) and Egan and Hawkes (2008), that children, as audiences, have agency and are more media literate than many studies suggest, my research aimed to provide the girls with a platform to discuss their understandings of media and how this relates to their "imagined futures". This links to discussions of children as a silenced group whereby "…discourses of 'giving voice' offer a way of constructing children as active subjects,…" (Alldred 1998 in Ribbens and Edwards 1998: p. 150). Through my research I wished to empower the working-class girls to research with me, to discuss their imagined futures and their perspectives on media, rather than have them simply being researched on. "'...children's worlds have typically become known through adult accounts'…The demand to 'hear the voices of children'…employs the same discourses of empowerment and metaphors of voice and perspective." (Brannen and O'Brien 1996: p. 1).

Lloyd-Smith and Tarr (in Lewis and Lindsay (2000) suggest researching with children and young people provides an opportunity to challenge meanings, social assumptions and beliefs. "…the scope of research about children could be expanded by involving children as researchers in many methods, levels and stages of the process. Children are the primary source of knowledge about their own views and experiences." (Alderson 2001: p. 151). My research aims to understand the girls' experiences and views but also to engage the girls with my research process and to be guided by their

contributions. "…significant knowledge gains result when children's active participation in the research process is deliberately solicited and when their perspectives, views and feelings are accepted as genuine, valid evidence…" (Woodhead and Faulkner (in Christensen and James 2000: p. 31). This is supported by Gauntlett (1999 in Ralph et al 1999) who suggests research that allows children a voice significantly impacts on the kind of conclusions which can be drawn. Approaching my research from this perspective not only compliments my feminist commitment to promoting the voices of the silenced but also may result in findings that would not have been uncovered if other methods had been used. The focus groups and co-participatory interviews enabled the girls to discuss amongst themselves their feelings and perspectives.

My research methods evolved during the data collection as the girls in the first focus group expressed an interest in continuing to work with me after their focus group had concluded. This developed the co-participatory methodology, "To involve children more directly in research can rescue them from silence and exclusion, and from being represented, by default, as passive objects…" (Alderson 2001: p. 142). The discussion of methods used and how this involved the girls is discussed in Section 4.5. These were motivated by findings from my literature review that showed young working-class girls are rarely given an opportunity to speak about experiences and opinions. Drawing on Buckingham's (1983) and van Zoonen's (1994) approach to media and young girls, my research strives to listen to young working-class girl's voices and perspectives. However, van Zoonen did not include a class aspect (Adair 2005) to her

research, therefore my research moves this forward, considering the intersection of class and gender.

One of the key concerns in my attempt to involve the girls within my research and allow them a voice was overcoming the power imbalance between myself as an adult researcher, and them as children (Morrow and Richards 1996), particularly as my research took place within schools. "…researchers face great challenges in finding ways to break down the power imbalance between adults and children, and in creating space which enables children to speak up and be heard…" (O'Kane 2000 in Christensen and James 2000: p. 136 - 137). Feminists argue the inclusion of personal experience helps to break down the power relationship between the researcher and researched. In addition to this, feminist researchers should be conscious of not only their own oppression as women but also be conscious of their privileged position as researchers or academics (Mies 1978 in Hammersley 1993). Feminist research should consist of a "…conscious partiality, which is achieved through partial identification with the research objects'…" (Mies 1978 in Hammersley 1993 p. 68). I did not adopt an objective impartial position but rather was aware of my identification with the participants and my awareness of shared oppressions. This adopts a feminist standpoint approach (Harding 2003; O'Shaughnessy and Krogman 2012; Hartsock 1998) (Section 4.3.2).

4.3.1 A Socialist Feminist Framework

Mitchell's (1971) four key structures of a woman's situation frames my approach, and as demonstrated in Section 4.1.1 constructs the objectives. This attempts to redress the balance of discussion about young girls and move away from the spotlight on sexualisation that has dominated academic and public sphere debates in recent decades. "The four elements of women's condition cannot merely be considered in isolation; they form a structure of specific inter-relations. The contemporary family can be seen as a triptych of sexual, reproductive and socializatory functions (the woman's world) embraced by production (the man's world) – precisely a structure which in the final instance is determined by the economy…Economic demands must be accompanied by coherent policies for the other three elements…" (Mitchell's 2015: p. 148 – 149). Therefore, in attempting to understand the expectations and desires for the future of the working-class girls all of these structures need to be considered. "…feminist critical theorists might argue we need to look at the structural conditions which defined their opportunities (or lack or) to engage in the workplace. Constructivist feminist might draw attention to the way in which women are socially constructed and their roles defined through dominant discourses, prevalent at work, in the media, in government and in everyday life." (Savigny & Marsden, 2011: p. 35). Consideration of the structures that surround working-class girls need to be examined to gain an understanding of how girls negotiate their futures.

Class has often been absent from discussions of girl's "aspirations", "careers" or representations within media, "…I found compelling evidence that considerations of

class are all too often absent from contemporary feminist studies." (Adair 2005: p 577). Linked to this is the need to understand and appreciate class and gender are not the only vectors of identity that shape girls' perspectives or imagined futures. The experiences of women's oppression are dependent on "race", age, sexuality, and other structural differences (Stanley 1990). As women do not experience the same single reality there is a need to adopt intersectionality as a theoretical position and attempting to embed this with the socialist feminist perspective, to recuse the obsession with gender/sexuality/the body of the post-feminist years, which, effectively, considered this as the only sphere of women's oppression. The addition of intersectionality within my framework attempts to move beyond the socialist feminist focus on the monolithic blocs of power (patriarchy and capitalism) and consider these as crucial but also informed by the complexity of identity. This attempts to explore how gender and class interact with regionality to create a multi-layered understanding of the girl's imagined futures. (Collins and Bilge 2016; Rose 1993; Gill 2009; Crenshaw 1994)

4.3.2 Research philosophy and researching "with" girls

My research can be seen to employ tools from constructivists and feminist standpoint theorists. My constructivist ontology draws on research methods that can be seen to share a common approach to constructivists, whilst my child-centred feminist standpoint epistemology focused on hearing the girls' voices and attempting to understand their perceptions from their standpoint.

The research methods utilised in my research can be seen to share a common approach to constructivists, who Moses and Knutsen (2012) suggest are epistemological pluralists, which "…employ different tools to understand the unique nature of the social world…" Moses and Knutsen 2012: p. 200). My research adopted a flexible approach to research methods (Section 4.5), for example, the girls were not restricted to attending particular focus groups, rather they could attend when best for them; the focus group timings were flexible to meet the needs of the schools; and the co-participatory interviews were developed at the request of the girls, and developed organically as my research progressed.

The link to feminist standpoint approaches can be seen through the focus on hearing the working-class girl's voices (Harding 2003) and attempting to see the imagined futures of the girl's and perceptions of media from their standpoint. A feminist standpoint epistemology calls for removal of research which is considered "malestream", as this "…ignores, because it silences, because it almost literally cannot 'see', the social world from women's standpoint." (Stanley and Wise 1990 in Stanley 1990: p. 39). My research attempts to address these issues of male dominated research and provide working-class girls with an opportunity to be heard, as they discuss their experiences (O'Shaughnessy and Krogman 2012), and their distinctive kinds of knowledge (Harding 2003). Additionally, the location of feminist standpoint epistemology from Marxist roots, resonates with the philosophy of my research and the belief working-class girls' experiences and position in society, "…inform and builds not only her reality but also how she understands of her social position and of the

larger sociocultural world." (Weisman 2016: p. 513). From this position, my research seeks to gain an understanding of how working-class girls imagine their futures and how they see their position within a gendered and classed society.

This child-centred feminist standpoint epistemology underpins my research through the belief working-class girls are able to offer important contributions to the body of knowledge about the development of their imagined futures, and, the role these girls perceive media plays in their socialisation. My research positions the girls as active participants, able to inform understanding of these issues, and focuses on the notion of research being "done with them" rather than being "done to them". A key aspect of this philosophy is working with the girls in the co-creation of meaning, stemming from the girls leading discussions. My methodology is informed by the desire for the female participants to have a voice. "A key objective is to develop an approach which empowers…the participants through the research process;…" (Fenge et al 2011). Not only did the girls lead discussions in focus groups but through some of the girls interviewing other girls and therefore co-creating the findings. Such participatory approaches have been described as "co-creating collaborative spaces…"(Fenge et al 2011, p.421). This is supported by Alderson and Morrow (2004) who suggest concerns about inequalities and inclusion have led researchers to engage with children in a more participatory way. "We suggest that the priorities for the future should be to encourage and develop the following trends….Increase in participatory research with children, when the ethics of justice and respect for rights, methods and outcomes, all reinforce one another…" (Alderson and Morrow 2004: 131). Engaging a co-

participatory and feminist approach to researching with the working-class girls, allows their voices to be heard and also supports the attempt to avoid the invisibility of gendered power relations, or produce knowledge that reinforces gender and other social hierarchies. My child-centred feminist standpoint epistemology is concerned with "…the ways in which research participants are treated and the care with which researchers attempt to represent the lived experience of research participants are of more central concern." (Jayaratne and Stewart in Holland et al 1995: p. 221).

My research was interpretive, due to the desire to understand the choices, desires and goals the working-class girls have, through their own words and views of the world within which they live (Bryman 2008). "...the interpretive paradigm recognizes that reality is *socially constructed* [original italics] as people's experiences occur within social, cultural, historical or personal contexts..." (Hennink et al 2011: p.15). Interpretivists seek to provide an understanding and "…draw attention to the continent nature of social reality and, rather than providing explanation, they seek to provide understanding. This is informed by the assumption that there is no one overarching truth about the 'real world'…there are a series of competing truths which are dependent upon our interpretation of the world…" (Savigny & Marsden, 2011: p. 27). Hennink et al (2011) and O'Gorman and MacIntosh (2015) suggest the interpretive paradigm accepts the multiple realities that may be revealed and is focused on understanding what is happening. The intersectional nature of my theoretical position and interpretivist approach demonstrates the awareness of a

multitude of realities perceived by the girls who all experience their position individually.

The integration of elements of a constructivist approach and a feminist standpoint approach contributes to balancing extremes, "…social constructionist perspectives…reconcile some of the more extreme ethical and methodological tenets of feminist research that are sometimes implicitly associated with standpoint approaches,…" (O'Shaughnessy and Krogman 2012: p. 514). Adopting a feminist standpoint approach combined with social constructivist perspectives allows my methodology to explore the construction of gender and class, whilst also researching knowledge from the perspectives of the working-class girls.

4.4 Research Design

4.4.1 Methodology

My qualitative approach to data collection emerged from my objectives, my philosophy and theoretical perspective, "Intersectionality theory, by virtue of its description of multidimensional nature of identity makes investigation through qualitative methods seem both natural and necessary." (Shields 2008: p. 306). The wish to discover the girl's perspectives on their futures and how the young working-class girls perceive media further supports the qualitative approach as it is focused on discovery (Ambert et al 1995). Qualitative research is concerned with the socially constructed nature of reality (Denzin and Lincoln 1998) which as discussed in Section

4.2.2 my research is concerned with the socially constructed nature of gender and class and therefore working-class girl's experiences and lives.

My methodological approach gave participants an opportunity to express themselves and provided them with a platform to be heard. The qualitative approach adopted was suited to this purpose, "…it could be argued that qualitative methods are more likely to represent the interests of underdogs and outsiders…Qualitative methods explicitly identify a person's understanding of the situation as something to be discovered rather than assumed. This is particularly important for groups whose experiences and understandings have been oppressed and repressed by dominant policies and research methods…" (Ezzy 2002: p. 45). The use of qualitative methods as appropriate for my prioritising the girl's voices and for their perspectives to be heard (Hennink et al 2011); Cancian 1992; Ezzy 2002).

It is important to acknowledge my research was informed by my own feminist beliefs. "…qualitative researchers accept the fact that research is ideologically driven…The qualitative researcher early on identifies his or her biases and articulates the ideology or conceptual frame for the study…" (Janesick 1998 in Denzin and Lincoln 1998: p. 41). I cannot claim impartial or value-free research and it is necessary to have an awareness of my own values and beliefs, which shaped the choices I made. Not only do I need to be reflexive of my position as a woman and a feminist but also as someone that would be perceived as middle-class yet brings an awareness of her own class position or interrogation of class position to my research. As part of this research

process, both in developing the methodology, analysing the data and developing the thesis it was crucial for me to reflect upon my position and subjectivities (Sutton and Austin 2015). As discussed by Rolin (2006), I approached my research from a socially grounded perspective which means my research is shaped through my moral and social values. This does not mean my bias and subjectivity are inherently negative, but rather it is unavoidable and therefore best identified and understood as it frames my research focus, approach and analysis, "…feminist standpoint epistemology challenges the very notion of impartiality" (Rolin 2006:" p. 156).

4.4.2 Gatekeepers

One of the key considerations of my research was gaining access to young working-class girls. Through using Savage et al (2013), areas of Britain with a high proportion of Traditional Working Class and Emergent Service Workers were identified. (See Section 4.3.3). Bebb's School was approached due to an existing contact of mine, and it was identified as fitting within the requirements of my sample. Attempting to gain access through schools requires gaining consent from the head teacher, informing the school of the purpose of my research and requesting the school would be available as a location for the focus groups. "Gatekeepers have a positive function in ensuring that children and young people are protected from harm…" (Masson in Fraser et al 2004: p. 46. Due to pressures schools and teachers face and the fact some schools already had researchers working within them, access was a key obstacle that needed to be overcome. "…most public schools face complex problems. By default, they are in no position to extend themselves to research projects that do not aid the school with

funding, services, materials, or guaranteed successes…" (Fisherkeller 2002: p. 158). This was a potential issue with my research, and one that entailed me considering what I could "offer" in return for the access to the girls and additionally how to minimise the impact of my presence in the school and my "demands" on the time of the girls, whilst still undertaking my research. "…the researcher needs the gatekeeper's attention and approval far more than the gatekeeper needs the researcher…." (Lindlof 1995: p. 107). One positive attribute that supported me in approaching schools was my previous experience as a teacher, this located me in a position of "adult researcher" or "teacher turned researcher" rather than student, as this term can imply a lack of experience, knowledge or status.

After gaining access to the first school and starting my first focus group there, I identified the contributions I could make to the school. This included supporting the teaching of A-level Media Studies, advising teaching staff on the Media and Film studies specification, undertaking work with Year 8 students around careers / advice and guidance during intensive learning weeks, and developing reports from these sessions for the teachers or head teachers to use. Despite this being outside of my own research it contributed to granting me to access to participants, gain the trust of the people within the institution and ultimately "giving back" to the school. A consequence of doing this was managing how the girls in the focus groups perceived me as a researcher that tried to establish a "chatty" conversation during research, and the "teacher" offering support in lessons. A majority of the time the girls appeared to easily switch from "George" the researcher to "Miss" in the classroom (as it was

customary to call female teachers). This was another example of the need to tread a fine line between the role of researcher, adult, confidant, and professional that may be specific to carrying out research within a school.

4.4.3 Sampling young working-class girls

As mentioned above (Section 4.3.2) I used Savage et al's (2013) framework of contemporary British social class classifications to identify areas within the UK that had high numbers of Traditional Working Class and Emergent Service Workers. These were considered by Savage et al (2013) as fitting into the notion of working-class and therefore offered the best opportunity for me to sample working-class girls whilst using a volunteer sample. As mentioned Bebb's School was a contact of mine, however, was approached as the demographic matched my requirements.

Previous research has been focused outside of the UK, often America (York 2008; Wang et al 2013; Tinsley and Faunce 1980; Brownlow et al 2000), or Australia (Watt 2008: Nagy et al 2010; Care et al 2007; Baker 2010), or when in the UK has tended to focus on London or the South East (Basit 1996; Archer et al 2012; Chisholm and Bois-Reynold 1993), or even when attempting to be nationwide continues to prioritise London (Couldry and Markham 2007). I chose to focus on areas outside of London in an attempt to redress this balance in some way. This led to research in areas (in part due to identifying areas through Savage et al 2013, and through my own contacts) whereby the white working-class dominated. This also offered the opportunity for my research to develop further intersectional considerations to working-class girls'

identities, that of regionality, which offers a new contribution to understanding working-class girls' lives and experiences.

Having identified both areas outside of London, I reviewed the demographic details of the areas using local government statistics, (Equality and Diversity Report, Staffordshire Local Government) and local demographic reporting (Derbyshire Local Government). Using these reports, I was able to ascertain the majority of the population were located in occupations that, when cross referenced against Savage et al (2013), matched the Traditional Working Class and Emergent Service Workers categories. This is supported by Le Roux et al (2008) who suggest lower supervisory and technical occupations along with semi-routine and routine positions form part of the working-class occupations now. The schools were purposively sampled to meet the demographic requirements of my research. "A purposeful sample is one that provides a clear criterion or rationale for the selection of participants, or places to observe, or events, that relates to the research questions…" (Ezzy 2002: p 74). This enabled me to approach schools that maximised the potential to have girls that volunteered coming from working-class groups. Despite trying to ensure I sampled schools with the desired research population, that of working-class girls, as part of the ethical considerations within my research I would not reject participants if they were not within the working-class categories. (See Appendices 5, 6, and 7 for Introduction letters and Introduction to Research)

The first school, “Bebb’s” School, was located in the East Midlands, and was identified as being in an area with above average levels of Traditional Working Class and Emergent Service workers and was situated close to two areas with high levels of the Precariat (Savage et al 2013). The school was also within an area that had one of the highest levels of deprivation within the borough and falls within the 10% of the most deprived areas of England (https://observatory.derbyshire.gov.uk). (See Appendix 10). I had previous delivered training to teachers in this school, and it was this relationship that aided me in gaining access, meaning I was not a complete stranger to the school (Masson in Fraser et al 2004). This access proved essential for the development of my research as a majority of my participants came from this school. The second school, “Mike’s” School, (pseudonym) was located in the West Midlands. This school was also located in an area within the top 15% of deprived areas within England (https://www.gov.uk/) and had a high proportion of Traditional Working Class and Emergent Service Workers. (See Appendix 11 for field notes). Both Schools were given an outline of the research (See Appendix 13).

The demographic of each of the boroughs the schools were located in are as follows. These statistics show the higher than average percentage of White people and lower than average percentage of ethnic minorities, which may go some way to explaining the assumed “whiteness” that dominated the girls’ discussions. Bebb’s School was located in the East Midlands. According to information taken from the 2011 census data, the local borough (kept anonymous within this thesis to protect the identity of the school and girls that participated in my research), consisted of 97% White, with the

second largest ethnic group being Asian / Asian British making up 1.2% of the population (www.reports.esd.org.uk). When examining the local district of Bebb's School the dominance of a White population increases to 98.2%. (www.citypopulation.de/en/uk). The area surrounding Mikes' School, located in the West Midlands, has a similar ethnic makeup, with 95% of the population being White (www.worldpopulationreview.com). Both of these areas have a higher than average White population compared to the UK as a whole (www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk).

I used a volunteer sample with Year 7 and 8 girls. A concern with volunteer sampling is highlighted by Cannon et al (1988) as it has been found white, middle-class women are more likely to volunteer than any other group, therefore attracting an unrepresentative sample of working-class girls. However, despite the weaknesses of volunteer sampling, due to how I had selected the schools that would best fit my working-class criteria, the sampling technique was appropriate. For my research, the girls from the schools identified would provide the data necessary to meet my objectives, and therefore asking for volunteers from these schools was appropriate to find my participants. "…a focus group study requires participants who can provide the best data" (Montell 1999: p. 58). By January 2017 I stopped seeking further schools and participants, as I was reaching data saturation (Ambert et al 1995) whereby major trends or themes were recurring.

4.4.4 Consent / Assent

Girls that volunteered were given Introductory letters (Appendix 12), parent and participant information sheets (Appendix 14 and 15), Consent forms (Appendix 16) and Assent forms (Appendix 17). As the participants were classed as vulnerable (below the age of 18) consent had to be gained from parents / guardians (Masson in Fraser et al 2004) along with assent from the participants. This reflects points raised by Masson (in Lewis and Lindsay 2000) who maintains children or young people are not in a position to decide for themselves if they want to participate in research or not. Seeking the consent of the adult with parental responsibility was essential for my research to take place. It is also recommended by Alderson (1995) that both parents and children are asked for consent. I judged the 11 and 12-year-olds girls able to understand the request being made of them, "…the competence of minors to consent to research is probably often underestimated…" (Lindsay in Lewis and Lindsay 2000: p. 12). I developed participant information letters and assent forms that were designed to support their understanding (See Appendices 15 and 17).

Additionally, when asking for volunteers, the girls had the opportunity to ask questions about my research and what they needed to do; this was followed up by further questions and discussions in the first focus group to check the girls still wanted to volunteer for my research, and to make sure they were aware they could withdraw from taking part, (Masson in Fraser et al 2004; Greig et al 2007). "…I believe that there is an onus on us to make participation in research, at whatever level, an experience which is at best fun, and at worst, does not harm, to young people. The time that they

devote to our research agendas is a gift, and one which we should be prepared to reciprocate." (Roberts in Christensen and James 2000: p. 138). This was an approach that resonated with my research philosophy, attempting to make my research fun for those girls that had volunteered and offered their contributions. (See Section 4.5).

4.4.5 Participants

As I was undertaking qualitative research my sample was small, (Cannon et al 1988). As discussed in Chapter 1 the focus on 11 and 12-year-old girls was intended to fill a gap in literature discussing this age group and their imagined futures, as much existing research into young peoples' futures have focused on young people in Grade 8 or above (13 – 14-year-olds) (Crombie et al 2005; Burlin 1976; Buck et al 2007; Barone 2006 and Hanson et al 1996). The choice of age links to previous research and the fact girls of this age were pre-GCSE options, whereby evidence suggests girls start to narrow their options (Watt 2008; Correll 2001; Hanson et al 1996; Watt et al 2012). Much of the existing research suggests by the age of eleven young people have started to identify "realistic" careers, (Crombie et al 2005; Care et al 2007; Correll 2001; Nelson 1978; Trice et al 1995). I focused on this age range as my research may identify opportunities for advice and guidance to encourage girls not to restrict subject choices as this early stage, as suggested by Correll (2001) high school age is crucial as this is the time children are making decisions about subjects. Choosing to research with a small group of girls that would be reasonably similar, due to age, background, fitting into the working-class category and attending the similar schools allowed the group to be reasonably homogenous and results therefore comparable across the two schools.

The focus for my research was further supported by Gottfredson (1981) with the Theory of Circumscription and Compromise. Gottfredson and Lapan (1997) suggest children as young as five develop an understanding of gender appropriate occupations, and between the ages of 9 and 13 young people develop an awareness of status (linked to class and socio-economic position) that further influences "choices" and decisions about education, subjects and future work. Girlhood is a point were girls are learning their place, "…girlhood is also a time in which girls come to learn how to take up their place in multiple and competing regimes of power…" (Hey 1997: p. 13).

In total thirty 11 and 12-year-old girls (See Appendix 18) volunteered from the two schools; the number of participants from "Bebb's" School totalled 21 (three from Year 8 and 18 from Year 7), and the number of participants in "Mike's" School totalled nine (five from Year 7 and four from Year 8). Three of the Year 7 girls from the first focus group in "Bebb's" School continued to work with me, when they moved into Year 8, they met me as a small focus group on three occasions to check findings, but also became involved in undertaking some of the research (See Section 4.5.3). Of the participants one was British Bangladeshi, 27 were White British and two were White European. The lack of diversity in the first school was reflective of the demographic of the area, however, the second school had a higher than average ethnic minority population, yet the wider area also had lower than average ethnic diversity within the population. This links to Reay (1995) who attempts to explain the lack of diversity in volunteer sample, suggesting white women are more likely to respond to research

requests. This is supported by Cannon et al (1988), who highlight unequal volunteering rates due to “race” and class, with white women more than twice as likely as Black women to respond to media or letter requests for participation.

4.5 Research Ethics

In addition to gaining consent from gatekeepers, parents and the girls, researching with young participants raises ethical issues that need to be considered. “…research ethics…can protect the people who take part in research” (Alderson in Fraser et al 2004: p. 99). There is a lack of detailed requirements that are specific to research with children, although one key requirement when working with children or vulnerable people is to have a Disclosure and Barring Service certificate; this was a requirement to enable me to be alone with the girls, and also demonstrate to schools my suitability for working with children. When considering the ethical considerations in my research my primary concern was to ensure the girls that chose to participate were protected from harm and clearly understood the purpose of my research and their role in it. As a feminist I wished to understand working-class girls’ situations and this also informed my ethical approach. “Feminist ethics shares with feminism,…the goal of understanding women’s oppression and working toward its elimination.“ (Brennan 1995: p. 860).

According to the ethical principles established in the 1978 Belmont Report there are three key principles. “…*Autonomy*[original italics] …Applying the principle of

autonomy to children and adolescents means making sure that they are able to consent through free choice,… *Beneficence*[original italics] …the researcher will need to be clear about what benefits there will be to the actual child or adolescent and to society, what risks are likely to occur to the child or adolescent and whether the benefits justify the risks…*Justice*[original italics]…the researcher must make sure that all children and adolescents are treated fairly and equally,…" (Greig et al 2007: p. 247 – 248). A fourth principle was added by Beauchamp and Childress, "…*Non-maleficence* [original italics]…When working with children and adolescents the researcher must take reasonable, sufficient and appropriate steps to avoid causing pain, suffering, incapacitation, offense and death…." (Beauchamp and Childress cited in Greig et al 2007 p. 247 – 248). Throughout this section I demonstrate how my research complied with and considered these ethical principles to ensure my research developed in a way that was ethical and the girls' wellbeing was at the forefront of the process.

The ethics checklist (See Appendix 9) demonstrates the outline process of gaining approval from Bournemouth University to undertake my research (where I began my PhD and where my empirical research was undertaken). There is a balance between the requirements of meeting the needs of the institution's ethics policy and the need for potential flexibility "A situated approach…" (Goredema-Braid 2010: p. 48), that allows for myself as a researcher to make ethical judgements based on the context of the research and issue. A particular concern was to ensure my research could maintain a flexibility in design and would respond to the needs of the participants, in an attempt to engage them, develop a rapport to facilitate openness between us and

allow them a voice. “When researchers acquiesce to the requirements and interpretations imposed by ethics committees, they are drawn into a position that is vulnerable to perpetuating and reinscribing the hegemonic discourses and practices…”(Halse and Honey 2005: p. 2155). This is also discussed by Shpungin et al (2012) who suggest some organizational cultures maintain existing social relations and privilege some voices.

4.5.1 Confidentiality versus Child Protection

A key aspect that was addressed through the consent and assent forms (discussed in Section 4.3.5) was that of confidentiality. This firstly deals with ensuring parents / guardians and the girls knew they would be assured confidentiality, whereby nothing would be disclosed within my research that would identify them, the school or indicate the area my research took place, beyond as discussed above, identifying the East Midlands and West Midlands. “All research participants, including children and young people, need careful explanations of research confidentiality when (or before) their consent to participate is sought.” (Masson in Lewis and Lindsay 2000: p. 41). Further reassurance of this was discussed with the girls during the first meetings to assure them what they disclosed to me would not be repeated outside of the group. During this first meeting, I also requested the girls did not repeat what was discussed within the focus groups or interviews to protect each other’s confidentiality. During the first meeting the girls had the opportunity to choose pseudonyms for themselves, this contributed to discussions about confidentiality and reassurances that only I would know the pseudonyms, this also worked as an ice-breaker with the girls, as they

enjoyed choosing alternative names. In addition to the girls having chosen pseudonyms, I allocated pseudonyms to the two schools to ensure they could be discussed but not recognised. I have acknowledged the wider region the schools are located within, to enable me to discuss the working-class demographic and sampling choices made, however, beyond this have not discussed the location of the schools or any specific regional or local identifiers to ensure the confidentiality of the girls, teachers, parents and schools. When the girls mentioned people or locations by name I replaced this with either a pseudonym or removed the name. This ensures confidentiality for all those that participated in my research and additionally those that may not have been active participants but are connected to my research through their role as gatekeepers, parents or teachers.

Assuring children confidentiality within research raises some serious considerations and issues, particularly in relation to some of the topics that were discussed in my research. "There are ethical considerations in research…with children which may mean that the same degree of confidentiality cannot be guaranteed to a child as would be given to an adult…where a child discloses that he or she is being seriously harmed or ill-treated…" (Masson in Lewis and Lindsay 2000: p. 41). As suggested by Furey et al (2010) researchers need to be alert to the potential of child protection issues being raised or disclosed and made clear the limits of confidentiality. This was particularly relevant when considering concerns around social media and potential harm. I approached this by explaining the girls would be afforded confidentiality unless I felt

they were at risk, however, I told them prior to reporting this I would discuss concerns with the girl involved.

Due to previously working as a teacher I was in the fortunate position of being trained in child protection and have a working knowledge of the guidelines and agencies involved with child protection, which further strengthens my ethical awareness. "…researchers should have adequate training and support so that they have the 'ethical literacy' to make decisions in the best interests of the research participants." (Furey et al 2010: p. 121). This informed my research in two ways, firstly I had an awareness of potential threats, risks or child protection issues which could be raised during my discussions with the girls, particularly around social media, such as risky behaviour online, relationships with other young people, or displaying signs of emotional distress to online experiences. Secondly, having worked with young people I was aware how developing a working relationship that attempted to engage the girls beyond just seeing me as a "distant" researcher would enhance the potential for disclosure of issues. In light of this understanding I acknowledged these risks in my ethics panel discussion and also clarified how this would be addressed.

4.5.2 Research Location

Holding focus groups within the schools removed some of the child safety issues that may have arisen if the girls met me offsite. I initially intended to hold these at the end of the school day, but through discussions with the schools, it was agreed that to ensure the girls would be able to get home, presence of staff, and access to buildings,

the focus groups would take place during the school day. This further diminished the risk to the girls, they were already on the campus, all potential volunteers would be able to participate because transport home was not an issue, and to reassure the school I was not alone with the girls in potentially empty buildings.

The use of focus groups as the primary method for collecting data also enables the girls to be part of a group and supports the development of rapport within the group, whereas one to one interviews may have led to the girls feeling intimidated. "…Children may feel more comfortable if they can bring a friend or parent to an interview…" (Masson in Lewis and Lindsay 2000: p. 43). The presence of between four and eight girls in focus groups encouraged the participants to relax. A concern with holding focus groups during the school day was ensuring these did not impact on the education of the participants. To overcome this focus groups were held during registration times, tutorial times, lunch breaks where the girls brought their lunch or were taken to the canteen to get lunch first, and on a couple of occasions permission was sought from the PE department to allow the girls to come out of lessons. When lessons were interrupted a discussion with the girls occurred to ensure they were happy to miss that lesson. The ethical implications of avoiding disturbance to learning meant my research had to be flexible to changes within the school day.

The groupings were negotiated, as far as possible, with participants, to ensure the girls were comfortable with the peers within their group. This was to ensure the girls were comfortable in the research environment. "…there are problems, such as obvious and

hidden ‘pecking orders’, the histories they have with each other, their possible animosities…”(Barbour and Schostak 2005: p. 43). When starting my research in “Mike’s” School, I observed the lack of interaction between the Year 7 and Year 8 girls, including the Year 7 girls appearing resistant to contribute in this mixed group. When raising this point with the Year 7 girls they admitted they would rather meet as a year group rather than mixed, which was then arranged. This demonstrates the dynamic of focus groups but also how this can be overcome to support the participants and achieve the aims.

4.5.3 Researcher Power

A concern throughout the data collection was attempting to negotiate the power imbalance between myself and the participants, “…feminists seek to equalize or reduce the power imbalances in the researcher-respondent relationship,…” (Gray et al 2015: p. 760). This requires reflection on my position as a researcher and my age, class, gender and experience (Crawford and Kimmel 1999). Oakley (in Roberts 1981) suggests feminists often favour methods that give participants more power, one way of attempting to give the participants more power was through using focus groups as the primary data collection, whereby the girls may feel power in numbers and support from others. This method “…disrupts the rigid dichotomy between interviewer and subject…” (Montell 1999: p. 51) In addition to this I adopted “.. the least-adult method” (Hains 2006: p. 9), whereby I sought to minimize my authority over the girls as far as possible. In part this was done through asking the girls to call me George when working in the focus groups together, and additionally, to support the removal

of a hierarchal structure we used areas where we could sit in a circle without me being in an obvious position of power. I provided drinks and cookies or cakes, started each group with a general chat about how the girls were, what they had been up to, and attempted to use humour to encourage the girls to relax and to engage in a more natural way. Researchers need to engage young people and to "build a relationship where respect, openness and a genuine intent to listen is evident." (O'Kane 2000 in Christensen and James 2000: p. 151).

The above points attempted to build a rapport with the girls, "Rapport-building with children is also a considerable concern…" (Hains 2006: p. 5). According to Berg (2014) researchers can develop rapport through a number of ways but a key feminist approach to this is through self-disclosure. Drawing on this, I would often disclose information about myself to the girls in an attempt to build trust, but also to help them see me as a "researcher-friend" rather than a "researcher-teacher". Another way of attempting to develop rapport within the focus groups was to consider what clothes I wore. "appearance can play a strong role in building rapport, and that when dealing with children, researchers should consider dressing casually." (Berg 2005 cited in Hains 2006: p. 5). Hains (2006) discusses how she adopted a casual style of dress to develop rapport, however, as a researcher undertaking my research within schools I had to consider the expectations of the school, therefore I had to balance dressing in a way that was smart enough to be accepted by the school, yet not as smart as teachers would dress, in an attempt to enable the respondents to feel comfortable. "Dressing up or dressing down in this way is not just about 'getting the best data' but about

enabling respondents and research to feel comfortable…" (Letherby 2003: p. 110). As my research progressed some of the girls commented they felt they could tell me anything, or did not have to worry about what they said, which provided me with some evidence that my attempts to reduce some of the power imbalance and barriers to open discussions were working.

Whilst attempting to overcome this power balance I was also aware that I did not want to "talk down" to the girls. Alderson (2001) suggests this is an obstacle when researching with children. Having worked as a teacher I felt I had experience of engaging and relating to young people, in addition to this whilst I used more simplified language than would be used in academia I was careful not to overly simplify this. I would rather repeat or rephrase something if the girls showed signs of not understanding rather than risk alienating them by infantilising them.

4.6 Methods

The following sections discuss the methods used. Despite starting with an idea of the methods I would use, these changed and developed as my research progressed. "The qualitative researcher-as-*bricoleur*…If the researcher needs to invent or piece together new tools or techniques, he or she will do so. Choices regarding which interpretive practices to employ are no necessarily made in advance." (Denzin and Lincoln 1998: p. 4). As a qualitative researcher the research process developed as the research progressed. "…The research process for qualitative researchers is emergent. This means that the initial plan for research cannot be tightly prescribed, and some or all

phases of the process may change or shift after the researcher enters the field and begins to collect data…" (Creswell 2014: p. 186).

The following methods were used:

1) Media diaries: All girls were initially asked to keep a media diary (discussed further below) to record their media use. (See Appendix 19)
2) Focus groups: These focus groups were ongoing, usually lasting between 40 minutes and an hour, depending on the needs of the school. The ongoing nature contributed to building a rapport with the girls, and ensured they were not rushed, to enable all of the girls to contribute and the conversations to develop. During 2015 I attended "Bebb's" School and worked with eight girls, from February to July, and held recorded focus groups a total of nine times. From November 2015 to March 2016 I attended "Bebb's" School and worked with three focus groups of four or five girls (total of 13 girls took part at this time), these focus groups were usually limited to 40 minutes, hence the smaller size. I attended "Mike's" School from January 2016 to April 2016 and worked with nine girls. Initially there were seven girls in the focus group from Years 7 and 8. However, as the Year 7 girls were resistant to speaking in front of the Year 8 girls after three focus groups these were divided into two separate groups. At this time two more Year 7 girls asked to join, creating two focus groups, one consisted of four Year 8 girls and the other five Year 7 girls. I saw these a further six times each, usually alternate weeks depending on the School's needs. (See Appendix 20)

3) One to three Interviews: Three of the initial Year 7s from “Bebb’s” School (“Galaxy”, “Shortbread” and “Dolphin”) met me on three occasions during December 2015, and January 2016, which provided an opportunity to check findings from the first focus group and discuss my research further. They were keen to continue working within my research, although we had met the objectives from my focus group with them.
4) Co-Participatory interviews: Further to the interviews with “Galaxy”, “Dolphin” and “Shortbread”, and their wish to be involved in my research, we worked together to provide them the opportunity to interview the Year 7 girls involved in the second round of focus groups in “Bebb’s” School. These interviews consisted of each of the Year 8 girls (“Galaxy”, “Shortbread” and “Dolphin”), interviewing two Year 7 girls in each interview. The decision to have two Year 7 girls per interview came from “Galaxy”, “Shortbread” and “Dolphin” who suggested this may help the Year 7s feel more comfortable. These co-participatory interviews took place in February 2016 with the girls holding simultaneous interviews on two consecutive weeks. These interviews lasted an hour each. The comments from these interviews that have been used in my discussions are identified, when quoted, whereas all other quotes come from focus groups.

The range of research methods I chose developed throughout my research alongside the girls’ wish to be involved in interviews. This reflects my constructivist approach, “…constructivists tend to be epistemological pluralists. They are willing to employ

different tools to understand the unique nature of the social world…" (Moses and Knutsen 2012: p. 200).

4.6.1 Media Diaries

Media diaries were chosen as a research method to develop an understanding of the girls' media consumption, as used by Anderson et al (1985), Huston et al (1990) and the Kaiser Family Foundation (2005). These were designed to allow me to develop an insight into popular media texts consumed and explore the platforms, including social media platforms, the girls were using. Although my research did not include this as an objective, the diaries were used to provide a starting point when discussing media representations, with visual images taken from the texts the girls engaged with to trigger conversations. (See Appendix 22, 23, 24, 25). Unlike Thomson's (2008) discussion about visual research with children and young people, although the girls were encouraged to keep diaries that visually represented their media consumption, they all chose to write down what media they had engaged with.

Media diaries were kept for four weeks, with a varied level of success. Despite the diaries being structured, as discussed by Corti (1993), where the girls were encouraged to record their media engagement according to platform, some of the girls kept the diaries updated daily, others often retrospectively completed these just prior to the focus group discussions, whilst some only recorded limited detail. Some of the media diaries were kept during the Christmas period, and therefore viewing habits reflect this with TV shows such as X-Factor being cited, and the films being watched, such as Elf

and Home Alone. The diaries do not reflect the hours of media use daily, or the changing media use patterns throughout the year but do give an indication of media consumption and offer an insight into the nature of the girls' engagement with media.

4.6.2 Focus Groups

Focus groups provided opportunities to gather rich and detailed data and create an environment that would encourage the girls to relax and open up. I believed the girls would be inclined to discuss points within the group and, therefore, allow me as a researcher to view how the girls negotiate their meanings. Focus groups are, "…well justified as they can access group norms and provide insights into the formation of views which cannot be so readily achieved via individual interviews. Additionally, they often give facilitators the chance to observe how individuals within groups react to the views of others and seek to defend their own views." (Barbour and Schostak 2005: p. 42). This view is supported by Dockrell et al (in Lewis and Lindsay 2000) who maintain focus groups allow discussions to create new ideas and are valuable as an exploratory form of research. This meets the needs of my objectives as I am exploring a new and emerging area of interest and want to understand the perceptions of the girls.

The focus groups were ongoing, meeting approximately nine times each (See Section 5.5). Working with the girls over a number of weeks allowed for a deeper rapport to be developed but also various topics to be discussed in line with my objectives (See Section 4.2). "Group interviews allow for a more egalitarian and less exploitative dynamic…the interaction among participants produces a new and valuable kind of

data." (Montell 1999: p. 44). Often, focus groups would start with the girls talking about media texts they had seen or watched, and sometimes stories they had heard in the news. This encouraged the girls to start talking with a focus on media, particularly when they were discussing television shows that were popular with many of them, for example *Supervet*. The girls were also interested in things I had watched, and often would ask if I had watched a television show, film or YouTuber that we had been discussing during the previous focus group, this would then link to the themes discussed the previous time and provide an opportunity to introduce the focus of this meeting. (See Appendix 21 for the focus group guide). It was crucial to my research to allow the girls to discuss media texts they had engaged with to encourage them to contribute and discuss their views. "Becoming accepted by children and young people to the point where they are willing to share their experiences with you involves, time, active listening and mutual respect." (Pattman and Kehily in Fraser et al 2004: p. 134).

Although I had clear objectives and developed questions that I wished to cover I had to be prepared to allow the girls some control over the agenda and be prepared for these conversations to go off track or cover a different point than I had planned. "…In choosing to use research techniques which are more responsive to the participants, rather than the researcher's agenda, the opportunity to gather information in a uniform way is forfeited…"(O'Kane 2000 in Christensen and James 2000: p. 155). Hains (2006) also warns of the potential for the conversation to drift from the original topic, but by allowing the girls to direct the flow of conversation this did allow me to see what was important to them. In addition to this the suggestion that focus groups is a

good choice of data collection to use with young people is developed by Berg (2013) and Greig et al (2007), whilst Madriz (in Denzin and Lincoln 2005) suggests focus groups allow people that often lack opportunities to express themselves. The girls also helped each other articulate and make sense of their position and their imagined futures, through supporting each other when making points about sexism, or sexist media images and when discussing imagined futures, with phrases focused on enabling the others to believe they could achieve whatever they wanted.

In early focus groups I used images from media use diaries to encourage the girls to talk about what media they engaged with, what they thought about the women in these texts and how they perceived women and girls were represented. This would often trigger conflicting opinions on the media personality or representations, and allowed the group to discuss without prompts from me. “In a group, if even one person expresses an idea it can prompt a response from the others, and the information that is produced is more likely to be framed by the categories and understandings of the interviewees rather than those of the interviewer.” (Montell 1999: p. 49). As discussed in Chapter 5 this led to the girls’ discussions often focusing on the sexualisation debate, whereby I used the focus group guide to trigger discussions concerning their imagined futures and media outside of the sexualisation discussion, and to prompt the girls to discuss perceptions of media socialisation. This also helped focus discussions if the girls went off track, with questions and prompts linked to the aims and objectives of my research.

The lack of complete control over the research process was further evidenced in regulating the size and occupants of the focus groups. Due to sickness, remembering to attend, friendships and arguments the focus group sizes could fluctuate from week to week. Despite Morgan (1996) suggesting the common rule for focus groups is to consist of four to six people, this fluctuated during the course of my research, with some groups starting and then other participants joining the group, splitting groups due to size, how the participants related to each other (see section 4.5) and also depending on the time the school could allow me to spend with the girls. I reduced the size of the focus groups and increased the frequency to accommodate focus groups that could only take place during lunchtimes. "…the qualitative researcher must be ready to adjust schedules, to be flexible about interview times and about adding or subtracting observations or interviews,…" (Janesick in Denzin and Lincoln 2005: p 54). Research based within schools, or hospitals can be, "complex, messy, poorly controlled "field" settings" (Robson 2011: p. xvi). This is supported by Greig et al (2007) who suggests real-world research with children is often "messy". These comments resonate with my research because during the data collection process there was a continuous fluctuation with regards to times and days to meet with the girls, girls that were present or absent and needing to accommodate fire alarms, exams, staff illnesses. The fluctuations were often due to the pressures of the school day and therefore little could be done apart from adjust to the changes.

4.6.3 Co-participatory Interviews

The co-participatory interviews developed after “Shortbread”, “Galaxy” and “Dolphin” became aware I was working with more Year 7 girls in their school (these three were now in Year 8). At this point they asked if they could be involved in interviewing the younger girls, so they became co-researchers. “The advantages of children having greater control over producing and analysing data are that they may enjoy the research process far more…and that the findings may more accurately report children’s own views and experiences.” (Alderson in Fraser et al 2004: p. 100). Although I continued to direct the overarching research focus, “Shortbread”, “Galaxy” and “Dolphin” identified topics about media use and representation they believed important and working with me developed questions they could ask during the interviews (See Appendix 26). Each of the girls interviewed the Year 7s in groups of two or three for approximately an hour. “…those conducting participatory action research (PAR) involving subjects as co- researchers continue to argue that this approach can empower disenfranchised groups and create research agendas…Participatory action research can also help to reduce the widely divergent power differentials between the researcher and the researched, allowing multiple subjectivities to define the problem and its solution.” (Fonow and Cook 2005: p.2223). Although my research would not clearly sit within the participatory action research method, the engagement with the girls and ability to allow them to shape the research agenda for those two weeks and hold interviews, including being responsible for recording the interviews and deciding on the questions they asked, gave some power to the girls and reduced the control I had over the research, “…research about children

and young people should be *with* children and adolescents and not something that is done *to* them…" (Greig et al 2007: p. 253)

4.7 Research Limitations

As discussed above, my research methods were chosen as they best suited the aims and objectives of my research and the working-class girls at the heart of my research. However, despite this there are a number of limitations that can be discussed.

A key limitation with regards to my research is the findings cannot generalise about all working-class girls and their imagined futures or perspectives on media socialisation. A limitation of qualitative research is the sample is often small, and focused on a small demographic (Section 4.3.3). The aim was not to be representative but to seek to understand experiences of working-class girls. This linked to my philosophical position of providing working-class girls an opportunity to express their experiences, to understand their perspectives and allow co-creation of research, which would not have been possible for a research project that wished to be representative. As discussed in Section 4.3.3 the sample was a volunteer sample, which does not claim to be representative, but rather included girls that wished to be part of my research. Additionally, the purposive sampling of the schools from area that met the needs of my research, does not claim to be representative of the United Kingdom, but rather, as discussed by Moses and Knutsen (2012), the sample focused on the relevant variable for my research. A key point to note here it that although this can be seen as a

limitation, my research was not focused on identifying representative trends, but rather on exploring experiences and giving a voice to those often invisible in research.

There were a number of ethical limitations (Section 4.4) that had to be overcome for my research to develop. These include the choice of location, the time that could be spent with the girls, how to introduce my research and frame the focus in a way that supported the girls' understanding of the aim of my research and how to develop a researcher / participant relationship with the girls in-line with my philosophical stance. One key limitation of my research, as discussed by Kellett and Ding (in Fraser et al 2004) is determining the role I adopted to gain access to the girls' worlds. Although I attempted to strike a balance between researcher / confidante / friend, there remains the potential for the girls to see me as a teacher, particularly as my research was based within a school environment. This limitation could significantly impact on the findings of my research, because there is potential the girls would not open up and share their experiences, leading to a lack of validity of my research findings. However, as discussed in Section 4.4.3 attempts were made to overcome this, for example, developing a rapport with the girls, providing cookies and drinks to create an inviting atmosphere, which was different to "normal" school time, and focusing on listening to the girls to demonstrate the value of their contributions.

The limitations of the methods used in my research are varied, with some developing from the methods itself, but others from the participant engagement with the method, that would suggest alternatives could be sought for future research. A key limitation

of the methods used included the low completion rates or the style of completion of the media diaries (Section 4.5.1). Initially it was planned these would be kept by the girls for a month, to allow me to gain an insight into how the girls engaged with media and to frame conversations around media used, however compliance with this varied. As discussed by Goodman et al. (2012), as a researcher I had little control here over the completion of the diaries and some of the girls did not fully participate in these. However, media diaries did contribute to the discussions, particularly early sessions to develop a rapport and encourage the girls to talk.

The focus groups and co-participatory interviews can be accused of lacking reliability, as a researcher I also had less control over the data that was produced (Morgan 1988), compared to a structured interview or quantitative method. Using focus groups means there is no way to ensure participants are expressing their own views (Gibbs 1997), as the girls may have been influenced by the other girls. However, throughout my research the girls appeared comfortable and willing to challenge each other and express opinions that did not comply with the views of the group, suggesting the girls were expressing themselves. Focus groups have "…often been selected as especially appropriate for eliciting the perspectives of women…"(Barbour 2007: p. 21), and as discussed in Section 4.5.2 these were the most appropriate method for my data collection.

As discussed in Section 4.5.2 the development of my research resulted in a "messy and complex" (Greig et al 2007) variety of methods used. These evolved as the girls

became involved in my research and as my research moved further towards the desired co-creation of research, that allowed the girls greater control and a voice in the structure of my research. However, as a limitation this means, not only can my research not be replicated, but also my research could appear disordered or not clearly planned prior to starting, with the further challenge of keeping the girls on track whilst not directing them (Section 4.5.2). This was intentional with my desire to reduce the power relationship between myself and the girls, (Section 4.4.3) but also because I wished to allow the girls to lead my research (Section 4.2.2) and develop their own voices.

4.8 Data Analysis

The analysis of the findings was an ongoing process whereby I was immersed in the data throughout my research process. Initially, media diaries were analysed as these were used as tools to contribute to understanding the girl's engagement with media but also as an icebreaker and way of developing a rapport. Analysis of these diaries included developing an Excel document to identify which texts were popular, the nature of the texts, particularly if YouTubers to identify what the focus of the vlogs were, (See Appendix 4). However, as discussed above the analysis of findings was an ongoing process, termed progressive focusing, according to Parlett & Hamilton (1976), whereby I could adjust the data collection process to reflect themes that were emerging or needed further investigation.

To analyse the data from focus groups and interviews I "…first reimmersed myself in the words and worlds of the participants by listening again to their audiotaped interviews as I reread the transcripts. I strove really to hear the Participants…My goal was to avoid leaping to conclusions or overlaying my own meanings." (Merrick 1999: p. 51). As many of the discussions had been framed around Mitchell's (2015) four spheres of women's oppression, I initially open coded the discussions according to Production, Reproduction, Socialisation of Children, Sexualisation and Media as an agent of socialisation. This coding allowed me to then re-listen and transcribe according to the themes that emerged (See Chapters 5,6, 7). A key aspect of this was immersing myself within the data and listening a number of times to identify the key themes, but also to ensure I was hearing the participants rather than allowing my own experiences and expectations to overshadow this. "Understanding gendered experience (one's own, and that of others) is very often through the recognition of ambivalence and contradiction…" (Davies and Gannon 2015: p. 314). To ensure clarity in the following chapters the participants quotes taken from the co-participatory interviews have been identified within the thesis. All other quotes came from focus groups.

4.9 Summary

This chapter has focused on the discussion of my research approach and theoretical philosophy that shaped my methodology. The child-centred feminist standpoint epistemology aimed to provide an opportunity to hear the voices of young working-

class girls and how they imagine their futures and perceive media as an agent of socialisation that could contribute to these futures. "…the perspectives of children and young people are of interest to contemporary social scientists precisely because they offer specific and unique insights – about their everyday lives at home and school and their views and hopes for their futures.." (Thomson 2008: p. 1). The socialist feminist stance of my research combined with an intersectional awareness has allowed an exploration into the subjective experiences of their gender and class position and how they negotiate structures of oppression to imagine their futures.

As demonstrated in Section 4.1.1, my objectives, framed around Production (work outside of the home), Reproduction (domestic work and mothering), and Sexualisation, aimed to explore how working-class girls perceive media socialises them into their imagined futures. This contributes to gaps in literature by centralising class and gender which has been missing from academic debate (Adair 2005), whilst additionally, contributing to the literature that discusses researching with young people, (Fenge et al 2011; Alderson and Morrow 2004; Jayaratne and Stewart 1995). The need for a participatory and co-creational methodology, whereby not only do the participants have a voice in the findings of my research, but also have a role in shaping how my research evolved, contributes to methodological discussions and literature. Due to this key feminist value, my research methods are clearly situated in an interpretivist approach with the adoption of qualitative methods that attempted to represent the girls' experiences. Despite the limitations of my approach, the child-centred feminist standpoint epistemology was most suited to the aims of my research,

the philosophy that shaped my desire to work with working-class girls, and allowed their voices to be heard, which are often absent from academic debate.

5 Data Analysis Chapter: “You don’t see girls like us”: Working-class Girls and Media

5.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the girls’ perceptions of media representations and how far they perceive media messages construct an idealised version of femininity, combining quotes from focus groups, the co-participatory interviews and referencing media texts and media usage identified through media diaries and discussions. (Many quotes through my thesis have been taken from focus groups, those taken from co-participatory interviews have been identified within the text.)

Media use of the girls is outlined in Appendices 1 – 7, however some key points can be noted: All of the girls had their own mobile phones (two were not smart phones the rest had smart phones); they all had access to the internet at home, through laptops, phones, tablets; 28 of the 30 girls had social media profiles, with *Instagram* and *Facebook* being the most popular; those girls that had social media profiles often had profiles on multiple platforms; television and films were watched with friends and family, but not often alone; US and UK media dominated, and as is discussed within Chapter 6, some of the US representations were identified as unrelatable due to the idealised, wealthy “college kids”; media such as magazines, newspapers, radio were not considered significant by the girls, with radio listened to if a parent had this on; and, the internet and therefore social media, was always “on”. Section 5.2 discusses the girls’ media consumption that further demonstrates how the girls were using

media, the platforms that dominated the girls' media consumption and the importance of social media to the girls' daily habits.

Central to this thesis is developing an understanding of how working-class girls perceive media representations in relation to their present lives and imagined futures. Sexualisation, which links to Mitchell's (2015) four pillars of oppression through which women's social position can be understood, emerged as a key element of media representations the girls wished to discuss. The focus of the girls on the sexualisation debate and their concern about how to present themselves through media narratives of acceptable femininity offers a contribution to understanding how this mediated focus on women's bodies, detracts from discussions of women's position within the workforce and home (Taylor 1995 in Holland et al. 1995).

The sexualisation debate is very much in the girls' present and although many findings show how the girls attempt to reject media messages, the combination of peers, society and mediated images creates a dominant message about their worth as young women, which is often tied to their ability to conform to expected notions of femininity. Central to developing an understanding of these issues is the duality of class and gender through which the girls are seen and also interpret media. As suggested by Plummer (2000) working-class people are looked at through class-based spectacles and at the same time the girls are looking from a (predominantly "white") working-class perspective. This draws on socialist feminist perspectives to understand how patriarchy and capitalism intersect (Willis 1977) and supports claims by Collins

and Bilge (2016) who maintain inequality, power and social divisions are intersecting axis.

This chapter discusses how the girls negotiate media representations and explores how the girls critiqued media for the narrow range of roles women are often shown in, for example, mother (Chapter 7) and the role of working women (Chapter 6). This considers how the girls highlighted the position of girls or women as the "weak" characters that "always needed saving" (Catherine 03/02/16 – co-participatory interview) and demonstrates the girls' perceptions of the classist nature of media representations.

Although the girls did not use the word class, their discussions often reflected class. The term "posh" was often used to discuss women that were "well-dressed", "spoke properly" and "not like us". This links to findings by Savage et al (2001) whereby notions of ordinariness and the "people like us" demonstrates a class awareness or identity. These working-class girls were aware of their difference to the ideal represented in media (Brown 1997) and the messages were a site of struggle for the young girls in their identity formation. This section continues to explore three key themes the girls often returned to; "Sexualisation", "Fake", and "Ladylike". Throughout these three key themes the notion of beauty and the mediated idealised classed and feminised body (Wolf 1991) was evident. The girls were aware of sexualisation but were using media to negotiate and identify their own sense of femininity which involved peer approval. Section 5.4 explores how the girls attempt to

balance their own representations through social media in an attempt to resist the "feminine norm" and whilst also not wishing to stand out. This section explores how the girls judge themselves (Gamsen 2011; Berriman and Thomson 2015) and others, as suggested by Magnusson and Marecek 2012 and Gulbrandsen 2003. Although the findings do not suggest the girls are only socialised by media, as suggested by Fine (2010) stereotypes appeared to be significant to the girls (de Beauvoir 1997; Brinkman et al 2014), as a site of opposition.

The girls identified how they were encouraged to conform to notions of respectable girlhood however, but they attempted to reject the gender norms they saw. "…resistant voices, gestures, interactions disrupt the regulatory fictions of idealized femininity, revisioning both who they are and who they might become." (Brown 1997 p. 700). The sexualisation debate is relevant to discussions both within and outside of media and forms a key structure of women's oppression (Mitchell 2015) and the "risk" to young girls (Gill 2007: Duits and van Zoonen 2011). "…the discourse of 'sexualisation' is gaining hegemonic status in the way that childhood sexuality is framed,…" (Renold and Ringrose 2013: p. 248). Despite the wish to challenge dominant representations the girls did wish to represent themselves as the "right kind of girl", whilst their peers do the work of patriarchal culture through monitoring appropriate femininity, (Hey 1997; Archer et al 2007; Durham 1999). These discussions contribute a wider understanding of the interaction of peers, media, and society in constructing and monitoring representations and ideals of femininity. This theme of attempting to balance their own desires or wishes with societal or media

expectations or “requirements” runs through this chapter and the following two chapters, for example Chapter 6 whereby girls attempt to balance their imagined future careers with their social worlds and opportunities, and in Chapter 7, whereby the girls attempt to balance their imagined domestic futures with societal expectations and pressures of having children.

Section 5.5 explores the girls’ awareness of their own invisibility, and how gender and class intersect to create specific mediated representations. This section draws together some of the key themes discussed throughout the chapter to demonstrate how socialist feminism combined with an intersectional awareness of “whiteness” and regionality, is necessary to attempt to develop an understanding of the particular position of these working-class girls (Rowbotham 1973). The intersection of gender, class and regionality offers the girls a restricted range of female representations to identify with, and the result is the girls do not see “girls like them”. Meanwhile their “whiteness” is invisible to them. This explores how the girls attempt to navigate the dual oppression of gender and class, whilst also often adopting a patriarchal tone and classist lens through which they judge others.

This chapter contributes to and extends debates about media representations and the perceptions of media by working-class girls. Research to date has often excluded girls’ voices from the debates, whereas my research centralises the interpretations and understandings the girls take from media. A key contribution is developing an understanding how the sexualisation debate runs through the girls’ critique of media,

self-representations through social media, and monitoring other girl's social media. Sexualisation and sexuality is the girls' present rather than their future, and they are presenting themselves continuously, which may frame how they can imagine their futures, outside of Sexualisation.

5.2 Working-Class Girls and their Media Consumption

Initial analysis of media consumption from the media diaries the girls kept was used to facilitate discussions in focus groups but also provides an interesting understanding of how the girls were consuming media. This discussion will demonstrate media platforms, texts and attitudes towards media. A key point to note is the lack of coherent patterns in the girls' media consumption, beyond the focus of the girls on digital platforms. The girls accessed a variety of new and traditional media texts, however their focus was often on social media platforms, with social media perceived as always "on", and for most of the girls part of their lives, whilst other media platforms were often engaged in depending on the presence of friends or family. One theme that emerged was how levels of sociability differed depending on the type of media being consumed. Girls often mentioned siblings and parents when talking about watching TV or films, which reflects the OFCOM findings (2016) that confirms watching TV was an important focus for family time, whereas engaging with social media platforms was something that separated the girls from their family, with them keeping this activity private, albeit interacting with friends via these platforms.

As mentioned above, one of the key themes the media diaries highlight is the girls' consumption of media is primarily through digital platforms, with the girls accessing media texts through either a combination of traditional sources and online sources or only online. Television and films were frequently consumed through On Demand platforms, whilst Netflix was watched through TV and TIVO and their tablets or laptops, and some girls watched and downloaded TV shows through Apple TV. Similarly, downloading was the preferred option when watching films. Many of the girls had internet or TV with parental controls to limit what could be watched, however, most of the girls talked about knowing the codes for the parental controls and being able to switch it off when they wanted, with some of them being responsible for monitoring their younger siblings viewing.

Viewing of television and films show the greatest variation of texts consumed (See Appendix 1 and 2). There was no clear trend in identifying the most popular films, with many of the films only being watched by one or two of the girls. Most of the films consumed were age appropriate, however there were six films mentioned in the media diaries that were Certificate 18 and twenty-three films that were Certificate 15 according to the BBFC (www.bbfc.co.uk) (See Appendix 2). When discussing the films that were not considered age appropriate, the girls suggested their parents were aware of them watching most of these, and often they watched the films with either their parents, older siblings or friends when they had "movie nights".

Analysis of the consumption of TV texts (See Appendix 1) showed the most popular programmes were *X-Factor, I'm a Celebrity, Eastenders, Coronation Street, Emmerdale*, however still less than a third of the girls talked about watching each of these texts, with some mentioning how they used to watch certain programmes but no longer watched them. The girls were often influenced by other members of the family in terms of viewing, so these shows were often viewed because their family members chose to view them, rather than the girls choosing the programme. For example; *Downton Abbey, Murder She Wrote* and *Top Gear*, were due to parents or grandparents choosing the programme, whilst other TV shows, such as *Danger Mouse* and *Peppa Pig* were viewed because of younger siblings. The girls showed an ambivalent attitude towards TV viewing;

> "There's never anything good on [TV]…I'm too busy for TV and things like that though…I've got something every day…, I've got dance on Monday, Rainbows helping on Tuesday,…" (Dreamwolf 05/11/015) [she outlined her daily activities]

> "I never watch normal TV" (Margaret 02/02/16 – her media diary showed she watched a lot of YouTubers)

> "I don't watch that much TV tho, I just like sit on my phone on like, Facebook and things…me phone is always in me hand…I have to ask my mum what's happened [on TV]…" (Mildred 02/02/16)

This discussion is in contrast with the report by Common Sense (2015) which suggests tweens prefer to watch TV. Most of the girls multi-tasked when the TV was on, engaging with social media or messaging their friends at the same time.

The girls often listened to music in their rooms, or through headphones, however this became a social activity when listening to the radio with their family or listening to music with friends. The girls had a wide range of genres and artists they listened to (see Appendix 5), which suggests music has “a powerful and enduring appeal” (Common Sense 2015: p. 37). The girls did not always share their musical preferences with friends however this did not appear important to the girls. One thing the girls shared was criticism of female musicians (as discussed further in Section 5.3.1). The girls would often say they liked or disliked women, however from a music perspective this was not expanded on, rather the girls would criticise the women for their looks.

YouTube and social media platforms such as *Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, Whatsapp* are popular with the girls, whilst they rarely, if ever read newspapers or magazines. The internet is perceived as always being there, so the girls did not consider this a media text, rather a way to consume media texts. Only two of the 30 girls included in my research did not have a social media profile. For the other girls, social media was the most important form of media. This reflects findings by OFCOM (2016) that shows on average 74% of young people have social media profiles by the age of 13. All the girls in the study, irrespective of whether they had social media

profiles, were aware of the safety messages that surround social media, particularly the messages about not meeting strangers that have ‘friended’ them on social media, not exchanging images (sexting), and not ‘friending’ strangers. However, what became evident through these discussions was the difference in the understanding of the word ‘friend’ for young people and adults advising them. ‘Llama’ was one of the most active girls on social media and suggested she had over 500 friends (she would not disclose exactly how many). The girls would accept friend requests from friends of friends, even if they had never met the person; their perception of what is a friend is, was different to those educating them. This is a key contribution from this discussion that can provide an understanding the girls’ interaction through social media and provides an area for further research.

In addition to the issues of safety whilst using social media a key theme that emerged from the research is the girl’s awareness of social media being constantly ‘on’. This challenges research by Common Sense (2015) who suggests teens spend more time listening to music or watching TV than using social media. The girls appeared to be rarely ‘off’ of social media, with it as a constant presence even when at school. This also questions the validity of research by OFCOM (2015) and Rideout et al (2010) who respectively have attempted to measure the amount of time young people spend engaging with media. Measuring how many hours the girls spend using media is almost impossible now due to social media rarely being turned off. This is something they cannot or do not want to escape. The girls in this study appeared to want to be actively engaged with social media and connected most of the time;

> “Even when I’m out I’ve got to find somewhere that’s got WIFI” (Llama 05/11/15)

Due to this many of the girls engaged with more than one form of media at a time, with TV viewing often an activity that was going on in the background whilst the girls were on one or more social media platforms. This multi-tasking supports findings by Pea et al (2012) who highlighted this as an emerging trend from statistics in 2009.

> “I watch like both, like, I’ll go on my phone and like, if I miss something on like Eastenders, I have to rewind it and watch it and then…” (Chloe 02/02/16)

> “I have the TV, my tablet and my phone…” (Mildred 02/02/16)

In addition to being present on social media some of the girls discussed how they felt they needed to be active, demonstrated through posting pictures, commenting, and ‘liking’ friends’ posts. When Mildred, Margaret, Nina and Chloe were asked how often they were on social media their response was collectively “All the time” (02/02/16). Llama also suggested she was on social media most of the time. One discussion with her after half term, where she had her mobile phone taken away, demonstrated how she felt desperate to know what was going on and felt she was missing out when unable to access her social media accounts. Social media formed part of her daily routine;

> "Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, and that's it…When I'm at home I'll go upstairs after school get changed, go in my bed, then go on my phone, check all my things [social media], and get my tablet and put Youtube on…" (Llama 05/11/15)

This was further discussed by Margaret and Chloe who demonstrated how they felt the need to post frequently;

> "If I haven't posted on Instagram, for like four days, I'm like, oh my god, I'd better post something quick. So, I'll like do my makeup and I'll just like change my top and I'll just, I'll just be like, try and get the perfect picture and it won't happen so I'll do it the next day." (Margaret 01/03/16)
>
> "I upload a photo every day."(Chloe 01/03/16)

Although the girls were not allowed to use their phones in school, they still talked about posting pictures of themselves and their group at break and lunch times. The need or wish to engage on social media was considered greater than the risk of losing their phones.

However, for the two girls that did not have social media there was a significant difference in their desire to develop a social media profile, as shown through the

discussion with Ariana and Dreamwolf. During conversations with Dreamwolf, she showed little interest in social media;

> "I don't really get to go on any electronics though so I can live without them, I'd rather not, because I see what my mum and dad are trying to do, because their generation used to get kicked outside to play, and most kids these days just stay at home and play on their X-Box and things which in the future that's not going to be very good." (Dreamwolf 26/03/15)

> "I can just go outside and see my friends." (Dreamwolf 26/03/15)

Although Dreamwolf's response suggests a disregard towards social media, her responses and discussions appear very similar to those heard from parents or teachers, so it is not clear how far she has been influenced by them. However, Ariana's response to not having social media contrasted with Dreamwolf's. Ariana was not allowed social media until she was thirteen, because her parents were concerned about her being bullied, as she had been bullied in a previous school. Ariana showed a clear awareness of the safety and risks associated with having social media profiles, and was cautious about social media, but showed a clear desire to be online;

> "…I'm gonna ask my mum if I can have it [social media] on my thirteenth birthday which is this year." (Ariana 26/03/15)
>
> "I want to go on Facebook because of my friend Kirsty" (Ariana 26/03/15)

The discussions with Ariana demonstrated she felt pressure to be on social media to join in with her friends, and the peer pressure and feeling of missing out, outweighed her fear of being subjected to bullying. This pressure to 'have' social media, was a theme that also emerged when talking to Rapunzel. She had not had any social media accounts until the previous year, but when she joined a new gymnastics club she felt the pressure to have an *Instagram* account. Most of the girls she met through this gymnastics club had *Instagram* accounts and shared images of themselves and each other competing and training, which Rapunzel wished to be part of. This point corroborates discussions by Quan-Haase and Young (2010) that suggests the majority of people in their study joined *Facebook* because a friend suggested it or because friends used it. It is evident the girls in my research felt pressure from friends, and often their parents succumb to this. These discussions clearly show the feeling of being excluded from a group for not having social media, and the importance of social media to provide a sense of belonging. What is also evident from the discussions with the girls, such as Llama, Mildred, Chloe, who use social media a lot, is that once they have social media this sense of belonging has to be maintained by being present and updating their profiles often.

Linked to the point above and how the Rapunzel's friends used *Instagram* for a particular purpose, it emerged the girls purposefully selected social media platforms for different uses. For example, girls will use *Snapchat* for chatting with friends, *Facebook* for watching what friends are doing, *Instagram* for following people and

sharing or uploading images. This supports findings by Quan-Haase and Young (2010: p358), "…Facebook, social information emerged as a key factor that was not present in the IM factor analysis. Facebook is used to find out about social events, friends' activities, and social information about peers." Llama discussed how she would upload images of herself "looking good" on *Facebook* or *Instagra*m but would share images of herself joking around on *Snapchat*. This shows an awareness of what image the girls are presenting to their wider friends, with only the close friends seeing the "real" or less "polished" images. This is also supported by the quote above from Margaret who discussed putting make up on just to take pictures for *Instagram. Instagram* emerged as the favoured platform for the girls to use, however of the girls that had social media profiles most used multiple platforms (See Appendix 4) and linked them, so images posted to *Instagram* would also appear on *Facebook*. This is supported by Quan-Haase and Young (2010: p. 350) "…users do not completely replace one form of social media with another because each form supports unique communication needs that the other cannot completely fulfill…". This was evident throughout discussions with the girls and the use of different platforms for different purposes.

In addition to selecting social media platforms for different purposes, the girls use multiple message platforms, such as *Snapchat* as mentioned, but also *Whatsapp, Messenge*r and SMS texting. OFCOM (2016) highlighted the emergence of this trend, identifying young people had increased their use of group messaging services. However, the discussion with the girls developed this knowledge and highlighted how there were clear reasons for the distinction between which message service to use.

Firstly, some of the girls were on pay-as-you-go contracts so texting was not a favourable way to message due to the cost, it appeared their parents were most likely to text them and they would respond by text. However, from the messaging services that are offered through roaming data or WIFI they distinguished between these because of privacy. For example, the girls liked *Snapchat* because the messages were not saved.

> "…Snapchat messages you can't save, they don't have to save, but Facebook messages do save…" (Llama)
> "What messages would you send that you don't want to be saved?" (Me)
> "…things about people…" (Llama 05/11/15)

However, arguments between friends or groups often took place on Messenger and *Whatsapp,* whereby members of the group, as mentioned by Llama, could spectate rather than joining in;

> "There's loads of beef going on, on Facebook…just on Facebook like group things…like people slagging people off and everything when we clearly haven't…I just sit there reading through it…" (Llama 05/11/15)

The girls used messaging services when engaged in arguments with others, which used the ability to engage in a 'conversation-like' exchange, contained within the group or person to person chat, "…the exchanges over IM emulate in-person conversations…",

(Quan-Haase and Young 2010: p. 359).

The deciding factors on what platform to use for the girls is whether they want messages to be saved or not. Those discussions young people do not want others to see are carried out on platforms where messages are not saved and therefore cannot be tracked, forwarded or saved. As mentioned by OFCOM there was a "…fine line between banter and bullying" (2016: p. 3), through group messaging services, the differing uses of group message services by the girls suggests this is a consideration by young people in choosing the service to use.

A majority of the girls used YouTube (See Appendix 3), with some using it more than any other media platforms. This is reflective of the findings of the OFCOM report (2016) that suggests a majority of 12 – 15 year olds in the UK prefer YouTube compared to TV, however this contradicts the research into American teens and tweens by the Common Sense organisation (2015) which suggests more 'tweens' prefer to watch TV. Most of the girls watched a variety of YouTubers, some of these focused on hair and beauty and were used for makeup tutorials, and others were used for music, parodies and pranks;

> "PewDiePie, Zoella… Bart Baker does umm song parodies,.. umm DanandPhil do just random videos but they are really funny and some challenges. Err Zoella I don't know really, it's a bit mad…" (Dreamwolf 05/11/15)

Despite Dreamwolf not having social media platforms she used YouTube and was familiar with a number of YouTubers. YouTube appeared to be perceived as outside of the label 'social media' but at the same time be distinct from other forms of media. Many of the girls suggested they enjoyed YouTube because they could choose what they watched, but also YouTube clips were short, so they didn't have to concentrate on it in the same way as if they were watching a show on TV. Some of the girls were fans of specific YouTubers, for example, Louisa had the Zoella book, makeup bag, files and notebooks from the range. Although she said she didn't watch YouTube that often she agreed with Jorgie and said she used Zoella to see makeup and hair tutorials. Jorgie selected YouTubers for particular purposes, for example Zoella for makeup and hair tutorials;

> "…finding music and watching tutorial videos and stuff like that…hair for when I go out with my friends…" (Jorgie 02/02/16)

However, some of the girls were less selective about who or what they watched, and used YouTube when they were bored;

> "…I just watch like, I don't really choose people, I just like, just watch things that come up on the suggestions, and it's like I normally do my little cousin's hair cos she comes across…" (Chelsey 12/04/16)
>
> "I only watch it if I'm bored [Youtube]…" (Jessica 02/02/16)

The girls admitted they often copied or attempted to copy makeup and hair tutorials shown by the female Youtubers, as demonstrated by Chelsey's comment above, whereby she would use YouTube to find styles for her little cousin's hair. Conversations at the start of some of the focus groups would occasionally be the girls (particularly Margaret, Mildred, Nina and Chloe) discussing hair and if they had attempted to copy styles. This linked to Chloe's interest in hair and her desire to be a hairdresser in the future, she appeared to copy the styles on YouTube because of her interest in hair and beauty. It was clear from these discussions that YouTube was consumed both individually and as a social networking tool, whereby they could discuss and engage with YouTubers with friends.

As discussed above the girls' media consumption is varied, but some key themes have emerged, such as the reliance on digital platforms, the embedded nature of social media in the girls' lives and the variety of media texts the girls consumed. The following section will discuss the girls' responses to media representations and perceptions of media across the texts and platforms they engage with.

5.3 Working-Class Girls and Media Representations

A number of academics critique the narrow, stereotypical representations of women in a range of media, and suggest little has changed over time (DeWitt et al 2013; Tincknell 2005; Collins 2011; Byerly and Ross 2006). "…it would remain indisputable

that stereotypical images of women have dominated, and continue to be perpetuated,…" (Carson and Pajaczkowska 2000: pg 305). The discussion within focus groups highlighted the girls recognised stereotypical feminine representations dominate media, linking to research by Collins (2011), DeWitt et al (2013), McRobbie (2009), and Wolf (1991). The theme the girls wished to discuss the most was that of sexualisation and objectification of women. Conversations often returned to the topic of overtly sexualised images, the lack of clothes of models / stars, and the focus on women's bodies beyond anything else. This sexualisation of women and girls is the focus of much academic research (Gavey 2012; Jackson and Goddard 2015; Lamb et al 2015; Charles 2012; Levy 2006; Walter 2010; Harris 2004; McRobbie 2009; Gill 2007). It would appear the sexualisation thesis within society has reached the girls, and potentially informed how they critique representations or provides a lens through which the girls engage with media. The sexualisation of women was accompanied by the girls' awareness of women and girls being defined by their femininity and represented as weak, demonstrated by "Catherine's" observation in a focus group;

> "In films, people, like the girls are always being saved, there's like only a few of them that the girl is actually a hero." (Catherine 04/02/16 – co-participatory interview)

This perception of the representation of women and girls is repeated by many of the other girls, whereby they identify how many females are limited to the role of "damsel in distress" (Dreamwolf 04/06/15), "the victim" (Amelia-Rose 04/06/15), that need

saving by men. However, some of the girls did identify some media texts they believed offered an alternative representation of women and girls that contrasted with the weak, passive, secondary to men stereotypes. Films such as, *Frozen* (2013), *The Hunger Games* (2012 – 2015), *Harry Potter* (2001 – 2011), and television shows such as, *Bones* (2005 – 2017) and *Fringe* (2008 – 2013), were perceived as challenging some of the feminine stereotypes. When discussing *Frozen*, "Shortbread" did not like the film but conceded;

> "It says girls are strong, I'll give it that…" (Shortbread 11.02.16)

This supports claims by Jennings (2014) and Signorelli (2012) who suggests female characters are being shown as stronger with less stereotypical content, and girls tend to prefer these characters (Aubrey and Harrison 2004). This interpretation of media is demonstrated by "Olivia-Rose" (15/03/16), discussing *Fringe*;

> "….I watch something on Netflix called Fringe, and umm the main, the main character is umm, a girl, and she, like, she does a normal job and she does normal things, and she wears normal clothes."

The use of "normal" when discussing the main character, reflects girls' perception of this character as someone "Olivia-Rose" can relate to because she did not perceive this woman as weak, passive, conforming to idealized beauty, or secondary to men. This interpretation of *Bones* and *Fringe* contradicts Haran et al (2008: p. 21) who suggest TV

programmes such as these are structured around a battle between men and women, and exhibit gender struggles and inequality. “Jorgie” and “Olivia-Rose” saw these representations as positive however not all girls agreed, some critiqued this and challenged how these women are still represented physically. They were not content with women merely being present but wanted women to be treated as equal. This links to the question raised by Williamson (2010) asking if it is enough to see more women or is the position of that woman or representation more important. The girls’ discussions reflect considerations from academics and show active negotiation of meaning.

In addition to the discussion of typically feminine representations, some of the girls identified the classist nature of media representations. These girls did not use the term “class” however, they clearly discussed media through a sense of “them and us” with the representations being perceived as showing “them”, or “posh” people. “Posh” was clearly seen as different, and not identifiable either through appearance, accent or material accessories. “Peeweebabee” (19/11/15) commented the women shown;

> “…are usually very very posh”

This reading of media was further supported by comments discussing how a narrow representation of British people was shown, with the girls suggesting they were not like the typical portrayal of British people shown in media. This supports Redden and

Brown (2010), Biressi and Nunn (2009), Lawler (2005) and Hadfield et al (2007) who identify the dominance of middle-class norms in media, whereby the working-class are either absent or demonised. This links to socialist feminist arguments surrounding the position of working-class women in media, whereby the girls do not see "girls like us" because the representations of working-class women are narrow, often parodied and these women can be seen as demonised or infantilised (as discussed in Section 5.4). However, to adopt a further intersectional awareness, these discussions go beyond class and link to regionality (Section 2.4.1.1). The girls commented on the absence of representations they could identify with, with the exception of local media, which focused on bad news about the area. One of the key identifiers of difference the girls identified was accents they heard on media, in comparison to their accents, and how this rendered them invisible. These discussions are supported by findings by McKenzie (2015) who suggested the women in her research felt excluded from "normal society". As discussed by Armstrong & Connolley (1989) class interacts with gender, ethnicity, race, and regionality. This creates a narrow representation of Britain, which links to the notion of translocation or social location as part of the intersection of inequality (Anthias 2012). "Intersectionality is a way of understanding and analysing the complexity in the world,…When it comes to social inequality, people's lives and the organization of power in a given society are better understood as being shaped not by a single axis of social division…but by many axes that work together and influence each other." (Collins and Bilge 2016: p. 2). The following discussion was linked to how the girls think others would perceive England based on what is seen on media texts;

> "I think Americans always think we're posh, they always just think London they never think about all the other areas around, they just think London…" (Chocolate Millionaire 10/02/16 – co-participatory interview)
>
> "...they always make us sound really posh even though if we went to America and started speaking to them they'd think oh my god you're not from England, cos you wouldn't, we don't sound like it in [the area], in London the more, like the Queen yeh she would speak like barrth…" (Memep 10/02/16 – co-participatory interview)
>
> "…and grrraass" (Chocolate Millionaire 10/02/16 – co-participatory interview)

This discussion demonstrates the girls' understanding of the construction of class and also the awareness of their regional identity setting them apart from dominant representations. The girls were attempting to challenge and resist the "naturalised" divisions and "rules" that appear in society and media, that appear as "common sense" (van Zoonen 1994). The findings from my research contribute to understanding the intersection of gender, class and regionality within media and how this informs the girls' lives. A key contribution from these findings is understanding the girls are aware of the gendered and classed nature of media, even when they do not use terms such as "class", with the girls are critiquing media through an intersectionally socialist feminist lens. This position, whereby the girls do not see women or girls "like them", shows they understand the representations reflect gendered and class norms. However, as found by Nayak (2000) the girls in my research had little idea of themselves as having an ethnicity. "…whiteness was seen as a homogenous category

deemed ordinary and unremarkable…”(Nayak in Sveinnson 2009: p. 33). The girls in my research did not perceive themselves as racialised and did not see “white” as a category. So when they commented on not seeing “girls like them”, they did not acknowledge the dominance of “whiteness” like most of these girls were. Therefore “whiteness” and the privileges this affords them are unseen.

5.3.1 Sexualisation

As mentioned Sexualisation was a key theme that emerged when discussing media representations. Often this focused on young female celebrities that were criticised for what they were wearing and for appearing in a sexualised manner. For example, when discussing Miley Cyrus;

> “I think Miley Cyrus has gone mad” Spring (16/02/15 – co-participatory interview)
>
> “I hate her…she’s a show-off she is…” (Louisa 15/03/16)
>
> “I used to love Hannah Montana…” (Jessica 15/03/16)
>
> “But what she is now isn’t any of what she was like on Hannah Montana…a really bad thing, it gives girls like that a bad name maybe…” (Jorgie 15/03/16)
>
> …“I don’t know why she wants to be like that, she wants to be noticed…” (Olivia-Rose 15/03/16)
>
> “…I think she’s an attention seeker…” (Jorgie 15/03/16)

Throughout this discussion it was evident the girls preferred the "good girl" version of Miley Cyrus, and, considered her current representation as unnecessarily sexual. These discussions link to findings by Lowe (2003) whereby discussions about Britney Spears suggested girls appeared angry with the "good / bad" girl contrast. This is similar for the girls in my research, whereby they were very outspoken about Cyrus and her representation as the "bad girl", preferring the "good girl" image. This discussion demonstrates the girls were aware of acceptable femininity (Youdell 2005), which reflects the virgin/whore dichotomy, where girls or women are either virginal (good) or whores (bad) (Crawford and Popp 2003; Youdell 2005; Lees 1986). The reflection of the virgin or "good" girl is evident in many of the Disney films and TV shows the girls watch, such as *Victorious, Hannah Montana, Liv and Maddie*, and as claimed by Gamson (2011) this dichotomy is often central to the position of women in the public sphere, the "…'virgin/whore' dichotomy that has long been at the heart of female fame." (Williamson (2010: p. 199). The "whore / bad" persona, as mentioned about Miley Cyrus, but also Ariana Grande, (whose tour was entitled 'Dangerous Woman'), was critiqued by the girls as they perceived the representations as too sexualised and "slutty". This links to the "…classic 'double standard'…" (McRobbie 1978, in Bland et al 1978: p. 107), whereby girls are judged for being too sexual but at the same time they are judged if they are not sexy (Crawford and Popp 2003). The idea of a "ideal" or "good" girl and a "non-desirable" or "bad" girl is supported by research by Tolman (1994) who identified how young girls are taught not to be sexual outside of heterosexuality and marriage, whilst Gill (2009: p. 142) highlighted the sexualisation of women's bodies is shown through a class and racial lens, with the

sexualised yet *"respectable"* middle class woman and *"slutty"* sexuality of working class women.

The girls rejected the hyper-sexualisation of these female musicians as inappropriate for younger girls to consume (Duit and van Zoonen 2011; Jackson and Goddard 2015). Other female musicians, such as Ariana Grande, Nicky Minaj, and Taylor Swift (discussed below) were also criticised due to their sexualised image. This is a common discourse in media, aimed at a "particular kind of celebrity" (Williamson 2010: p. 118);

> "…she looks like a tramp, …well like she's got really big earrings" (Shortbread 16/02/15
>
> "chav" (Amelia-Rose 16/02/15)
>
> "….she looks like someone that's like, I dunno, that lives in a chavy area and hasn't got a good education " (Shortbread 16/02/15)

However, it emerged that female musicians can "redeem" themselves despite their sexualisation, as was the case of Jessie J. Some of the girls in this focus group liked her, others did not, however they all agreed that when Jessie J shaved her head for charity this was a good thing and appeared to redeem her in the eyes of the girls that disliked her.

Although the girls in my research do not specify class in their discussions of sexualisation, as shown by the comments below, there is a class lens through which

the girls are interpreting representations and understanding media messages, as they discuss the notion of the "chavy" sexualised image. (See Section 5.4). These discussions rejected the idea that self-sexualisation can be perceived as sexually empowering, as suggested by Aubrey et al (2017); Gavey (2012); and, Peterson (2010). Rather the girls appeared to adopt a critical reading of the musicians, with some girls showing an awareness of the construction of these images and how they believed the sexualised images were for the benefit of boys and men, rather than as expressions of power for women. These findings link to Hains (2007) who suggests media is reinforcing patriarchal mainstream ideals about women's bodies and appearances.

The focus on sexualisation throughout conversations with the girls contributes to understanding how these working-class girls consider and negotiate sexualisation in media, but also highlights the relevance and importance of sexualisation to these girls. This emphasises the relevance of revisiting Mitchell's structures of women's oppression, and engaging with socialist feminism, as this remains a key to understanding the position of women in media and society. The girls within my research highlight the oppression they experience through sexualisation and identifies how this positions them in relation to boys, societal expectations along with the fine line they must negotiate between being feminine but not too sexual. The discussions show the girls' media literacy and agency in attempting to create their own interpretation of media, however, as shown by the critique of sexualised representations, they tended to adopt a middle-class tone and reflect the dominant discourse.

The following sections explore other key themes ("Fake" and "Ladylike"), that emerged from discussions with the girls. These all contribute to understanding how they understand media representations, their attempts to resist gender norms whilst also demonstrating how the girls perceive media in their own, and other girls' lives.

5.3.2 "Fake"

In addition to the sexualisation of women, another theme emerged was the notion of being "fake". This is a new contribution to literature that discusses the perceptions of girls and women in media. Throughout my research the word "fake" was often used to describe the representation and self-representation of women and girls. The girls identified the use of makeup, plastic surgery, Photoshop, and editing as all contributing to the "fake" representation of women.

The discussion of makeup developed throughout many of the focus groups, with the girls often trying to negotiate between what they perceived as too much, and therefore fake, and what they wore or wanted to wear to fit in.

> "You see so many people, they've got like a 'cake face'…that much makeup on, their face is caked in it…" (Jupiter 10/03/16)

This was further developed when they talked about some of the women from reality TV shows, known for their appearances, such as Geordie Shore and Ex on the Beach:

> "they're a bit fake" (Dolphin 26/02/15)
>
> "they're like a Barbie…" (Galaxy 26/02/15)

This exaggerated and "fake" version of femininity was criticised by all of the girls, even though some of them used false nails, false eye lashes, or hair extensions, or heavily pencilled their eyebrows. Many of the girls wore some makeup (mainly mascara) to school despite the rules, however they suggested they rarely used makeup, or only used a little, and when they did, they did not really enjoy it. "Llama" discussed how she had to wear a lot of makeup for her dancing competitions, but, did not like it because she did not feel herself and it was "caked on". It was unclear how far the girls were agreeing with the critique of the use of makeup to comply with the general feelings of the group. However, the girls' discussions about makeup reflects findings discussed by Fabricant and Gould (1993), who suggested contradictions about the amount and frequency of makeup use is linked to conflicted attitudes about makeup and the balance between some but not too much. This also supports Gentina et al (2012) who suggested there is a code of makeup use that defines what is appropriate for certain situations.

These discussions show the complexity the girls' face when developing their own identity and self-representations (see Section 5.3 for further discussions). The exaggerated or "fake" look is not, according to them, attractive, however no makeup is equally challenging and problematic, so the girls attempt to strike a balance. The

consumption of make-up is linked to "…identity construction…" Fabricant and Gould (1993: p. 535). Rudd (1997) identified makeup is linked to adolescent self-image improvement, which was evidenced by the girls who wore make-up and attempted to justify their own consumption and self-presentation on social media, with the suggestion they needed to use makeup to make themselves look better. (Section 5.3).

The use of airbrushing was also discussed by the girls in relation to being "fake", with some of the girls highlighting this as another example of "non-realistic" representations. When the girls were shown magazines and were discussing them, "Dreamwolf" pointed out to the group where she thought the celebrities had been airbrushed. Her knowledge of airbrushing was linked to the work her Mum did, as a photographer. Although the other girls had less knowledge about the use of Photoshop, they were aware of how the flawless images were constructed and unrealistic.

> "That airbrushed kinda look seems like, really popular, like they all seem like, they've got like the perfect complexion and stuff." (Amelia-Rose 16/02/15)
>
> "But it doesn't look sexy at all" (Galaxy 16/02/15)

The literacy the girls have in interrogating media is supported by Gill (2012) and Gauntlett (in Ralph et al 1999) who maintain girls show a high level of media literacy and are clearly aware of how constructed media is. These findings contribute to existing literature through demonstrating the girls are not just managing their

transition towards womanhood with the messages they get from peers and mothers (Fabricant and Gould 1993; Gentina et al 2012) but also through the messages and images they are shown in media. The girls are aware media constructs “fake” images of women and girls, and these messages are negotiated, and interpreted by the girls in an attempt to construct their own identity, in opposition to being seen as “fake” but whilst trying to conform to some gendered expectations.

Further to the discussion of the constructed representations in media that show “fake” images of women and girls, another theme emerged that contributes to understanding how the girls perceive media, the notion of media idealising “ladylike” women and girls. This theme links to wider societal “instructions” the girls are given about how to be girls, developed from idealised middle-class respectability.

5.3.3 “Ladylike”

The discussions the girls had about being “ladylike”, reflected messages they perceived as coming from media and wider society. The ladylike theme emerged when talking to the girls about media socialisation, whereby the girls suggested media messages reflected messages from family, peers and schools about how they should act and behave. It was clear through discussions with the girls they were equating ladylike with the notion of “posh”, middle-class representations.

When defining ladylike the girls commented;

"It's where you're not expected to do rude things, like burping and stuff like that. You're expected to sit smart, not like how I'm sitting now, …you're expected to act smart, look smart, dress smart and have smart makeup" (Jorgie 22/03/16)

"Eat smart, like little tiny petite…." (Louisa 22/03/16)

"Yeh eat posh like that"(Jorgie 22/03/16)

"…The complete opposite of a boy" (Amethyst 24/03/16)

"When you like, see a girl, like for example walking down, the, like…no like walking from class you wouldn't expect her to like swear or anything…supposed to sit like…" (Mak 24/03/16)

The identification of this by the girls confirms discussions by Biressi and Nunn (2009) and Lawler (2005) who suggest middle-class values are shown through media. The girls further considered this behaviour sets standards by which girls are judged and encouraged to emulate. "Ladylike" expectations were linked to the notion of being "posh", rather than just being linked to good manners. This was particularly evident when the girls' embodied the descriptions of "ladylike", with exaggerated movements and attempting to adopt "posh" accents and what they perceived as "posh" composure. These findings are reinforced by Brown (1997) who suggests working-class women are aware of the dominant cultural values however vary in the extent to which they desired to be "this kind of girl", as they have the ability to negotiate their own understandings of the media representations and extent they comply with the "norm". It was clear from the discussion with the girls in my research they attempted to reject these norms, although they did not use the term "middle-class values" the

girls framed the conversation and considered these representations as "idealised" femininity, that did not reflect their values and they did not appear to wish to comply with. The girls were aware of the classist nature of the representations, without clearly having the word "class" to label these representations or to offer a positive representations of themselves that countered this. As discussed by Skeggs (1997) "…Their class struggle is waged on a daily basis to overcome the denigration and delegitimizing associated with their class positioning. This is why representations are a key site of class struggle; they are where symbolic violence occurs." (Skeggs 1997: p. 95).

The girls would often struggle to explain what was meant by the term "ladylike", however would embody this notion, through either demonstrating what they perceived as "ladylike" or what they understood as not being "ladylike". This embodiment demonstrated their attempts to resist the "ladylike" label, as the girls parodied "ladylike" through exaggerated versions of how "ladies" are supposed to walk, sit, hold themselves, and eat.

> "..as if you have a book on your head, like…" (Margaret then demonstrates 22/03/16))
> "…oh yeh you have to sit there and cross your legs don't you, if you wear a skirt" (Mildred 22/03/16)

This discussion links to suggestions that women's bodies are more intensely policed than men's due to the male / female binary; "…femaleness is still disturbing enough to require supervision and containment by forms of discipline that men are not subjected to." (King 2004: p. 36). The girls were aware of their bodies being monitored and attempts through media and wider society to control or "police" them. The girls' awareness of appropriate femininity and the instructions of how to be "ladylike" challenges Lareau, (2003), Walkerdine & Lucey, (1989) and Bourdieu (2010) who maintain there are class differences in the way in which children are socialized. Despite the girls being from a working-class background they were aware of the "typical" and socially constructed expectations of girls that are perpetuated in media and wider society.

This containment of the girls' bodies (Youdell 2005) and control they were expected to exhibit conforms to discussions by Allen (1999) who suggests culture and society normalises behaviour, and through this normalisation attempts to make members of society to behave "appropriately". It is argued by Pylypa (1998) that not only do individuals regulate their bodies to conform to norms, but they also to talk about what they "should" and "should not" do. This was evident in the conversations with the girls, where they discussed and demonstrated what they should do or behave like, and often drew attention to how they did not comply with this. Pointing out their "flaws" stopped them considering themselves "ladylike" and was often done with much enjoyment and laughter, with the girls challenging each other to perform "ladylike" the best, for example, walking across a classroom with a book on their heads.

The girls embraced the opportunity to resist this “ladylike” identity and appeared to enjoy subverting or challenging the notion of “ladylike”, through their embodied performance, thus directly resisting the dominant feminine norm, whilst also implicitly resisting the notion of “posh” and therefore identifying as a class apart from the middle-class ideal. As discussed by Hall (2000 in du Gay et al 2000), constructing an identity is an act of power. The girls in my research demonstrated they had agency and power to resist and negotiate these dominant messages of “desirable” femininity. The girls’ discussions challenge claims by Pylypa (1998) that the desire to conform leads to self-discipline and self-surveillance, however as discussions in Sections 5.4 demonstrate this is not as straightforward as this initially appears. There is a complexity to this whereby the girls appear to want to resist and challenge the norms however find themselves conforming, which they then often appear to have to justify.

5.4 Self-representations: Judging themselves and others

The above discussions focused on mediated representations of women and girls, however, another aspect the girls considered within the focus group conversations was the self-representations of girls on social media. “Social media demand that young people actively and deliberately think about and negotiate their own visibility – the image they project, the identity they want to have.” (Gabriel 2014: p. 105). The themes that emerged when discussing how the girls perceived representations and represented themselves on social media contributes to understanding the girls’ perceptions of media and their role as girls. Throughout the focus groups it became

apparent the girls wished to talk about social media the most often, and this was the form of media the girls consistently used, supporting findings from OFCOM (2016).

The girls were aware of how they “should” present themselves but also how other girls were under pressure to present themselves in the “perfect” way, this awareness of being watched was expected by the girls (Gamson 2011). The girls were seemingly in a constant negotiation with their images and images of friends to ensure they were perceived as “cool” or “appropriate”. Despite selfies offering the girls opportunities to experiment with representations, as claimed by Doring et al (2016), the girls highlighted how many girls chose to conform to gendered stereotypes. Although the girls did not suggest or imply they were ashamed by their position (gender, class or regionality), the self-monitoring and constant judging of themselves and others suggested this was linked to an awareness of “their position” as working-class girls or in their words “not posh girls”. This is argued by Skeggs (1997) as linked to shame, “Shame was produced as a result of their consciousness of their ‘place’ – through the mismatch of their dispositions and positions. …Their attempts to claim respectability locked them into systems of self-regulation and monitoring, producing themselves as governable subjects.” (Skeggs 1997: p. 162). This applies to the way the girls operated through social media, with the constant surveillance of themselves and others to regulate the performance of the feminine “ideal” subject. This monitoring offers the girls up as available to representations that potentially “control” how the girls see themselves and others. Even when the girls endeavour to reject the “beauty myth” (Wolf 1991), the discussions of editing photographs and using filters to improve

themselves suggests, the girls are, as suggested above by Gabriel (2014), considering how they represent themselves. "From Instagram and the 'selfie', to the ephemeral Snapchat and YouTube vlogging – young people's media practices are increasingly visually orientated, with 'the self' and the body framed firmly at their centre." (Berriman and Thomson 2015: p.589) These findings demonstrate how far the sexualisation debate permeates the girls' media lives, and questions if the girls' focus on their individual bodies and critiques of other girls and women detracts from the other dimensions of women's lives as discussed by Mitchell (2015), such as Production and Reproduction. These findings contribute to understanding how Mitchell's (2015) structures of inequality continue to interact to oppress working-class girls.

The critique of others' representations and their own self-representations emerged, which demonstrated the complexity between what they see and do and reflected some of the themes discussed above in Section 5.3.

> "…they portray girls in a certain way…they all look pretty, all sitting there looking pretty, with their lipstick and their hair…and their…skinny bodies and their crop top thingy bobs…" (Shortbread 17/12/15)

"Shortbread" was discussing how *Instagram, Facebook* and *YouTube* representations show an idealised image of girls, which linked (as discussed in Section 5.3) to a "them and us" theme, with "us" being most of the girls in the focus groups, and "them" being the "popular" girls, that attempted to create the "perfect account". Many of these

discussions focused on how YouTube influencers were often used by the girls to show them latest beauty looks (See Appendix 4). The YouTube beauty influencers that were most often engaged with by the girls were: Zoella; Sprinkle of Glitter; Tanya Burr; Pixiwoo; NikkieTutorials. The "how-to" tutorials were also believed to shape the representations shown on the "perfect accounts", as discussed by "Shortbread", the ideal "pretty" girl. Many of the girls engaged with a range of YouTubers (See Appendix 4), and despite female YouTubers portraying themselves as "just like us" (Duffy and Hund 2015: p. 9) the girls did not identify with them. They did discuss how they felt they got to know the YouTubers, linking to the discussion of parasocial relationships in Section 3.2.2 (Rasmussen 2018; Ferchaud et al 2018), but this did not stop them highlighting the "fake" images. They drew attention to the "fake" aspect of some of the tutorials, whereby they pointed out the makeup and hair looks could not be achieved in the time shown or without help. The girls did not identify "whiteness" as contributing to their identification with the YouTubers (a majority of the YouTubers and girls shared "whiteness"). This is another example of "whiteness" not being visible to the girls, and the girls not seeing "whiteness" as a racial identity. "The invisibility of whiteness as a racial position…" (Dyer 1997: p. 3), which supports Frankenberg's (1993) claim "whiteness" is usually unexamined and unnamed.

The girls' discussions about the "popular girls" and how these were seen as concerned with fashion, makeup and appeared to be more sexualised, is supported by Magnusson and Marecek (2012) and Gulbrandsen (2003) who identified how the popular girls were seen as, "…preoccupied with their self-performance…". The girls in

my focus groups were very critical of these “popular girls” and highlighted how these girls conformed to gendered norms. This is demonstrated by the discussion with “Jupiter”, “Mak” and “Catherine”, which focused primarily on *Instagram* and *Facebook*;

> “…someone who is really trying to get a perfect account, they like,… they just have like an open account, and what they do is they take like pictures and they put, they crop it, they put effects on and then they put like, “I’m so not pretty today” and then they are going to get all these comments like that say “you are” “don’t be so hard on yourself”…” (Jupiter 04/02/16 – co-participatory interview)
> …“they’ll try and, like, attract attention from other people…” (Mak 04/02/16 – co-participatory interview)
> “…they put loads of makeup on to take like one or two photos,…and after that they’ll probably wipe it off, post it on Instagram or Snapchat and won’t bother for the rest of the day, until they want to take another picture,…” (Catherine 04/02/16 – co-participatory interview)

The discussion highlights the idea of the perfect account, which appeared to mean the account with “perfect” images, and comments that were focused on making this person feel better about herself. The process highlighted by “Catherine” was discussed in many other conversations about social media and taking selfies. This process of self-presentation and objectifying themselves supports Berriman and Thomson (2015), Gamson (2011), Tiggeman and Slater (2014), and De Beauvoir (1997).

As discussed by (Dobson and Coffey 2015) this self-objectification is linked to the normative message that leads to "…self-surveillance, self-monitoring and self-discipline…" (Gill 2007: p. 155). It was evident from the conversations with the girls, they undertook surveillance and monitoring of themselves and others and judged according to normative representations. The girls in the focus group criticised the others for representing themselves in a way that complies with dominant feminine discourse, but often represented themselves in a similar way, because this avoided the chances of the girls being ridiculed. "…self-consciousness and self-contradiction, involving feelings of simultaneously 'being with' whilst 'against' an/other…" (Hey 1997: p. 33). Girls face a, "…dual emotional imperative…" (Berriman and Thomson 2015: p. 595), wanting to fit in and be praised for their images, through likes and comments on social media, and avoid criticism from their peers. As much as the girls highlight a potential balancing act in their imagined future domestic lives (Section 7.2.2.1) they also have balancing act between being seen as feminine, but not too sexual, and conforming whilst not necessarily wanting to conform, in an attempt to avoid standing out, and through this they develop attachments with their peers (Levine and Stekel (2016). This develops points made by Skeggs (1997) who demonstrated how working-class women focused on the improvement discourse and the need to be seen to be wanting to "improve" themselves to distinguish themselves from those members of the working-class or underclass that did not wish to improve, however, in the case of the girls in my research as much as they attempted to "fit in" with the appropriate classed femininity shown in media, and therefore not be seen as "chav" they also did not want to be seen as trying too hard or spending too long on their appearance.

"Class was configured through the improvement discourse because in order to improve they had to differentiate themselves from those who did not or could not improve. They were continually making comparisons between themselves and others, creating distances and establishing distinctions and tastes in the process…The women had a strong sense of what they did not want to be,…" (Skeggs 1997: p. 82). The girls did not want to be seen as not making an effort, but also did not want to be seen as spending too long on their appearance. The balancing act between conforming to ideal tropes of femininity whilst not looking as though they were trying to conform too much.

This balancing act is linked to class, as the dominant and "acceptable" face of femininity is that of middle-class, whereby the girls have to develop the tools to comply with these representations. The key contribution from these findings are through adding a class dimension to discussions of social media use and engagement and highlighting the challenges this presents for working-class girls.

It is clear from the judgement of others, along with passing comments about themselves, the girls were aware of and felt the need to conform or justify why they did not conform to the stereotypes that were significant (Fine 2010). The stereotypes they see in media appear to form, at least part of, their schema of a "desirable" feminine image and internalisation of the "…dominant tropes of ideal femininity…" (Tsaliki 2015: p. 507). Girls did not want to appear too sexual, and those that were presenting themselves in a slightly more sexual way, through clothes the girls deemed

as revealing, or makeup that was perceived as too much, were considered as too sexual, rather than striking the right balance to "look good" (Duits and van Zoonen 2011). The girls perceived these self-representations negatively, (Daniels and Zurbriggen 2016) and believed the girls were only presenting themselves in this manner to attract boys, which also was met with disapproval;

> "so they can be perfect…so they can get a boyfriend I reckon…" (Amethyst 04/02/16 – co-participatory interview)
> "To make a good impression" (Black Widow 04/02/16 – co-participatory interview)
> "boys" (Mak 04/02/16 – co-participatory interview)
> "boys" (Jupiter 04/02/16 – co-participatory interview)
> "…so they can get a boyfriend" (Black Widow 04/02/16 – co-participatory interview)

The notion of attempting to be seen as heterosexually attractive supports findings by Tortajada et al (2013) who discusses how girls present themselves in hyper-sexualised images that are combined with traditional notions of heterosexual attractiveness. There was assumed heterosexuality evident in all of the focus groups discussions (Section 7.1.1) However, not all of the girls believed boys were the reason for this self-representation, "Chelsey" suggested girls presented themselves in stereotypical ways because they wanted to fit in and look like other girls;

> "I think girls are actually pressured to look like, like, they see like…they see other girls like, with like boyfriends and everything and then they just feel like they're nothing, so they try and copy of other people to, just to get the attention,"(Chelsey 22/03/16)

The idea proposed by "Chelsey", of girls feeling "they're nothing", without attention and the potential pressure demonstrates how powerful some of the girls perceive their peers are, as these "popular girls" create the pressure to fit in and conform.

The "them and us" tone throughout these discussions suggests a divide between the girls that get it right and the girls that do not. The girls act as each other's critics and regulators, and contribute to the "…microcultural politics of girls' homosociality.." (Hey 1997: p. 130), which is embedded within the constant monitoring, and is central to the relationships between girls. As suggested by Danaher et al (2000) girls are socialised to constantly monitor their own bodies and often negatively evaluate peers and their self-representation (Daniels and Zurbriggen 2016). This monitoring of their own and other's bodies works to ensure the "right" representation is seen, which as discussed by Skeggs (1997) offers the girls some cultural capital. "…women do see and invest in their bodies as a form of cultural capital…They regulate their bodies to make sure that they cannot be seen to be one who does not or cannot care." (Skeggs 1997: p. 83). This scrutiny of each other does the work of patriarchal society and encourages compliance with hegemonic masculine culture (Hey 1997; Durham 1999). Often these discussions developed in a tone whereby the girls perceived "other" girls were

conforming to gendered stereotypes or portraying themselves as overtly sexy, in contrast to the girls in the focus groups, supporting claims by Lamb et al (2015) that girls see “other” girls’ behaviour as conformist but not their own, supporting the view of the third-person effect (Davison 1983; Connors 2005; Duck and Mullin 1995).

However, in contrast to the discussion that focused on the “them and us” discourse, some of the girls admitted they edited their pictures before uploading them to their social media accounts. This is shown by the discussion with “Galaxy” and “Shortbread”, who showed me a number of their images, before and after editing, and some of their latest images uploaded to social media.

> “I’ve got this app…you can make your teeth whiter…its called photo editor…it’s got a filter on it, you got like your pictures, your colour, your stickers, your lighting, and you can get rid of your spots look,…and you can whiten teeth and then you can get rid of red eyes…I love my app…” (Shortbread 17/12/15)
>
> “My profile picture on Facebook that’s edited” (Shortbread 17/12/15)
>
> “Mine’s not” (Galaxy 17/12/15)
>
> “Mine is” (Shortbread 17/12/15)
>
> “loads of people in our year use filters” (Shortbread 17/12/15)

The changes they had made to original images included changing their lip colour, whitening their teeth, filters to soften the lighting, removal of spots or blemishes, and changing eye colour. The girls spend time considering how to present themselves and

construct an appropriate image. Girls put "…considerable effort into constructing their everyday appearance…" (Archer et al 2007: p. 168). This supports Tiggeman and Slater (2014) who maintain girls usually post images of themselves when they think they are looking "good" or "cool". The use of editing apps, whilst critiquing editing and photo-shopping in other forms of media, showed a distinction by the girls between what they did and what they perceived others did. The changes they made to their images were driven by the belief they needed to enhance their looks, so it is clear they felt a need to conform to beauty standards. However, when asked the girls showed conflicting views about where the pressure came from, with some suggesting they complied with how their peers expected them to look, or how they would expect their peers to look, which focuses on the need to fit in whilst others suggested "other" girls were pressured by media. The girls suggested they were taught to judge other girls, with many of the girls suggesting peers were influential in shaping how they presented themselves. The notions of self-objectification, self-monitoring and complying with gendered representations supports findings from Berriman and Thomson (2015), Gamson (2011), Tiggeman and Slater (2014), and links to discussions by Dobson and Coffey (2015), and Gill (2007), who suggest girls receive normative messages about femininity. "Part of our socialisation influences us to make ourselves the subject of our own gaze, and so we are constantly monitoring our bodies, actions and feelings…" (Danaher et al 2000: p. 54). The girls are receiving these messages from a range of sources, as demonstrated by the discussion of peers, media and family, who appear to shape expectations of femininity the girls recognise.

Despite media being perceived as an agent of socialisation (Byerly and Ross (2006), the findings of this research do not support the notion of media being the key agency of socialisation. The girls did not agree or conclude where the pressure came from, but suggested peers, media and family all had a role to play. Specifically, the girls suggested "others" (third-person effect Davison 1983) may be influenced by media, but they identified peer and family as central to their socialisation. When considering the self-objectification and need to conform to the "ideal" the girls often referred to Youtubers they watched and how this showed "others" how girls should look, for example *Zoella*, *Tanya Burr* and *Sprinkle of Glitter*. Zoella in particular was criticised by Year 8 students for "pretending to be perfect", which according to the girls set an example to be judged against. This links to discussions of the power of the family to socialise women and contain women, as suggested in early Marxist arguments from Engels (1884/2010) and findings from Humm (1992). This also supports the socialist feminist arguments of capitalism intersecting with patriarchy to confine women to roles and positions that support a capitalist society. As maintained by Mitchell (2015) the four structures of women's oppression need to be explored to identify how they overlap and integrate to maintain women's position.

5.5 Invisible Girls and being "The Other": Perceptions of the intersection of Class and Gender in Media

It has been demonstrated by the themes discussed above, media provides working-class girls with a limited mediated space, with, a lack of relatable characters or

celebrities, and stereotypes that contain women and girls within the realm of "acceptable" (often a middle-class ideal) femininity. A key contribution from this section is developing an understanding of how the girls attempt to negotiate their own identity, when feeling invisible. "…The social processes involved in both the formation and the maintenance of identity are determined by the social structure." (Berger and Luckman 1991: p. 194). The mediated structures highlight how the representations shown did not reflect the reality of the girls' lives, with representations being perceived as not "real" or "not like us".

> "…like, when you see women in the media, they're either dead dead skinny, six pack and everything, or they're like really really obese, you don't get like the average person.." (Mildred 22/03/16)
>
> "People don't think there's an average person, you're either too skinny or too fat,…" (Margaret 22/03/16)
>
> "I know, yeh" (Mildred 22/03/16)
>
> "…you're too small, you're too tall, you're too loud, you're too quiet" (Margaret 22/03/16)
>
> "…I'm not trying to call you fat but stand up, with me, like our size, you don't see people like our size, either really really skinny or…" (Mildred 22/03/16)

This discussion demonstrated the girl's awareness of their lack of conformity to media ideals, but also how they perceived themselves as "average", and therefore invisible in media. There were other ways the girls perceived they were invisible in media, which

links to classed representations rather than the beauty ideal. For example, the girls commented on the lack of representations of women and girls with accents like theirs (Section 5.1). As discussed, this highlights the need for an intersectional approach that allows for a recognition of multiple vectors of identity that impact on the girls' lives. This supports Armstrong and Connolley (1989), Christian and Namaganda (2018) and Chapman and Benis (2017) who highlight regionality has an impact on lives, and in terms of my research the girls showed an awareness of their regional identity having an impact on their visibility in media and imagined futures. Their frequent reference to characters as "posh" indicates they regard themselves as not "posh". This lack of recognition, shown throughout this chapter, with the girls not "seeing" themselves in representations due to physical, sexual, class or gendered appearances reflects discussions by Skeggs (1997) whereby the women in her research, "spend more time either not recognizing the identifications which it is assumed that they make (e.g. class, femininity or heterosexuality) or disidentifying…the women either did not recognize themselves or did not want to recognize themselves as the categories of identification that were available to them." (Skeggs 1997: p. 164). In the same way the girls in my research did not recognise themselves either in media or in "others" social media behaviour. They disidentified themselves from similar behaviour on social media such as filtering their images or spending a lot of time achieving the "perfect" picture, whilst also not "seeing" themselves in traditional media representations. This did not mean the girls could not see some celebrities in media as relatable, they just did not see themselves as the same as these women.

As mentioned above the girls suggested the women that were perceived as relatable were from shows such as on *Geordie Shore*, because they had to work for a living. The discussion of working-class girls in reality TV links to discussions by Skeggs (2009: p. 628) who identifies reality TV relies on “ordinary everydayness”, which utilises working-class people to depict the “ordinary”. Some of the girls watched Geordie Shore, but rather than criticise behaviour, they suggested the girls were having fun, and the representations were relatable, because they were “ordinary” girls;

> “…[Geordie Shore is relatable]…not like in the sense that like they go out drinking and like…” (Margaret 01/03/16)
> “…get down with it…” (Mildred 01/03/16)
> “..they’re not all snobby are they, like,..” (Chloe 01/03/16)
> “They do have to work…that’s the sense they’re relatable…” (Margaret 01/3/16)

The girls’ perception of the characters in Geordie Shore demonstrates the rejection of the dominant reading of the text (Hall 1980), that of showing the characters as lacking, and judged against a middle-class norm. The girls are aware the behaviour of the female characters was often looked down on or deemed shocking, but because these characters were perceived as the most relatable, they overlooked the behaviour to see aspects of their character they could identify with, or were the closest they saw to “girls like them”. This was further demonstrated by “Shortbread’s” comments about Tulisa;

> "…Tulisa, she's, she was brought up in a rough area, like you know she came from Camden town and she's where she is today. People like that are awesome" (Shortbread 10/12/15)

The achievement of Tulisa was commended, and because the girls did not perceive her as having an unrealistic body image, she escaped criticism, even if they did not like her music. The sense of authenticity to her past, and maintaining this was seen as desirable, linking to findings by Cocker et al (2015) whereby the sentimentalising of humble beginnings helps Tulisa be seen as reformed and dignified. As suggested by Redfern and Aune (2010) class inequality is evident in celebrity culture and the explicit focus on middle-class and invisibility or demonising of working-class reflects this. In response to this the girls wanted more girls like themselves supporting comments by hooks (2000) who suggests middle-class women's voices have always been heard, whilst working-class women are ignored or parodied.

What these discussions additionally show, through its absence, is the lack of acknowledgement of "whiteness" and the privileges offered through a majority of the girls' racial position as "white". "Part of the privilege associated with whiteness is, in fact, the choice about whether or not to think about race at all, whether to take any notice whatsoever of its role in daily life." (Lewis 1998: p. 21). Although the girls did not see themselves as privileged, due to their gender, class and regionality, they did not "see" their "whiteness". "Whiteness" was seen as the "norm" with its "structured

invisibility" (Frankenberg 1993: p. 6), that leads to the girls not questioning the prevalence of "white" representations or considering their position as "white" subjects. Interestingly, "Nina", as the only British Bangladeshi did not comment on the dominance of "whiteness". As discussed in Section 4.4.3, the areas the schools were located in had a lower than average ethnic population, which may contribute to the lack of awareness or visibility of ethnicity diversity or the assumption of "whiteness", however this needs further research to explore the relationship between the ethnic diversity of the location and the girls engagement with their own "whiteness". This may have been due to her minority position within the focus groups, but also reflected her reticence in volunteering contributions, which again, may be due to her minority status, whereby to identify difference would be to highlight her own difference. The two "white" European girls, "Mak" and "Peeweebabee", did not acknowledge their difference from "white" British, again suggesting due to their "whiteness" differences were overlooked and invisible. "The sense of whites as non-raced is most evident in the absence of reference to whiteness in the habitual speech and writing of white people…" (Dyer 1997: p. 2)

As discussed in Section 5.3 some female musicians and celebrities were perceived as "chavy" and part of an underclass (Hayward and Yar 2006; Tyler and Bennett 2010; Williamson 2010), based on appearance, attitude or behaviour. These "chavs" are discussed through a "them and us" discourse and perceived as below them in the class strata. The language the girls employed to discuss "chavs" reflects the dominant middle-class representation of "chavs" in mainstream media and wider society

(Hollingworth and Williams 2009). The girls adopt a middle-class lens through which they judged these characters, supporting claims by Raisborough and Adams (2008) and Biressi and Nunn (2009) who suggest middle-class values are shown as normative.

As discussed by Bourdieu (2010: 168) life-styles are linked to habitus, which then become categorised as “distinguished or vulgar”, with the lifestyles, behaviours and choices of “chavs” being perceived as vulgar. This suggests the girls perceive “chavs” as different to them, with lower status and as possessing a class identity the girls look down upon (Tyler 2013), supporting notions of “disidentification”, (Anthias 2012: p. 123) where the working-class girls are denying an identity, or resisting markers of an identity they fear will be attributed to them, that of “chav”. “…shame and respectability have long antecedents in relation to the working-class women, in which the feminine body is understood as always already shameful.” (Walkerdine 2011 in Wood and Skeggs 2011: p. 225). The girls in my research had an antagonistic relationship with “chavs”, evidenced by the way they discussed “chavs” as “rough” or “disgusting” whereby the “chavs” behaviour and attitude was shameful and something to identify in opposition to. Equally did not align themselves to middle-class girls or women either. This shows the awareness the girls have of how they are positioned and framed both by media and society, neither part of the underclass or the middle-class. This supports claims by Anthias (2012b) that social divisions can produce multiple and uneven or contradictory positions, the girls’ class position is both excluded from middle-class opportunities and representations but also exclusive of “chav” representations. The girls position themselves as morally superior in

comparison to the girls they label “chavs”, with “chavs” being seen as part of the non-respectable element of the working-class (Le Grand 2015). There was an acceptance of the whiteness of the “chav” representation, again highlighting the “invisibility” of “race”, which may reflect the lack of ethnic diversity from the wider population where the schools were located.

An example of this moralistic tone (Le Grand (2015; Raisborough and Adams 2008; Cocker et al 2015; Biressi and Nunn 2009), is evident when discussing pop star Cheryl Tweedy (her name has also been Cheryl Cole, and currently she is known as ‘Cheryl’). The girl’s comments focused on her weight and the age difference between Cheryl Tweedy and Liam Payne (from boy band *One Direction*). It was evident from the comments from the girls their judgements were complying with the middle-class lens through which media representations function., and because Cheryl Tweedy “failed” to conform to feminine expectations, she was subjected to criticism, despite coming from a working-class background, this opposes findings by Cocker et al (2015) who found Cheryl Tweedy was admired, despite her “chav” label. Despite suggestions by Cocker et al (2015) that the construction of Cheryl Tweedy as “ordinary” led to her been seen as authentic, the girls in my research rejected this and demonstrated dislike for her, based on her behaviour and image. Meanwhile, actors from middle-class backgrounds, such as Emma Watson (*Harry Potter actress)*, were perceived as “role-models” and “empowered” due to the roles they had taken and their conformity to middle-class norms, for example, the girls commented on her appearance at awards ceremonies as “classy”. These discussions show the complexity of the girls’

perceptions of women in media. Body image appears to over-ride the potential for some working-class women to be considered as relatable, this may be because of the centrality of appearance to the girls' media consumption and production, and the bombardment of messages about the ideal body. However, at the same time the girls judge appropriate behaviour in addition to body image, whilst Geordie Shore girls drink and "get with" boys, they are deemed more relatable than Cheryl Tweedy who has a young boyfriend and has been married twice. It may be the perception that Cheryl Tweedy has tried to become acceptable and in the girls' eyes failed, whereas pop star Tulisa and *Geordie Shore* girls have not attempted to conform. These themes and findings need further consideration and investigation and offer an opportunity for further research (Section 8.3).

These findings demonstrate the need to explore these issues from a socialist feminist perspective. As argued by Steeves (1987) socialist feminists need to understand relationships between gender and class oppression, however as my findings have highlighted there is also a need to consider "whiteness" and regionality as vectors of identity that intersect with class and gender in shaping working-class girls' experiences. The analysis of media, and the girls' interpretations of representations demonstrates those who have power are those women that conform to the "norm". Representations reflect those that "possess the dominant culture have their power legitimated and reproduced" (Gartmann 1991: p. 425). These women are white and middle-class, (Skeggs 2009; and hooks 2000). "…the parameters of what constitute power and success are highly regulatory, and exclusive to bodies that are often white,

middle class and (hetero) sexually desirable." (Charles 2012: p. 320). However, the dominance of whiteness was invisible to the girls, as discussed above. White, middle-class and heterosexual women have their power reiterated and legitimated through media representations, whilst those women and girls outside of the norm or "The Other" (Hall 1997), are either invisible or seen as lacking, and lack power (Lawler 2005). Without considering this through a socialist feminist lens, that incorporates intersectional critiques, the power distribution normalised through media representations will continue and be unquestioned.

The representations and the need for class to be centred in my research reflects how, "Class was central to the young women's subjectivities...Class operated in a dialogic manner: in every judgement of themselves a measurement was made against others. In this process the designated 'other' (based on representations and imaginings of the respectable and judgemental middle class) was constructed as the standard to/from which they measured themselves." (Skeggs 1997: p. 74). It is through this difference and being outside of this norm the girls are attempting to construct their identities in, "… relation to the Other, the relation to what it is not,…" (Hall 2000 in du Gay et al, 2000; p17). This suggestion by Hall may explain how the working-class girls in my research did not explore "whiteness", firstly they come from the privileged position of "whiteness" as a racial category, but additionally they are constructing their identities in relation to what they are not, such as not "chavs", not middle-class and not men. "Whiteness" is not acknowledged because this is what they are and reflects the general makeup of the populations they are surrounded by, with below average ethnic

diversity, which may contribute to the lack of “seeing” “whiteness” because it was the “norm”. The girls do not therefore see this as part of their identity because media and society are not highlighting this as a “difference”. However, as Laclau (1990) suggested, creating an identity can be seen as an act of power, which is shown through the conversations the girls had about who they felt they were, what they imagined for their futures (as discussed further in Chapter 6 and 7), and also what they attempted to resist and reject. Although the girls demonstrated agency, and therefore claimed a sense of power, when considering their identities, this was done within the confines of their awareness of the balancing act necessary to negotiate the multiple “pit-falls” around how to be a girl and the risks of non-conformity. The girls were left with a “choice”; either being invisible, whereby the mediated middle class and patriarchal notions of what it means to be a women or girl do not reflect the girls’ reality, or, identifying the girls or women that are “othered” by media, such as the stars from Geordie Shore as relatable.

The girls do not see “girls like us” so they attempt to negotiate these images and representations to form a sense of who they are. This demonstrates the intersection of gender and class, but also regionality and offers the ability to critique the absence of “whiteness” and invisibility of “race”. This focuses on the dynamic nature of inequality (Anthias 2012b) and demonstrates working-class girls experience a dual oppression or “double jeopardy” (Purdie-Vaughn and Eibach 2008: p. 378), that of gender and class which are interlocking identities (Parent et al (2013). However, my research adds to this discussion and highlights intersectional considerations are needed to explore how

the multiple vectors of identity, such as regionality, also oppresses women. These findings support claims that intersectionality "…reflects the reality of lives." Shields' (2008: p. 304).

5.6 Conclusion

Throughout the discussions above it is clear young working-class girls are media literate, which contradicts Durham (1999) who suggested girls were ill-equipped to critically analyse representations. The girls wanted to reject media messages about how they should look and what they should do and adopted a similar response to media effects as found by Duit and van Zoonen (2011), with "Rapunzel" even claiming it made her more determined to prove media wrong. However, as suggested by Tsaliki (2015) as the girls may be aware of the adult discourse about harmful media effects this may be their attempt to appear grown-up. The girls highlight feeling the need to conform comes from peer pressure, as shown by the discussion with "Chloe", "Margaret" and "Mildred". The role peers have in judging each other, and the penalties the girls suffer if they do not conform to the expectations of peers is key to understanding the girls' conflicting wishes.

The girls in my research understood the complex messages received through the representations they encountered, and their interrogation of media often adopted a nascent feminist tone, with the girls applying the term "sexist" to representations. The "sexist" nature of media was particularly highlighted when discussing sexualisation (Mitchell 2015). This was often returned to during discussions, revealing how the

wider societal discourse about sexualisation of girls was part of their consciousness. It is evident sexualisation and the body is not an imagined future for the girls; it is the present, even though they are only 11 and 12 years-old, it is, for them the most prominent and immediate of Mitchell's (2015) four spheres. This raises a key concern for the future of the young girls, because whilst they are focused on the balancing act required of them to be attractive but not too sexual, this potentially distracts them from their potential futures outside of the focus on their bodies. This is further complicated by the intersection of class and gender, whereby it is often working-class celebrities that are accused of being too sexual, or are sexualised, which is then read by the girls either through an adopted middle-class lens, or through a working-class view attempting to relate to representations. This links to discussions by Youdell (2005) who suggests working-class girls have to attempt to navigate the dichotomy between good / bad girls, or virgin/whore, whilst middle-class high-attaining girls are afforded protection from the "hetero-femininity and virgin/whore binary" due to their class and school attainment. Revisiting Mitchell's (1971) spheres of subjection, the focus of the girls on discussing Sexualisation demonstrates the importance of this oppression girls and women experience, however contributing to Mitchell's discussion the findings that demonstrate "posh", "ladylike" and "fake" contribute to building on this sphere of subjection. Sexualisation can be developed to incorporate these findings to show how Sexualisation is a little like walking a tightrope for the girls, to be sexual but not too sexual, to meet middle-class norms whilst being convincing rather than fake. This offers a contribution to updating Mitchell's (1971) sphere of subjection.

Although the girls did not identify class as a key element to media representations, many of the critiques and discussions showed how gender and class intersected. The girls mentioned “posh” frequently when considering the representation of women, who they perceived as not “like them”, and also demonstrated, through discussions, the middle-class values evident in media representations (Skeggs 2009). This links to Savage (2003: p. 537) who discussed the “unacknowledged normality” of middle-classness which was evident in the way the girls receive and perceive media, and offer critique of girls or women that are represented or self-represent in a way that does not conform to the middle-class norms of acceptable femininity. The girls mentioned not seeing “girls like them” who came from their class and regional position and the invisibility of working-class girls that were ordinary, not “chavs” but not “posh”. This notion of being “othered” highlights the need to explore gender and class, but also to be aware of other intersecting aspects of the girls’ identity. It was evident the girls perceived their difference through their regional identity, and how this was invisible within media. The girls identify their “othering” through representational discourses and perceived themselves as different or “othered”. (Anthias 2012b). The girls see themselves as outside of media representations and unable to identify with representations they see despite the dominance of “whiteness” in the representations that surround them. This offers a further contribution to the understanding of working-class girls and “whiteness”, whereby the girls can see their lack of privilege or inequality, however cannot “see” their privilege through their racial position.

“…whiteness was seen as a homogenous category deemed ordinary and

unremarkable…" (Nayak in Sveinnson 2009: p. 33). The girls in my research equally did not perceive themselves as racialised or see "white" as a category, and therefore "whiteness" and the privileges this affords are unseen.

This intersection of class, gender and regionality shaped the girls' experiences and understandings of media and provide the messages they wished to resist. However, equally so did their invisible or unacknowledged racial position as "white" girls. The structures of power (gender and class) work together (Eisenstein 1977) and these social positions are relational (Gill 2009). Approaching my research through a socialist feminist perspective allows new understandings to emerge (Rowbotham in Humm, 1992).

6 Data Analysis: Working-class girls and their imagined futures with respect to (potential) working lives outside of the home (Production)

6.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the girls' imagined futures with regards to their working lives. As discussed in Section 2.3, according to Mitchell (2015) it is essential to understand how the structures of women's oppression interrelate, to develop an understanding of the position of women. There has been an absence of discussion about working-class girls and their desires for their futures, or their achievements (Walkerdine et al., 2001 and Plummer 2000). This chapter explores how girls imagine their future working lives, and what they perceive socialises them into these potential futures. This contributes to discussions about class, gender and imagined futures with a focus on bringing the debate up to date and into academic discussion.

The first section within this chapter focuses on discussing the imagined futures the girls have in terms of what work they imagine doing outside of the home. This explores how the girls are starting to plan for their futures and the expectations they have for their future in terms of education and employment. This demonstrates young working-class girls are prioritising what they want to do in terms of work at this point in their development. They demonstrate a focus on their working lives rather than potential domestic or romantic lives. This demonstrates that despite Gordon et al

(2005) and Plummer (2000) identifying class as important in terms of entering higher education, the girls rarely discussed this, however, later in this chapter there is evidence of some of the girls' awareness of potential material restrictions to their goals. This section explores the working futures the girls imagine, with a focus on how some of the girls have narrowed their options, supporting Gottfredson's (1981) "Theory of Circumscription and Compromise".

Section 6.3 discusses the reasons the girls give for these imagined working futures focusing on the four key themes that emerged from the data: impact of their hobbies, interests and experiences; socialisation through families, in particular the role of their mothers; the role of gendered attitudes and awareness of gendered norms; and, the role of class in their shaping their futures, albeit implicitly discussed rather than overtly termed "class". This section complements research into young working-class girls and their futures, particularly the role of mothers (Weinshenker 2006; Starrels 1992; Treiman and Terrell 1975), and contributes to discussions because it identifies the girls' consideration of their socio-economic position and gender as they imagine their futures.

The third section (Section 6.4) focuses on the girls' perceptions of media and how they perceive this socialises them, in relation to their imagined working futures. The findings demonstrated the girls chose media texts that reflected their interests or hobbies or their imagined futures, which suggests girls have agency about how they engage with media to reinforce options they are considering, and to give them more

information about their potential future role. This differs from the perception of the role of media in their imagined domestic futures (Section 7.4), however both chapters demonstrate the media literacy and relative agency the girls have when discussing media and how they use it.

Finally, the chapter discusses the intersection of gender and class within the girls' imagined future working lives. This explores themes that have emerged, particularly the role intersecting identities play in shaping the expectations of the girls for their futures. This discusses how media representations reinforce gendered occupations and show a classist view of working women however, the girls reject and negotiate with these images and messages to develop their own understanding of their potential roles. This discussion demonstrates the awareness and pressure the girls experience to conform to societal norms. This furthers the debate about gender, class, and mediated norms that construct expectations these girls, often, then attempt to challenge.

6.2 Imagined Futures within the workplace

The findings demonstrated most of the girls had considered their futures; some girls had clear occupations they wished to enter and had researched this in terms of achieving these goals, whilst some girls had a variety of options. The imagined futures are clearly linked to perceptions of gender and class or, access to material resources, (Section 6.3.4). Many of the girls have clear aspirations to go to university and college,

supporting findings by Freie (2010), showing they are focused on their imagined working life rather than their imagined future domestic lives (as discussed in Chapter 7). The findings support Sanders and Munford (2008) who suggest working-class girls focus on being independent rather than developing domestic relationships and their potential family lives.

6.2.1 Planning their futures

When thinking about their futures most of the girls had clear ideas about what work they imagined doing, even those girls that did not have clear ideas of potential occupations they were still focused on taking the "right" subjects at school and "doing" well. Evidence of this was demonstrated by a discussion "Galaxy" and "Dolphin" (11/02/2016) had about GCSE options. This conversation took place during a two to one interview with me, during the time we were planning the co-participatory interviews, however due to "Shortbread's" absence they had started to talk about school and subjects, which clearly linked to their imagined futures. The girls were expressing their annoyance about their perceived lack of "choice" and restrictions that meant they could only take certain combinations of subjects. The girls disagreed about which subjects they should have to take, for example "Galaxy" wanted to take two languages rather than humanities, however humanities was compulsory.

> "…They're [the government] trying to tell you what you have to take." (Galaxy)
>
> "You have to take a language" (Dolphin)
>
> "But then you're not choosing your options are ya?" (Galaxy)

"You have to take humanities" (Dolphin)

"I was gonna take two languages I was, I was gonna take French and German" (Galaxy)

"Can you?" (Me)

"No…" (Dolphin)

"You can…" (Galaxy)

"Why would you take two?" (Dolphin)

…

"You can't because they both go on at the same time" (Dolphin)

…

"I wanna do French and German because I wanna be one of them holiday entertainers" (Galaxy)

Not only did the girls discuss and consider the subjects they wanted to take for their GCSEs, progression to university and college was an area for discussion with the girls considering the subjects they may want to study, and, what university they may want to go to:

"I'm definitely going to university, I'd be the first one in my family to actually go to university, cos my Nan just did childminding, umm, my Grandad just, he was, he run a whole factory and didn't really need to go to university for it, my Mum never went, well she did go, but she didn't finish because she got bored, umm, and my Dad,…my Dad I don't think he ever went, umm, and I think, it would be,

my cousin didn't go cos she works at the bowling alley, so it would be me…"

(Memep 17/12/15)

These responses demonstrate the girls think about going to university and are aware of the qualifications necessary for their occupational goals. Generally, university or college was perceived as an expected route by the girls in my research, despite the fact few of their family members had attended university. This challenges the suggestion, "…working-class students have yet to be assimilated into a culture where it is *normal* to stay on at school until 18 years of age." (Plummer 2000: p. 26). This may be due to the sample of girls predominantly coming from the top-sets within their year group that impacted on their expectation and desire to enter higher education. However, the desire to attend university by many of the girls, is not evidenced in higher education statistics, with university entry figures demonstrating the prevalence of students from middle-class backgrounds (Gordon et al 2005 and Plummer 2000).

The girls suggested their expectations of attending university or college were linked to their imagined future occupations, rather than linked to expectations from their schools or media representations. The girls suggested the only representations of college or university in media were;

"American high school kids talking about college" (Shortbread 04/06/15)

The girls discussed television and film representations (for example; *Liv and Maddie*, *Pretty Little* Liars, *90210*, *Victorious*,*Teen Beach, Pitch Perfect*) that were considered as unrealistic because the girls could not relate to them due to the privileged lifestyles of these girls and identifying the difference between them and American college students.

Some of the students expected to go to university or college because this mirrored their parent's experiences, for example, "Amelia-Rose" had seen her Mum study for her degree whilst she was young, and this was influential in terms of how "Amelia-Rose" imagined her future;

> "…I have a life plan,… like with my Mum…to finish here and hopefully get GCSE in Maths at A, so I can do it at A-level, and then go to [further education] college…get A-levels in English, English Lit, umm an AS Law, and err hopefully Maths if I can do it and then go on again to university and do Law with criminology,…" (Amelia-Rose 04/06/2015).

Although this was a very prescriptive idea of what she planned to do, and far beyond what the other girls discussed, "Amelia-Rose" had a strong relationship with her Mum, and they discussed the future in detail. Alongside the "role-model" of her Mum, "Amelia-Rose's" imagined future was also influenced by her own experiences. These discussions demonstrate the need for an understanding of the differences the girls may have due to their own experiences, backgrounds and abilities.

Although the occupations discussed by the girls, may not become the work the girls eventually do (Rojewski in Skorikov and Patton 2007), the discussions showed the girls were considering what work they may want to do, the likelihood of doing this, the qualifications, further education or experience needed to achieve it, and their ability to do the job. This is demonstrated by discussions with "Ilama" who had already given potential future work a lot of thought;

> "I want to be a veterinary nurse…My Mum spoke to, ummm, my Mum spoke to, like, the people at the vets cos my dog had to go there, she spoke to them and they said that they can't, like, take on people that are doing work experience but I'd be able to work with horses and everything down the 'Stables'…I know where I'd probably go for work experience, I'd go to 'Alfs' the boarding kennels or probably go somewhere like that…" (Ilama 19/03/15)

In addition to talking and thinking about what they wanted to do the girls had developed clear ideas and reasons about why they did not want to do a particular job. "Black Widow" wants to work in rescue centres, specifically with dogs;

> "Umm, I'd like to work somewhere like Battersea or Dogs Trust working with dogs…but I'd never be able to work, like, at Battersea as a vet because I wouldn't be able to, like, put it down." (Black Widow 17/12/15)

These conversations show the girls were thinking through their options, had given their choices considerable thought, and, understood how they would achieve what they wanted. The following sections discuss the differences that emerged between the girls in terms of those that had a clear idea of their futures and those that had a range of choices.

6.2.1.1 Girls with a plan

When discussing imagined work outside the home, the findings can be divided into two themes, those girls with clear ideas of what they imagined for the future and those girls that had a number of potential idea or had not decided. This section explores themes that emerged from the girls that had a clear idea for their future goals.

A range of occupations were identified by the girls such as; youth counsellor; young people's services (law); actress; chef; veterinary nurse; carer; vet; animal carer; gymnast; artist and Maths teacher, as shown by the quotes below;

> "I want to be a youth counsellor…I need to get Maths and Science to go to college,…I want to go to uni." (Shortbread 19/03/15)
>
> "I want to be, I want to work in a residential home …cos I like looking after either old or young people…" (Spring 19/03/15)
>
> " …My goal is to just be a vet and help animals" (Memep 23/03/16)

Although these occupations do not all fit into the category of feminised occupations, many do fall into the category of a caring role, such as youth counsellor, carer, veterinary nurse and animal carer in a rescue centre. "…girls are heavily concentrated in four fields - education, home economics, nursing and social work...[and] are still heavily concentrated in clerical, secretarial, and sales jobs;… " (Ginzberg 1958: p. 314). Despite the fact Ginzberg was writing in the 1950s it appears the data is continuing to show a concentration in gendered occupations and gendered positions within these occupations. (Walter 2010; Fine 2010; Chisholm and Bois- Reynold 1993).

Further to this, the desire to be an artist or to be interested in art as a subject is arguably gendered, "…art remains a feminine, marginalised subject despite its relevance to the increasingly successful creative industries." (Etherington 2013: p 34). Three of the girls with a clear idea of future goals, mentioned art as their occupational choice. A further two girls, from the group of girls that had multiple options for their futures, identified art or a creative subject linked to art as occupational goals. All of these girls suggested the reason for choosing this occupation is due to their interest in the subject.

> "I want to be a artist, like, doing fantasy like work…like fantasy creatures…drawing… (Amethyst 10/12/15)
>
> "I've always wanted to be an artist cos I really like drawing…my favourite is painting,…err probably try and do them [drawings] in books" (Emma 17/12/15)

The girls may be choosing or focusing on art as an occupational choice due to the essentialist belief that art is a feminine subject and is aligned to their gender and they considered they were good in due to gender construction. "…both 11-12- and 15-16-year olds were found to hold essentialist beliefs about academic ability in stereotypically feminine subjects…" (Dhesi 2011: p. 273). However, "Bebb's" school focused on artistic subjects which may influence their choices. (see Section 6.3.1 for further discussion of interests, competency and choices).

My findings demonstrate many of the girls imagine gendered occupations in their futures. The influence of class on imagined futures is implicated by Gaskell (1975) who suggests working-class girls are inclined towards more traditional sex-role ideologies. As my research did not take a comparative approach it cannot be evaluated how far the girls are choosing gendered occupations based on their class, however, the data suggests complying with gendered norms influences how they imagine their futures.

6.2.1.2 Girls with options

Some of the girls had an "either / or" solution to their desired occupations, for example, "Jupiter" had three potential options;

> "I've three things, but they're all quite different,…I want to be a teacher, musician and a beautician…music and maths are my favourite subjects…." (Jupiter 17/12/15)
>
> "A singer, but if, like, I can't get that I'll be a veterinary…" (Ariana 19/03/15)

> "I wanna be either an architect, an artist, an athlete or a footballer…I love sport and my favourite painter is Vincent Van Gogh, I just wanna be an artist like him…(Peeweebabee 10/12/15)

These choices were often linked to interests, hobbies or skills the girls possessed, (Section 6.3.1) however, "Ariana" was slightly different to the other girls, her desire to be a singer was linked closely to her love of Ariana Grande. (discussed further below). The girls did not show a clear preference in their choices and discussions indicated they had not matured in their decisions about occupations based on accessibility or capacity to do the job. "*Compromise* [original italics] is the process by which youngsters begin to relinquish their most preferred alternatives for less compatible ones that they perceive as more accessible." (Gottfredson in Brown 2002 p. 93). However, some of the girls may be starting to filter options based on skills, such as "Peeweebabee", who is filtering her options based on her artistic ability as discussed by Etherington (2013), whereby artistic ability is necessary for architecture courses.

Some of the choices give evidence that some girls have not yet reached the point in their development whereby they compromise what they imagine doing, in favour of roles they are likely to be able to do. For example, "Jupiter", who enjoyed music and had started playing the guitar, but had not performed musically and did not participate in music outside of school, and "Ariana" who admitted she was not able to sing;

> "I want…I'd like to be a popstar one day,…I know that I won't be able to get through because my singing is a bit…I'd like to be Ariana Grande…" (Ariana 26/02/15)

This suggests choices discussed may be less realistic for the girls that had not yet reached the stage of "compromise" (Gottfredson in Brown 2002) in occupational decisions.

Although most of the girls were focused on their imagined futures, even if they have choices, some of the girls changed ideas about occupations during my research period. For example, "Jorgie";

> "I want to be a vet or a history teacher…"(Jorgie Yr 7 - 19/01/2016)

Despite these choices appearing to be clearly fixed in the early stages of focus group discussions, "Jorgie" changed to include being a forensic anthropologist or a gymnast by the end of the data collection period. "Galaxy" also changed her mind during the time she was involved in my research. "Galaxy" was involved in my research for just over a year, as she was one of the Year 7 students that then participated in holding interviews when she was in Year 8. This allowed me to spend more time with her, and therefore explore how her choices changed over this time. "Galaxy" initially suggested;

> “I like drama but…if that doesn’t work then I’d probably be a care person,…I like cooking but I wouldn’t, I wouldn’t want it as a job cos it wouldn’t bring in a lot of money…for how much it would cost…” (Galaxy 19/03/15)

However, by the end of the data collection she had changed her mind and had decided she wanted to be a chef and an entertainer in a holiday camp. This change in occupational choice for “Galaxy” (as she moved from Year 7 to Year 8) could be explained by Ginzberg et al (1950) who suggested most 11-year-olds developed their occupational ideas through links to their interests, whereas 13-year-olds made frequent reference to their capability. However, my research does not support this claim, rather the data demonstrates “Galaxy” was imagining her future linked to her interests at both points in the data collection. Early on she identified drama and cooking as interests but did not see cooking as a potential way to earn money. Her change in potential occupations may be linked to further knowledge of the occupational area or finding a potential way to combine her interests and occupation. Her choices in Year 8 were a combination of the two things she enjoyed, whereas, in Year 7 she implied she would settle for being a care person. The findings in my research were more complex with interests, skills, capacity, and family informing the girls’ choices, both for the girls that had clear occupations for their imagined futures and for those girls that were not sure. As discussed in Section 8.3 further research is needed to explore how far the subjects the girls perceived they did well in were subjects they were interested in or being good at things led to them becoming more interested in the subject.

The differences between the girls in terms of having clear ideas of what they want to be in the future and those that are not sure, can be explained by the "…capacity for abstraction…" (Gottfredson (in Brown 2002: p. 94), which suggests young people progress at different rates and therefore some of the girls had a more developed ability to organise information about themselves and their world.

There was only one girl that admitted she had no idea about what she imagined doing in the future. Some of the girls mentioned potential futures they did not appear to have considered a great deal, but they suggested something, which may be due to being surrounded by others that were suggesting ideas for their futures. However, "Nina" was very clear she had not really considered what she may want to be.

> "I have no idea what I want to be…I first wanted to be a Maths teacher, but not so much now." (Nina 19/01/2016)

"Nina" admitted she was very good at Maths and enjoyed it but could not express why she had changed from this potential future to not having any idea about the future. "Nina" was the only British Bangladeshi student in my research sample, and her family background was based on very traditional gender roles (discussed further in Section 7.3.2,) of which she was very critical. It may be (Section 6.3.2) "Nina" did not have a female family member that influenced her or at least not within the world of work (Plummer 2000; Weinshenker 2006; Starrels 1992). "Nina" did suggest she expected

to work and wanted to work but could not imagine what this work would be. It may be this is a realistic position for her to take as a young girl that had not reached a point of considering her GCSE options, however in light of the conversations with the other girls, whereby they were considering their futures, she seemed the exception. Due to the sample demographic a comparison of ethnicity as an influence is not possible, however this may be an intersecting identity that shapes "Nina's" position. "Nina" may have been dominated by "whiteness" and equally due to her position as the only girl of British Bangladeshi descent may have felt unable to express expectations shaped by the "white" norm of the other girls. Further to this discussion the face the wider population reflects a higher than average percentage of "white" people, and lower than average ethnic minorities, it may be that "Nina" was accustomed with the dominance of "whiteness" and the prevalence of "white" voices, which contributes to lack of space to discuss her racial position within the class and gender debate. The consideration of ethnicity is an area for further research. (Section 8.3).

6.3 Why these Imagined Futures?

There were a range of reasons the girls identified the occupational choices they mentioned, that can be thematically organised into Hobbies, interests and experiences; parental or familial influence; class, socio-economic influence; and media influence. Although the following sections are organised according to these themes, these are complex and, at times, contradictory reasons for the occupational choices they have identified. Previous research has not agreed on what contributes to the

imagined futures of girls, therefore these findings shed new light on this debate. This section clearly contributes to developing an understanding of why these working-class girls imagine the futures they do, and potentially why they appear to follow gendered trajectories in their work life.

6.3.1 Interests, Hobbies and Experience

One of the key themes that emerged when discussing with the girls why they imagine or want the working futures they identified were linked to interests, hobbies or experiences. Often the occupation they had mentioned was linked to something they "loved". For example, when asking "Olivia-Rose", "Ilama" and "Dreamwolf" about their futures;

> "I love animals" (Olivia-Rose Yr7 - 12/04/2016)
>
> "I love animals, well I don't love spiders or pigeons but…" (Ilama 04/06/2015)
>
> "I just love art" (Dreamwolf 04/06/2015)

"Dreamwolf", "Emma", "Mak" and "Chocolate Millionaire" all identified occupations that were creative or required artistic talent, when discussing this they identified "Bebb's" school was focused on art and creative subjects, and they all felt competent in these subjects. Interests often shaped girls' choices but also the girls' perceived capability was considered. Girls such as "Rapunzel", "Dolphin" and "Margaret" all identified futures that were linked to things they enjoyed but also felt they were competent at, for example "Rapunzel" excelled at gymnastics, "Dolphin" loved acting

and was very good at drama including being selected for school plays, and “Margaret” loved music and singing and was also good enough to play the lead role in school productions. It was clear the girls were considering futures they thought they would be able to succeed in, rather than having an aspiration that may have been outside of their capability. This develops findings by Ginzberg et al (1950) who suggests Year 7 students would most likely choose occupations linked to what they were interested in, to highlight how interests, skills and talent overlap to shape imagined futures.

Some of the girls imagined futures that were linked to experiences. This is shown by “Shortbread’s” answer to why she wanted to be a youth counsellor;

> “Someone that I knew, went down the wrong path and it’s like, I just want to help other people…and to like get into a better place” (Shortbread 04/06/2015)

This was also the case with “Louisa”, who mentioned she considered physiotherapy as a future, because her Mum had experienced back problems and she wanted to help people that were in the same situation. Additionally, “Amelia-Rose” wanted to work in youth services (law) because of her experiences growing up. These choices reflect a caring role, traditionally women’s work, as highlighted by *Business Insider* (17 February 2015).

The girls’ interests and experiences do not exist in a vacuum, removed from other influences. It may be the interests and experiences in the family shape what the girls

like and from this, their thoughts for their futures emerge. Additionally, their families often encourage them to pursue interests or activities they have a talent for, so this may inspire the girls and boost their self-esteem in terms of judging their capability within that field. The role of the family is clearly influential, as discussed in the following section.

6.3.2 Socialisation through female family members

This section discusses the role of mothers and other female family members in the girl's occupational choices. It became evident during the discussions with the girls that the key socialisation agent they believe shapes their imagined working futures were their mothers or other female relatives. Weinshenker (2006) suggests if young people see their mothers participating in paid work, they would see this as the norm. Starrels (1992) supports this view and suggests children's values and attitudes around employment are most likely to be influenced by their mothers. However, irrespective of the role their mothers currently fulfilled, either working, full-time childcare, or a combination of these roles, the girls expected to work. Furthering this my research demonstrated the girls suggested their imagined futures were shaped by their mother's occupations or interests.

> "….my Mums always wanted to be a midwife but she never managed to get it because she had children like, she had children when she was, I think it was, 18…so she never really had a chance, to like, have…to do the …"(Chelsey Yr 7 - 12/04/2016)

> “I just wanna be like a teacher for like infants school…like reception…me Mum,…year ones to threes...and me sister has just done a Masters degree and is gonna start work at sixth form…”(Mildred - 19/01/2016)

The centrality of mothers is supported by Plummer (2000) who autobiographically reflects on her own experiences as a working-class girl and comments, “As far as we were aware, we were to inherit our mother’s lives…They and other working-class women around us were our role models, the only women (other than schoolteachers) we really met in childhood.” (Plummer 2000: p 117). This is reflected in the girls’ discussion about both their imagined futures in the workplace and in the domestic sphere. However, is it not as simple as the girls wishing to adopt their mother’s lives. Some girls modelled their own imagined futures along these lines whilst others viewed their futures in opposition to what they saw in their mother’s lives. These findings also support literature from the 1970s and 1980s when class was often more central to debates. Smith (1980), Psathas (1968) and Tangri (1972) suggested links between a mother’s occupational status and the aspirations of young girls. This demonstrates the role of mothers in working-class girls’ lives and how these girls identify or reflect upon their mothers’ roles when considering their imagined futures. The evidence of the influence of mothers is further demonstrated with discussions with “Galaxy” and “Mak”. “Galaxy” mentioned her Mum and two sisters when mentioning what she might want to do;

> "I like drama but…if that doesn't work then I'd probably be a care person, because my Step-Mum's one and my sister and my other sister…." (Galaxy 19/03/15)

Further to this "Mak" identified how her interests were combined with family influences to shape her imagined future;

> "…umm well, my Mum, kind of helps out at the weekend with interior designing and my step-sister's doing interior designing and I think it just would be, like, really cool to, like, design someone's room and I love like colour coding and everything." (Mak 10/12/15)

These findings demonstrate the need to explore imagined futures of girls from a class perspective, as research suggests the role of the working-class mother, and the position of working-class girls is particular to their social position, with a consideration of economic pressures, expectations to inherit their mothers lives as suggested by Plummer (2000), and the role key women play in the futures of girls. The importance of mothers or older female relatives is also supported by Connolly and Healy (2004) who maintain working-class girls are involved in an active process of making sense of their social reality and use these women as a source of information and guidance on how to become women. My research contributes to the debate by demonstrating the importance of mothers for working-class girls has not diminished since research in the 1970s and 1980s, and whilst their mothers may adopt different occupations and

combine work and motherhood in different ways, understanding this is key to understanding some of the expectations, goals and desires young working-class girls have. These findings are in conflict with Lapour and Heppner (2009) who suggest girls are influenced by their fathers, however this research was focused on girls "social class privilege" (Lapour and Heppner 2009: p. 477). There is a need for further comparative research between the role of parents across class differences.

In addition to what occupations mothers have, some girls suggested they saw their mothers as role models, as identified by Burlin (1976) and Treiman and Terrell (1975). Buck et al (2007) further suggested role models need to be someone the girls could identify with, felt a connection with, or who cared about the participants and had a common interest. This was evidenced by "Amelia-Rose" who suggested her Mum was a role model;

> "My Mum's success, kinda drove me to have a plan, she's a consultant, and she only went to uni when she was 27, cos she messed the first bit of her life up, and she had me and my sister, and then thought that's it I'm gonna be what I want to be and then she went to university and I've watched, cos I can remember it, I watched her whole path through it, the graduations…[asked if she finds her inspirational] very yeh" (Amelia-Rose 04/06/2015)

Another key contribution from my findings showed it was not just mothers that the girls perceived as influential in their imagined futures. Many of the girls identified

other female relatives, such as sisters, aunts, and grandmothers as potentially shaping what they imagined doing in the future. Both “Chocolate Millionaire” and “Catherine” suggested their grandmothers were influential, “Chloe” was influenced by her mother and cousin, and “Margaret” mentioned the work her aunt did;

> “I want to be a photographer or do something in the music industry…my auntie…she works in a studio but goes around and does celebrities as well [photographer].” (Margaret 19/01/2016)

Whereas, “Black Widow” identified her cousin as her influence, (she lived with her Dad, Uncle and Grandmother, but had strong connections to her extended family);

> “Umm my cousin she’s lives in Scotland now, she moved down to London to work at Battersea…and she, I think she became manager at one point, but, she wanted to move back up to Scotland to be with family so she worked at Scotland Dogs Trust and now she’s the manager…she went to university” (Black Widow 17/12/15)

These working-class girls have close relationships with their mothers, and women from their extended family (Weinshenker 2006; Plummer 2000; Starrels 1992; Connolly and Healy 2004). The girls often talked about spending time with and being looked after by members of their wider family, specifically female members of the family, highlighting the gender divisions in their families (Section 7.3).

In comparison to this dominance of working-class women in the girls' lives, only four girls mentioned their fathers or uncles as having an influence of their imagined futures. These findings reinforce the importance of family influence in the girls' imagined futures (Trice 1990). The girls in my research clearly imagined futures that coincided with family influences and at times the expectations of their families. "Because of socialization experiences, young adults might be expected to hold attitudes about career and family that would be similar to those of their parents" (Schroeder et al 1992: p. 275). As discussed, these girls' imagined futures were more often connected to their female relatives and not only do the girls recognise women in their lives because of what occupation they have, but also because of how they organise and run their lives (Section 7.3). The girls appeared to have an admiration for their female relatives, and an acknowledgement of the balancing act these women are managing, with children and work being two competing pressures. This suggests, not only are mothers are most likely to shape the attitudes and therefore imagined future of these young working-class girls, but the girls acknowledge this influence. This may be because they do not have other women to identify with, for example, as discussed, the invisibility of "girls like us" in media (Section 5.3). The girls see those women closest to them as relatable, with lives and experiences that reflect their own. (Plummer 2000)

These findings contribute to the debates about parental influence in the imagined futures of young girls, not only demonstrating the centrality of women in shaping their desires but also the acknowledgement by the young girls, of the importance of the

women in their lives. These findings may suggest the issue of gendered work cannot be "solved" in a short period of time, rather changes may take longer to filter through families as slowly the girls that aspire to step out of gender occupations become role models or agents of socialisation in their own families.

6.3.3 Gendered attitudes to work outside of the home

Analysis of the discussions with the girls demonstrated their awareness of the gendered nature of occupations, and the girls that chose occupations less gender typical often acknowledged this. Some of the girls adopted a defiant tone;

> "…I want to be an architect and interior designer…I think a lot of people will judge me for me being an architect because they'll think like oh you shouldn't be working with buildings and like designing stuff, but I think that's wrong" (Mak 04/02/2016)

"Mak" was aware of the potential gendered reaction to her choices but appeared self-assured when discussing her occupational choices. However, "Peeweebabee" demonstrated her concern about her wish to join the army due to the gendered perception of this role.

> "…I really wanted to go into the army, but, um, I don't think it will work out…most people make fun of me because I wanna to do something different, and then, people just make me not want to do it anymore,…probably because

> they see more men as army, as in the army and not as many girls"."
>
> (Peeweebabee 13/04/16)

This potential to be "made fun of" meant "Peeweebabee" was less sure about joining the army and was considering other, more gender traditional roles. The awareness of gender role appropriateness supports Robison-Awana et al (2002) who maintains gender-role stereotyping reaches a peak during adolescence. "Peeweebabee" showed a lack of confidence in this choice despite the fact she had thought about it for a while, her Dad had undertaken army training, and (as mentioned in Section 6.4) she enjoyed *Our Girl* that showed women in the army.

The gendered nature of occupations was often commented on;

> "when people are in the, is it military? You don't really like, expect to see many women" (Amethyst 04/02/2016)
>
> "It's like men being nurses everyone thinks it really weird because they expect a female nurse" (Jupiter - 04/02/2016)
>
> "like people think that cos you're a woman you can't be a mechanic" (Mildred 22/03/16)

The girls displayed irritation about the gendering of occupations and the assumptions that women either should not or could not do certain work. The girls demonstrated a feminist attitude to the division of labour, and, in a similar way to their discussions

about media representations, suggested these divisions were sexist. Although the girls did not articulate themselves as feminists, a feminist tone, that initially emerged through discussions about media representations, developed when discussing their imagined futures both in the workplace and in the home. They discussed women's roles and the inequality they were aware of and suggested women should be able to do anything;

> "Cos you're a woman doesn't mean you should be limited as to what jobs you can do …no one should be limited to what they can do…" (Margaret 22/03/16)
> "Woman is not a limit to what you can do, like…" (Mildred 22/03/16)

However, despite this reaction to gendered occupations the girls were aware of the "risks" they took if they chose a non-typical occupation. As mentioned above by "Peeweebabee", many of the girls considered they would be laughed at or ridiculed for breaking the unspoken gender rules. The girls have an awareness of "images of occupations", and understand people have a "cognitive map of occupations" (Gottfredson in Brown 2002: p. 88), that inform how they react to their choices. This did not necessarily detract from their desire to work in non-traditional roles but did make them think about their decisions. As discussed by Correll (2004), Fine (2010) and Hamilton and Powers (1990) even if girls do not agree with the social values and the status attached to specific subjects and gender, knowing that these beliefs exist may affect the individual's judgement about their competence and aspirations for the future.

6.3.4 Classed Futures

As discussed above, the girls often linked their imagined occupations to interests, experiences and family members, however, some of the conversations highlighted perceptions of their social status and material constraints and how this may impact on their choices. This theme is clearly demonstrated by the discussion with "Dolphin" and "Galaxy" whereby they started discussing GCSE options and then progressed to considering how they would achieve their goals;

> "I've looked into acting a lot and it's like thousands and thousands of pounds to get into the schools, you like, you don't really stand a chance unless you go to them schools, so…I can't really, like my parents can't really afford it and I won't be able to afford it" (Dolphin)
>
> "you can get scholarships though" (Me)
>
> "yeh but you have to be really good" (Dolphin)
>
> "But thing is with them you have to do dancing, acting and singing" (Galaxy)
>
> "Yeh" (Dolphin)
>
> "What's that about? What if I don't want to sing cos I'm rubbish" (Galaxy)
>
> "Can't dance to save my life" (Dolphin)

The conversation revealed that "Dolphin" had looked into this potential future and explored the talents she would need to be successful. In addition to this, she shows an awareness of the cost and chances of getting into a drama college. The awareness of

material resources within the family and how these impact on "Dolphin's" ambition suggests access to economic resources play a role in considerations for the future, "social ambition is probably reinforced by the availability of material and immaterial resources that make educational success feasible." (Barone 2006. p 1050). The awareness of the cost of "Dolphin's" imagined future may limit her potential to achieve this or even pursue it. My findings support discussion of the lack of opportunities and number of working-class actors (BBC News 27/07/2017) in the British media industry. This is supported by research into occupational choice that demonstrates socio-economic position and resources have the greatest modifying influence on occupational decisions. (Ginzberg et al 1950; Harlan and Berheide 1994; Ferry 2006; Burlin 1976, and Budgeon 2015).

Linked to these findings Evans (2009) suggests an awareness of class and gender shape decisions and recruitment in Higher Education. "…certain features of their recruitment [to Higher Education] which point to an underlying persistence of class and gender norms of behaviour and aspiration. Those norms and aspirations are particularly related to ideas about personal responsibilities..." (Evans 2009: p. 343). Although working-class girls may be taking up opportunities within education this is balanced by their understanding of "their" world and the commitments they have within it, suggesting goals and expectations are adapted to fit with this social world. It is clear from this discussion that "Dolphin" was aware of the economic restrictions that would potentially make her goal unachievable. Working-class girls are confronted with a

range of barriers or wider considerations that impact on their choices, that are linked not just to their gender but also their class and perceived economic resources.

This awareness is reinforced by many of the girls when discussing the difference between themselves and "other" girls that go to university, not just from the financial considerations, but along class lines. McKenzie (2015) researched in St Ann's (a council estate in Nottingham) and found "…a consideration of how language, ideas and practices, in addition to power relations and resources, shape how groups self-identify, how they understand their place in the work, where they belong and where they are not welcome. The fear of being 'looked down on' and treated badly often means that the talent, skills and knowledge held within council estates usually stays there, unknown and unrecognised beyond the neighbourhood." (McKenzie 2015: p. 76-77). This finding is reflected in the girls' discussions whereby they demonstrate they have the desire to do well and step outside of the region they are growing up in but are aware they may not "fit" and could be "looked down on". For example, "Memep's" awareness of potential difference between herself and others emerged in where she imagined studying;

> "I just want, like, I want to get good grades, err get good grades but I don't want to go to a university that pushes you too far, so that you become one of them and become too posh. I would like to go to a normal university, but that still gives you good grades and not be posh…" (Memep 10/02/2016)

This demonstrates the girls' awareness of their class and regional difference from others (Section 5.3), particularly those representations that prioritise the middle-classes and render working-class girls invisible. This links back to discussions in Chapter 5 whereby the girls identified regional and class differences but did not "see" their position as "white" which offers them opportunities. As mentioned, the girls had perceptions of London and Oxford that suggested they did not want to go to those universities because of their difference from people that went to "those places". In a similar way to how the women in McKenzie's (2015) research from St Ann's understood their position in society, the girls also demonstrated a perception of where they would "fit in" and where was "suitable". "Understanding your place in the world, where you belong, and in particular, where you are not welcome, as issues that the people here in St Ann's know very well. The lack of social justice and class disadvantage also includes a debate about 'space' for those who cannot or do not want to 'move' up or out." (McKenzie 2015: p. 159) They saw themselves as "normal", whilst often referring to "posh" people, and showing an awareness of their social identity and a sense of where they felt they belonged, (Care et al 2007; and Allen and Hollingworth 2011), and this influenced their discussion of their imagined futures.

However, in addition to Care et al's (2007) findings my research demonstrates that the girls often looked for alternative ways to achieve what they wanted, rather than accepting gendered or classed restrictions. For example, "Mak's" awareness of her imagined future potentially challenging gendered norms, yet continuing to desire to this, whilst "Memep" looked for alternative universities so she would fit in and achieve

her goals. It was only when the girls saw money as an obstacle that they considered revising their choices, (as discussed above), and even then, the girls looked for ways to overcome this.

As discussed in Section 5.3 the girls also considered their accents as an indicator of difference that would potentially hold them back, because they would be seen as coming from a “rough” area rather than “speaking posh”. This links to perceptions of difference and feeling invisible discussed in Section 5.5. With the girls perceiving their inability to fit in with the expected middle-class accents and behaviours limiting their potential or at least leading them to be seen as unsuitable for certain job roles in other areas of the UK. For example, the girls perceive other areas in the UK have better opportunities, or more variety of opportunities, however, they do not see these opportunities as available to them as they are aware of their perceived social difference. This supports findings from Chisholm and Bois-Reynold (1993) who found young working-class females have an understanding of their position within class and gender and this influences their expectations, whereby certain opportunities are not perceived as available to them. This also supports the need to approach my research intersectionally, with a consideration of regionality as having an impact on the girls' imagined futures. The girls were potentially making decisions about their future education and opportunities through the lens of their regional identity. The girls in my research were aware of how gender, class, and regionality may restrict opportunities for them. As suggested by Allen and Hollingworth (2011) the locales of the girls produced a sense of how possible it would be to achieve their goals. “…the classed

experiences of working women must also be understood as a process whereby class processes are socially and culturally negotiated and reproduced." (Hebson 2009: p. 41). The girls in my research were attempting to negotiate the class and gender processes that may inhibit their imagined working futures. It was evident in the discussions around social status, class and opportunities that some of the girls drew on the differences they saw in media representations. The discussion of "posh" Londoners and their difference because they do not have the "right" accent can be seen to link to how they perceive they are invisible in media and the representation of middle-class working women rather than working-class women. What this did not acknowledge is the shared identity of "whiteness", suggesting that for these working-class girls their differences and inequalities through class and regionality was more important, and more noticeable than their "race". (Bhopal 2018; Kindinger and Schmitt 2019; Probyn 2004). The following section focuses on the discussion with the girls about the role of media representations and their imagined working lives, and the intersection of class and gender as a final theme that informs how the girls imagine their futures.

6.4 The Intersection of Class, Gender and Media in the girl's imagined working futures

Many of the discussions about the girls' imagined futures and women in work made links to media representations. As discussed in Section 6.3 "Peeweebabee" was aware of the norm and expectation when discussing the army. Additionally, the girls considered themselves as "different from the norm", or "Other" (Hall 1997), which

influenced opportunities the girls perceived they had. They were aware the norm was shown through media, so those women with "posh accents" were shown to have more opportunities and therefore the potential to choose whatever future they wanted, whilst the girls saw themselves as potentially held back by their accents, as discussed in Section 6.3.4. Despite identifying the "norm" in media representations, the "white norm" was not acknowledged, as suggested by Dyer (1997). A key theme that emerged in these discussions about the role media may play in their imagined futures was summed up by "Chocolate Millionaire's" comment;

> "I think the media shows girls as, like, all pretty and stuff and never really do anything to do with jobs its always like how we think about their looks and stuff." (Chocolate Millionaire 23/02/16)

"Chocolate Millionaire" identifies women and girls are often restricted to focus on appearance and image rather than linked to occupations and careers, and believed this shaped how other people, (men), would perceive women and potentially limit the opportunities women had in the workplace because they would not be considered as serious about work. The girls suggested women were shown in a narrow range of occupations, and these tended to be stereotypical. As mentioned earlier the girls pointed to women YouTubers who focused on beauty and fashion (*Zoella, Tanya Burr, Sprinkle of Glitter)*, whilst men YouTubers (*Pointless Blog, Thatcher Joe, Roman Attwod*) that were active and did "different" things, such as pranks. In addition to YouTubers the girls also pointed to some television shows and films that highlighted

the limited role they saw girls and women in, including films such as; *Frozen* and *Rapunzel* where they saw the women needing saving and television shows such as *Broadchurch* and *Doctor Who*, where the main character had a woman "helper", or soap operas where the girls believed the women were often in "typical'' roles, such as *Eastenders, Emmerdale* and *Coronation Street.*

> "beautician or hairdresser…" (Superwoman – 03/02/16)
>
> "cleaning" (Peeweebabee – 03/02/16)
>
> "ironing" (Black Widow 03/02/16)
>
> "laundrette" (Superwoman)
>
> "cooking" (Peeweebabee)
>
> "receptionist" (Peeweebabee)

Their understandings of media representations confirm findings by DeWitt et al (2013); Tincknell (2005); Carson and Pajaczkowska (2000) who identify women are represented in traditional feminine roles, within the home rather than the professional sphere, and often lacking power or prestige (Smith et al 2012). The girls showed an awareness and critique of these representations, as discussed in Chapter 5, but suggested media representations may shape what other people expect women to do. This is reflecting the "third person effect", whereby girls predict others are affected. "…this hypothesis predicts that people will tend to overestimate the influence that mass communications have on the attitudes and behavior of others." (Davison 1983; p. 3).

> "I think like, I think like, people think they should like, the men go to work and the women stay at home and look after the children" (Rapunzel 03/02/16)
>
> "You usually see [in media], like the kids with their mother rather than their dad, because I guess, it's a, basically it's a woman's job to look after their kids" (Memep 03/02/16)

The findings demonstrate the contribution this research is making to discussions about class and gender and how these intersect for young working-class girls and their imagined futures. Young working-class girls are aware they are seeing middle-class norms in terms of the work women do and the families women have. Although they do not discuss class as a term, they distinguish this through describing the homes, working lives, appearance and accent of women as being "posh" (eg *Fringe, Bones, Good Morning Britain*) whereby the women seen were considered "superior" to them. Through this they highlighted the absence of women that reflect their experiences or are "like them" (eg *Pretty Little Liars, Home and Away, Jessie*).

Some of the girls drew attention to women that challenge the gendered norms in media representations, highlighting women shown in police roles, science roles, or characters such as Katniss from *The Hunger Games*, who they suggested showed a positive and empowered representation of women;

> "I watch, umm, Hawaii Five-O as well….There's someone on it called…she's like, a police like..she's a certain psychia… [psychiatrist]…police person…" (Chelsey 12/04/2016)
>
> "I like the film Miss Congeniality, cos she's like, an FBI agent." (Roo Roo 03/02/16)
>
> "Women are police officers…Silence of the Lambs films, she's, err she's an FBI agent and most people think men do that" (Roo Roo 23/03/16)

The girls suggested they watched these television shows or films because they enjoyed the alternative representations of women. Some of these girls suggested these more "positive" representations played a role in shaping their thoughts for their imagined futures as they saw this as positive and empowering, showing women could do whatever they liked. This demonstrated a nuanced understanding of the role of media and how the girls were talking about taking a selective approach to media, rejecting representations that did not comply with how they wanted to see women, and choosing to engage with media texts that fulfilled their requirements. The discussions, as discussed in Section 6.3.3, showed an emerging feminist critique of media and an active approach by the girls to choose media that suited what they wanted.

The girls' discussions suggest they had some power to resist culturally hegemonic definitions of femininity, as suggested by Allen (1999). The findings discussed here reinforce discussions in Chapter 5, showing the girls are media literate and critical of media representations. The girls identify with and at times choose media texts that

offer them alternative representations of women and embrace the opportunity to see women that appear to have more power. They are discussing media through an emerging (often implicit) feminist lens rather than as passive consumers, thus these findings contribute to the debate about girls' agency and power in engaging with media. This is demonstrated by "Jorgie" and "Olivia-Rose" who were both interested in forensic work, and "Jorgie" had been researching forensic work. After identifying this as a potential future, "Jorgie" spent half term watching *Bones* on Netflix, and later progressed to *Fringe*. She then discussed at length these shows, in light of her interest in this as a career. "Olivia-Rose" also started watching both *Fringe* and *Bones*. These events and discussions demonstrate how the peer relationship could be influential in their occupational choices, however neither of the girls admitted this. Although both "Olivia-Rose" and "Jorgie" enjoyed the representation of these women, as powerful and independent, within a field of work that is often gendered they acknowledged their difference from these "posh" women and the lack of reality to some storylines. However, the discussion did demonstrate how media texts were interpreted by the girls to identify "powerful" women and these were chosen because of the interests of the girls rather than shaping the interests of the girls. The girls perceived media as an opportunity to watch and engage with things that gave them an insight into their potential occupations, rather than looking for role models or women to relate to.

As discussed in Chapter 5, many of the girls drew attention to not seeing "girls like them" in media, and these texts were not understood to show women similar to them, but rather women that at least offered an alternative to the "thin ideal" or "perfect

mother”. This is further supported by “Roo Roo”, who suggested she wanted to work for the FBI;

> “I’d work in the FBI…I just watched this film…it was a horror film…it was, ermm, Silence of the Lambs.” (Roo Roo 10/12/15)

Although it could be perceived “Roo Roo” is basing her choice of occupation on the film, it emerged through discussions “Roo Roo” chose to watch the film because she wanted to work for the FBI and admired the role of the female agent as she perceived her as being represented as a strong role model. This selection of media according to their interests and imagined futures was also supported by “Memep”. She wanted to work with animals, ideally as a vet or RSPCA worker and watched a range of programmes focused on animals, such as, *SuperVet*, and *Paul O’Grady For the Love of Dogs* because of this love of animals and because she saw roles that reflected her potential future.

> “I want to be a vet,… I watched, like, *Paul O’Grady For the Love of Dogs* and,.. I like, I like, how he goes and saves them and then they get rehomed.…I’ve also wanted to be a vet since I was two or three…” (Memep 17/12/15)

Media reinforced “Memp’s” views of her imagined future and how working in this field would be rewarding and she has a real interest in animal welfare. “Memep” was very clear that she believed her media choices reflected love of animals and desire to work

with animals. The girls rejected the notion of media socialisation linked to their imagined future work.

The girls did perceive media creates gendered expectations that may socialise them into understanding certain jobs or roles as more, or less, feminine. Through this normalising of gender, the girls suggested representations could inform judgements about their occupational choices and they suggested the normalising power of media would not encourage them to make certain choices but could potentially deter them from some roles because they knew the ramifications of rejecting gender appropriate roles, as demonstrated by “Peeweebabee” (Section 6.3.3). Media has a, "...differential symbolic power” (Couldry (2000: p.57) that is naturalised and creates a social reality that restricts how women are perceived or perceive themselves. This view is supported by Smith et al (2010), with the suggestion television viewing may reinforce children’s attitudes about gender and may inform children about gender appropriate and inappropriate actions, which could strengthen gender role schemas, which could, “…skew children’s attitudes, beliefs, and expectations about their own behaviors and occupational aspirations.” (Smith et al 2010: p775). However, the findings extend these debates by demonstrating the girls perceived media had little power to shape their own expectations, but rather may shape other’s expectations, which in turn could have an impact on how their choices were perceived.

6.5 Conclusion

In summary, this chapter has shown the complexity of discussions around girls' potential occupational choices and imagined futures, how they believe they are socialised into these "choices", their engagement with media, and the intersection of class and gender. It is clear the girls are often complying with gendered norms in their imagined future occupational "choices", however when discussing the reasons for their choices and influences, none of the girls considered their gender as an influence. They highlighted the importance of family, interests and experiences and reflected on the importance of where they live and therefore their perceived social status. In support of Walkerdine et al (2001) the girls saw themselves as strong, independent and often capable of achieving their goals. The biggest restriction to their goals were the material resources necessary for university or college fees. This demonstrated how the girls did not see gender as a clear restriction but implicitly (discussed in relation to material resources) class was a potential hurdle they had to overcome. "…if one were permitted only a single variable with which to predict an individual's occupational status, it would surely be the socioeconomic status of the individual's family." (Schulenberg, Vondracek, & Crouter 1984: p. 130). This links to Rothon et al (2011) who claims working-class students may have high aspirations but are not as successful in converting these aspirations to achievements. Many of the girls in my research wanted to go to university or college and desired a "career", however class appeared to be a potential inhibitor, whilst gender was seen as a problem to fight against. This is a theme that emerges throughout Chapters 5, 6, and 7, whereby the

girls attempt to challenge the sexism they see, however do not have the "language" to challenge class inequality in the same way. This may reflect the visibility of feminism, albeit the consumer-friendly version of feminism, as discussed by Banet-Weiser (2018). Whereas, class and socialism are still not as visible in media or social discourse, despite beginning to emerge through Corbyn's Labour leadership.

Another key finding from this chapter is the girls' perceptions their mothers or female relatives are influences in their imagined working lives outside of the home. The girls talked about how they wanted to emulate their mothers, sisters, aunts, or cousins, and how these women appeared to be role models in terms of work. Alongside the women in their lives being key to their imagined futures, the girls appeared to be making decisions or imagining futures based on interests, hobbies and skills they possess. The findings demonstrate how all of the girls expected and wanted to work in their future and many had given this a lot of thought.

Throughout the discussions gender, class and regionality intersected in the girls' lives and made the girls aware of not seeing "girls like them". They talked of "posh" girls or women, who appeared to have it all, for example, careers and children. They identified the gendered discourse around these representations and reflected on the regional differences that set them apart. Gender and class are intertwined and intersect both in media and in the working world, however media representations render this invisible. Additionally, other intersecting identities frame the imagined futures of the girls including their regional identities, linking to the need for the

intersectional understanding of working-class girls' experiences. However, as highlighted through this chapter, "whiteness" is invisible for the girls, and despite them benefitting from being "white" and therefore aspects of their identity being visible they do not acknowledge or "see" this.

Through analysis of the data it emerged that most of the girls do not perceive media as having an influence on their choices. They engage with media based on their interests, but few believe they have based their decisions for their imagined futures on media. But they do see it as potentially shaping expectations and perceptions of others, linking to the third-person effect (Davison 1983; Connors 2005; Duck and Mullin 1995) as discussed in Section 3.5.1. "Sexist attitudes and outdated stereotypes continue to shackle women and restrict their opportunities." (Banyard 2011: pg 76). The girls showed an awareness of the sexist attitudes that mean they are subjected to discriminatory comments when they challenge the norms. The girls were supportive of each other when mentioning occupations (typically feminine or not), however many discussions demonstrated other people in the girl's wider social circle were more likely to be judgemental, particularly boys. This supports the suggestion by Brownlow et al. (2000) that the social construction of gender and gender roles are key to restricting young girl's "choices" and preferences. However, it is not as straightforward as the girls being aware of the social construction of their gender role, but rather their peers, families and wider community being socialised by the construction of gendered norms.

7 Data Analysis: Working class girls and their imagined futures within the domestic sphere (Reproduction).

7.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the girls' imagined futures within the domestic sphere and their perception of media socialisation, which often places women primarily within the domestic sphere of the family (Brunsdon 1978 in Bland et al 1978). "…it is within the development of her feminine psyche and her ideological and socio-economic role as mother and housekeeper that woman finds the oppression that is hers alone…so any movement for her liberation must analyse and change this position." (Mitchell 2015: p. 14). Based upon these arguments it is essential to explore the girls' imagined futures within the domestic sphere to truly develop an understanding of the girls' expectations for their futures.

The findings discussed in this chapter demonstrate how the girls identified the idealised nature of the families shown in media, which led to a lack of identification from their own family position. (See Section 7.4.1). The girls drew attention to the representations of the "ideal family", which conforms to middle-class norms, and the dominance of the patriarchal distribution of caring and domestic roles. The findings discussed in this chapter demonstrates the continued need for a socialist feminist approach to understanding the position of working-class girls.

This chapter starts by discussing the imagined futures the girls have in terms of Reproduction and Socialisation of children. The discussion of the girls' imagined futures explores how far these comply with gendered norms about the role of mothers and the domestic work associated with this role. "The notion that 'family' and 'society' are virtually co-extensive or that an advance society not founded on nuclear family is now inconceivable, despite revolutionary posturings to the contrary, is still widespread…" (Mitchell 2015: p. 107). Further to Mitchell's argument my research demonstrates how Reproduction and Socialisation, are inextricably linked to young working-class girls' position in society. This section demonstrates how the girls prioritise education, finding work and becoming independent before considering having children and their domestic lives.

Section 7.3 discusses reasons the girls give for these imagined futures. This focuses on two key themes that emerged, the socialisation from their mothers, and the wish to challenge or subvert the traditional gendered roles they see in their own families or media. As with the discussion about the girls' imagined futures within the workplace (Chapter 6), a regular theme emerged of mothers being influential in the girls' expectations. The girls' mothers often either set a standard of motherhood the girls wished to comply with or portrayed a role the girls wished to challenge.

Section 7.4 explores the girls' perceptions of media and examines how the girls interpret media representations of women in the domestic sphere. Scholars (DeWitt

et al 2013; Byerly and Ross 2006; Smith et al 2012) suggest women continue to be stereotyped into (heter-normative) domestic roles within media, with images such as the "ideal mother" (Chambers 2000) often evident. This section discusses the girls' understanding of this representation and explore how the girls negotiate middle-class ideals of the "yummy mummy" and the "ideal parent" (Hadfield et al 2007) that renders working-class women invisible.

Section 7.5 focuses on exploring the intersection of class and gender within media representations and the domestic sphere. Although media representations may be accused of oppressing working-class girls, or rendering them invisible, the girls' attempt to draw on influences outside of media to shape their expectations and negotiate their own imagined futures in opposition to what they see within media. Despite this, the girls often complied with gendered and classed norms in their expectations and appear to expect to live within these constraints.

7.1.1 Imagined relationships and heteronormativity

Before focusing on the discussion of findings around the imagined futures of the girls, it is important to identify the assumptions the girls made about the structure of their imagined future families.

Many of the girls, such as "Dreamwolf" and "Mak" suggested marriage was not important. These girls were focused on being independent, and often rejected the notion of permanent romantic relationships, particularly early on in their adult lives.

This supports Weis's (1990) findings whereby working-class girls were critical of the marriage and the romantic ideal. However, many of the girls did expect to be married or cohabit later in life (Gordon et al 2005). The family background of the girls did not appear to influence their views on marriage or shape these expectations.

Many girls acknowledged the potential fragility of relationships and risk of family breakdown. For example, "Ilama" commented on how she did not want to have children with someone and then that relationship break down, rather she wanted to be "sure". The other girls in this focus group all agreed with this, and drew attention to what they saw as their own mother's failings if she had children, but did not stay with the father of those children, demonstrated below by "Spring's" comment;

> "I don't want to follow in my Mum's footsteps, what she's done…cos, well, she had me and, and cos my Dad's foreign they moved away from each other, and then now she's marrying someone else and she's already had a kid with him, so I don't, I don't want to do that I just want to like, have a relationship and stay with that one person and have kids with them…." (Spring 19/03/15)

This shows a harsh judgement of her mother's choices and a potential longing for her own family to replicate media ideals. This also reflects the negative discourse that surrounds working-class mothers and condemns them for not measuring up to the middle-class ideal.

Most of the girls focused on independence first, with their expectation of family life and a desire for independence contrasting with the, "myth of Cinderella" (de Beauvoir 1997: p. 168), whereby happiness was perceived as coming from meeting "Prince Charming". The girls in my research appear intent on creating their own opportunities and being self-reliant. The girls were scathing about the contribution of men and boys (Section 7.3.2) in their lives and did not see being in a relationship as a way to improve their chances.

Despite the girls' lack of focus on relationships and marriage in their imagined futures, this did not stop the girls from discussing relationships with boys. This confirms findings by Sanders and Munford (2008) whereby girls were concerned with relationships in the present, but when they discussed their imagined futures their concern was independence. The girls appeared to assume boys were of interest to each other (Myers and Raymond 2010), and often discussed which boys (both celebrity and within their social group) were "hot", therefore assuming a heteronormative discourse. None of the girls' indicated homosexuality as an option, suggesting they had "…learned that to be an "appropriate" girl, they should perform heteronormativity for other girls…" (Myers and Raymond 2010: p. 185). Even if any of the girls were lesbian or bisexual or may be lesbian or bisexual in the future this was not acknowledged. The heteronormative discourse reinforces findings from earlier research that suggest young girls often assume heteronormativity or their conversations are embedded within a heterosexual discourse (Magnesson and Marecek 2012; Gulbrandsen 2003; Martin 2009; Myers and Raymond 2010).

"…heteronormative expectations inflected the girls' narratives about becoming teenagers…"(Magnesson and Marecek 2012: p. 91). As mothers were key to many of the imagined futures the girls discussed (See Section 7.3.1) it may be mothers convey assumed heterosexuality (Martin 2009), or because the relationships they see in their families are based on heterosexuality. The responses from some of the girls about not having children or adopting children may have been an attempt to maintain and participate in this heteronormative discourse and perform as an "appropriate girl" (Myers and Raymond 2010). This is an area that could be explored in further research. (See Section 8.3)

7.2 Imagined Futures in the Domestic Sphere

The following discussion focuses on the girls' imagined futures in terms of Reproduction and Socialisation of Children. This explores how the girls focus primarily on developing their working life before having children and then imagine a future where they have to sacrifice aspects of their lives to balance children and work. Despite the girls often suggesting men should contribute to child care, they continued to imagine a future where they would have to negotiate a balance in their own lives.

7.2.1 Reproduction

The centrality of the family, shown through media, reinforces the dominant ideology of womanhood being defined by being or wanting to be a mother (Russo 1976 and Mitchell 2015). However, despite the centrality of the family and the maternal role

attached to womanhood, the girls I researched with had a very varied response to imagining having children. Some girls responded with numbers of children they wanted, whilst others were strongly against the idea of children, and some suggested adoption or fostering as an alternative;

> "No I don't want children" (Mildred 02/02/16)
>
> "I don't either" (Chloe 02/02/16)
>
> "No" (Nina 26/01/16)
>
> "I don't know" (Olivia-Rose 12/04/16)
>
> "I want three." (Llama 19/03/15)
>
> "I want four…two girls and then two boys" (Margaret 26/02/16)
>
> "Yeh, two,…a boy and girl" (Jorgie 26/01/16)

The variety of responses from the girls may demonstrate a change of attitude towards motherhood compared to Prendergast and Prout (1980) who found all of the 15-year-old girls in their study, "…saw motherhood as an inevitable destiny for women…" (Prendergast and Prout 1980: p. 529). This may reflect the changing times or the girls' age and point in development where relationships are yet to be explored.

A common theme that appeared throughout the discussions around Reproduction and Socialisation of children (Section 7.2.2.1) reflects the findings by Sanders and Munford (2008) and Ex and Janssens (2000) whereby the girls were aware combining relationships, children and work require balancing acts between independence and

responsibility. Girls see the “employed, career-minded mother” (Jacques and Radtke 2012: p. 455) as part of their imagined future, however throughout the discussions there is an understanding that to achieve this it requires negotiation and potential sacrifice. The girls have a gendered expectation of having to manage or juggle their role within the family with their role within the workplace, which may be internalised due to the roles they see their mothers fulfilling at home, with many of the men not helping.

> “Yeh, cos men just think they can do nowt” (Mildred 22/03/16)

Despite the variety of responses about having children from the girls, all of the girls assumed they would be able to have children, if they wished. Three girls, (in separate focus groups) highlighted the potential to adopt or foster children, appearing to reject “traditional” motherhood, in favour of an alternative version of a family, however, they may also have been negotiating the assumed heterosexuality. (see Section 7.1.1) The reasons and influences for young girls considering alternative families cannot be explored fully here and provides an opportunity for further research (Section 8.3). However, these discussions do evidence the dominance of hegemonic discourses of womanhood being inextricably tied to presumed motherhood as discussed by Mitchell (2015) and Jacques and Radtke (2012).

In addition to the girls assuming they would be able to have children, some of the girls considered how many children they want and what sex children would be desired;

"I want a boy and a girl" (Jorgie 12/04/16)

"I think I just want one" (Spring 19/03/15)

"I'll have two" (Shortbread 19/03/15)

"Two" (Galaxy 19/03/15)

"Children, husband…" (Peeweebabee 24/02/16)

"I want a boy and a girl" (Amethyst 24/02/16)

It is important to acknowledge the girls that imagined having children were not less ambitious than those girls that suggested they did not want children or were not sure (Kanji and Hupka-Brunner 2014). Most of these girls wanted to have occupations that required study after compulsory schooling, some of their imagined occupations could be perceived as within male-dominated professions, and many talked passionately about their imagined future work. This refutes claims the education and career plans of girls of 15 – 17-years old, "…are influenced by their anticipated role as a mother and their perception of social pressure to give up work to care for their children." (Marks and Houston 2002: p. 334). The imagined children in the girls' futures did not appear to influence what work they imagined for themselves, rather as discussed in Section 7.2.2.1, the girls were aware of having to balance the demands of both children and work. Irrespective of the girls' imagined futures within the domestic sphere their focus was initially on occupation. "Occupation was the centerpiece of the future thinking of these young females." (Sanders and Munford 2008: p. 343).

7.2.1.1 Career First

Historically it has often been the case that working-class women have worked alongside motherhood to financially contribute, therefore it is possible to suggest the working-class girls in my research expected to "inherit our mothers' lives" (Plummer 2000: p. 117) (discussed in Section 6.3.2). As discussed in Section 7.3.1, the girls often perceived their futures in light of their mothers' lives, and how their mothers managed work and family. The role of media in reflecting this work / child balance was discounted by the girls as they critiqued the "stay-at-home mum" representation they saw, or the "career-woman" that tries to combine it all.

All of the girls in my research imagined working and continuing education, (see Chapter 6) even if they were not sure what they wanted to do in the future, they did not envisage themselves as stay-at-home mums. Many of the girls explored this further and discussed their plan for children after they had achieved some level of financial and occupational security, supporting the conflict identified by Walkerdine et al (2001), between work and independence with having children.

> "Well my main goal in life is to go to college and university…I haven't really thought about that I don't know whether I want to [have children] like, because so far I've thought like about me and getting my career and everything, so I don't know what to do about children, I don't know whether I want children" (Mak 25/02/16)

> “I think I might [want children] but I just want to work hard and just try my best, that’s all I really want…I want to umm, I want to do a sports career” (Rapunzel 23/03/16)

When imagining their futures, work or “career” appeared most important to the girls rather than their role within the domestic sphere or as mothers. “…females made plans that would allow them to focus on the aspect of life most important to them,…” (Corder and Stephan 1984: p. 399). Both “Mak” and “Rapunzel” mention having a “career” and this has taken precedence over their thoughts about their imagined domestic futures. These girls appear to be rejecting the characteristics of motherhood and womanhood that are, “…heavily invested with connotations of maternal instinct, of self-sacrifice…”.(Barrett and McIntosh 1991: p. 27). Rather these girls are prioritising themselves, valuing a good education and financial independence (Bassoff and Ortiz 1984). The girls in my research, tended to be primarily from the high-achieving groups and therefore support the findings of Chisholm and Bois-Reynold (1993) who found high-achieving working-class girls in secondary school were not prepared to sacrifice their own self-fulfilment and life goals in the pursuit of motherhood.

The girls’ discussions demonstrated support for Gordon et al (2005) who suggested girls, “…saw it as important to be responsible about having children, and had material concerns. They suggested that you needed an education, a career with a reasonable salary and somewhere to live, before taking on the responsibility of children.” (Gordon

et al 2005: p. 93). The girls saw their future selves as independent and autonomous with relationships and family adopting secondary importance (Sanders and Munford 2008). However, despite the girls' focus on occupation, their imagined future relationships often comply with gendered norms and a normative division of roles, as discussed below.

7.2.2 Socialisation of Children

The fourth structure of the woman's situation, Socialisation of children (Mitchell's 2015) plays a significant role in women's lives. "The emphasis of familial ideology has shifted from a cult of the biological ordeal of maternity…to a celebration of mother-care as a social act." (Mitchell 2015: p. 118). When discussing this role with the girls in my research there were a couple of common assumptions made by the girls that reflects both media representations and dominant ideologies about family units (DeWitt et al 2013; Smith et al 2012; Tincknell 2005). There was assumed heterosexuality (Section 7.1.1), linked to this there was an expectation of having children within two-parent families, and, although the preference was for both parents to be involved in childcare, there was an acceptance this would often mean a compromise in the girls' working hours and responsibilities. These findings reflect discussions by Anyon (in Walker and Barton 1983) who suggested working-class girls were aware of the conflict between their desire to work and their role as primary child-carer, suggesting the girls' perception of their futures mirror the concerns of working-class women from the 1980s. The discussions about the girls' role in

socialising children in their imagined futures led to disagreement between the girls and emerging feminist statements about the role of women and men, as discussed below.

7.2.2.1 Balancing Acts

Many of the girls suggested they would expect to stop work initially for maternity care, supporting claims by Gordon et al (2005). However, only "Jorgie" specified a length of time for this, other girls indicated they would expect to take up to a year off, which they based on their experiences of their mothers being on maternity leave.

> "I'd go off for three months and then go back in" (Jorgie 12/04/16)

"Jorgie" stated she would want to return to work as soon as possible and she expected to share parental responsibility with her partner. These discussions show the girls were considering and attempting to resolve issues around children and work, "…For most of the young women, both working and middle class, with high career aspirations, commensurate with their educational and other aspirations, marriage and children, while specified as imagined objectives, raise issues that they will need to resolve…" (Gordon et al 2005: p. 90). Many of the girls suggested they would return to work on a part-time basis;

> "…part-time, so you could spend some time with the family" (Peeweebabee 24/02/16)

Umm…I would like kids…umm I think I'd work part time, but still have time to spend with them." (Black Widow 25/02/16)

The girls that expected to return to work part-time after having children, also showed an expectation their (assumed) male partner / husband would be able to provide financially for them, at least while the children were below school age. This supports claims by Duncan et al (2003) and Lewis (2000) that suggest despite changes to mothers' employment patterns and moves towards gender equality, this does not lead to a change in the gendered identities and expectations of caring. "…cultural stereotypes of fathers as 'providers' and 'breadwinners' continue to exert a strong influence over men, women and children's attitudes to parenthood." (Lewis 2000: p. 1). The expectation of combining employment with motherhood is not new for working-class women (Hamilton and Powers 1990; Pocock 2005). This may suggest the girls in my research are reflecting on the expectations their mothers and other women within their network have (Section 7.3.1), or the lives these women have experienced, including this balancing act is not necessarily a choice for working-class women. When asked if they imagined being stay-at-home mothers, some of the girls commented;

"…how'd we earn our money? " (Spring 19/03/15)

"You'd just be living off the dole" (Galaxy 19/03/15)

"I think I'd kill myself if I had to stay at home with them… I wouldn't like it, cos I'm just be stuck in the house, doing nothing." (Shortbread 19/03/15)

The resistance to this role was clear and links to earlier discussions about the girls wanting to be independent and autonomous and suggests these girls do not see staying at home raising children as something fulfilling or affordable. This refutes suggestions by Duncan et al (2003) that working-class women have a primary mother position whilst middle-class women having a primary worker position.

The girls were prepared to reduce the hours they worked to look after children and presented this in a way that suggested this would be their "choice", rather than something they were forced to do or a sacrifice. This links to findings by Jacques and Radkte (2012) who suggests young girls try and construct themselves as free agents that can choose to adopt more traditional roles. This notion of "choice" links earlier theoretical discussions about neoliberal discourses of "choice" (Section 2.5.1), because although the girls suggested this would be a "choice", this was framed by their awareness of the constraints posed by combining children and work and the gendered expectations they face.

In addition to the girls that imagined returning to work on a part-time basis, some of the girls that expected to prioritise caring for children explored alternative options to part-time work and suggested solutions;

> "I'd want to look after them for a bit, but it'd be better if you could work from home, cos then you could look after them most of the time until they go to school." (Margaret 26/01/16)

This appeared to be "Margaret's" ideal solution to combining work and children, rather than something she would actually do. The comment from "Margaret" demonstrates she sees herself as the solution to the issue rather than exploring the potential that her partner / husband could reduce their working hours and commitments. Many girls suggested leaving children with a childminder, so they can return to work. This led to disagreements between the girls, with some suggesting this was a good solution so they could work and not give up their independence;

> "I would probably send them to a childminder, cos that's what my Mum does. Err, it's probably easier, I know you have to obviously pay money for them to look after them…I think it would be alright, I mean you don't have to stop working unless you are really stuck." (Memep 24/02/16)

"Memep" modelled her solution on her Mum's example and considered this as a way to continue to work. A number of the girls referenced their mothers when discussing their potential work / children balance. The influence of mothers on some of the decisions (Section 7.3.1), demonstrates that not only are mothers a source of socialisation for the imagined work the girls would do in the future (See Chapter 6) but also socialise the girls into the imagined futures they expect within the domestic sphere. This supports claims by Schroeder et al (1992) who suggest young people may be expected to be socialised into similar attitudes to their parents, and more

specifically that young girls see their mothers as role models for their futures (Arditti et al 1991; Ex and Janssens 1998; Boyd 1989).

Other girls suggested leaving children with a childminder was not ideal because that person was a stranger.

> "I would, umm not send them to a childminder because I don't actually know the childminder…I would just get a friend or something to do it…"
> (Superwoman 24/02/16)

Some of the girls suggested their mothers would contribute to childcare, this reflected the experiences of their own childhood, where many of the girls had close relationships to their grandmothers and were often cared for by grandparents after school. These conversations indicate socialisation through family experience was reflected in the girls' thoughts for their futures, as discussed in the following section. This may link to the regional and traditional class identity of the girls whereby their families live within the local area and there are close relationships and family support available for them. This offers a potential area for further research and provides a contribution to the discussion of intersectionality and regionality, to discover if girls that came from areas where families were more dispersed would have very different expectations for looking after children.

7.3 Why these Imagined Futures?

Two key themes emerged when discussing why the girls imagined the futures they discussed. The first one was the importance of their own socialisation by their mothers or their female relatives, and secondly the girls discussed their desire to resist gendered expectations and therefore imagine their futures in opposition to social norms.

7.3.1 Socialisation through mothers

The girls believed their mothers and other female relatives were important in shaping their desires for the futures, supporting findings from Arditti et al (1991), Marks and Houston (2002), Plummer (2000), and Connolly and Healy (2004) who suggest girls' gender role development and how they "learn" to become women is shaped by their mothers or other female relatives. The role of their mothers or female relatives in their socialisation appeared to offer the girls an opportunity to challenge or negotiate media messages, irrespective of whether their home life reflected traditional gender roles or gender equality. The girls often discussed their mothers as strong and powerful women who had overcome difficulties, either in relationships or work, and this identification with "strong" women appeared to negate the representations of "passive" or "weak" women they saw in media.

However, not all of the girls discussed their mothers as someone they wanted to emulate, some of the girls expressed a desire to be different, in contrast to findings

from Marks and Houston (2002) who suggested girls try and model themselves on their mothers. When discussing the role of women in the household many of the girls suggested the women in their house did most of the housework. Despite this experience all of the girls suggested they wanted to share responsibilities in their imagined future if they lived with someone, demonstrating that despite seeing the gendered division of the home, they did not expect to repeat this pattern, refuting suggestions by Corder and Stephan (1984) that girls learn their gender role through the roles they see in the home. However, the girls did suggest there was an expectation that they would help in the home, whilst that was not always the same for their male relatives.

> "…I don't tidy very often I only help my Mum sometimes…my Mum says we've [Amethyst and her sister] got to help." (Amethyst 25/02/16)
>
> "I basically look after my little brother, like when my Mum's cleaning up and everything, cos I have to change his nappies, I have to get him ready for bed and I have to feed him his bottles" (Chelsey 12/04/16)

"Chelsey" discussed how these experiences allowed her to explore her imagined future role of midwife and mother. This shows "Chelsey" as actively involved in making sense of her imagined future rather than being a "passive and compliant" girl, (Connolly and Healy 2004). "Some of the young girls therefore depend upon their mothers and other older female relatives not only for knowledge but also the many opportunities that they provide for trying out and experimenting with those activities associated with

being women." (Connolly and Healy 2004: p. 522). This view is supported by McKenzie (2015) who suggests women "pass down" knowledge, "Passed-down knowledge has always been important among women, particularly when that knowledge is about 'making ends meet', or 'getting by'." (McKenzie 2015: p. 47). "Jupiter's" comments also demonstrate the influence of her mother on her imagined future;

> "…If I was to have children what I'd do is I wouldn't stop working I'd just work, I'd be like my Mum…she leaves the house at about half past seven every morning and then she doesn't get back until half past seven at night pretty much…even though we don't spend a lot of time together then time that we do spend is really good…"(Jupiter 25/02/16)

However, some of the girls discussed a more equal division of the caring and domestic roles within their homes and imagined their future domestic life to be similar to this (Corder and Stephan 1984). Comments by "Catherine" and "Rapunzel" demonstrate the family organisation many of the girls experienced, whereby both parents worked and childcare or housework was divided between the parents, with the approach appearing to be teamwork.

> "My Mum and Dad have both got a job…when my Mum's at work in the morning or Sunday or whenever he's got time, he [Dad] will always clean he'll do cooking and he'll wash up" (Catherine 24/03/16)

> "My Mum and Dad like, share the cooking, they sometimes do it together, sometimes one of them does it and then like the next day the other one does it. My Mum is like a taxi person, cos she's always, umm, driving me and my sister and my brother to like clubs and stuff…and then my Dad's got a habit of, like, if he sees anything on the table or something he will tidy it away…" (Rapunzel 24/02/16)

Further to this "Rapunzel" confirmed that similarly to her parent's division of domestic work she imagined sharing the work. "Dolphin" (quote below) discussed at length how both her parents had worked hard to have their own house and given her and her sister things. She knew both of her parents worked long hours, which often meant she had to go to her grandmother's after school. She discussed the family working as a team, and for "Dolphin" she suggested it was sensible for everyone to help in this way, without a gender split in roles.

> "My Mum, umm, she's got a full time job…and then my Dad is a joiner, he does like 14 hour shifts…well me and my sister, she's nine, we go to our Moma's when they are at work and then we come home and we like, help Mum, if Dad is still at work…" (Dolphin 19/11/15)

This theme of sharing the work and working as a team is reflected in the girls' imagined domestic futures. They expect to share the responsibility and work with their partners, suggesting the values from the family are significant beyond the

immediate family structure (Barrett and McIntosh 1991). The discussions with the girls demonstrated they perceived their attitude towards gender roles and division of domestic responsibilities may be influenced by what they see in their own families, (Ex and Janssens 1998), with those girls that see shared responsibilities wishing to replicate this in their own imagined futures. However, those girls whose mothers have to take most responsibility for the caring roles, wish for a more equal future for themselves, discussed below.

7.3.2 Resistance to Gendered expectations

Lewis (2000) suggests although women continue to be more heavily involved in childcare the gap between men and women's contributions to caring for children is narrowing. This change in the responsibilities may be shaping the girls' expectations of their futures, with the assumption they will not be expected, or will not accept having to do all of the caring for children. "Jorgie" expected to return to full-time work with her partner / husband taking equal responsibility, although primarily the child would be in childcare. This view was supported by a number of girls;

> "…share responsibility. I'd want days off" (Jorgie 12/04/16)
>
> "Yeh, because it's both of our child, it's not just mine" (Olivia-Rose 12/04/16)

"Chocolate Millionaire", however, took this discussion further and highlighted the inequality within the family experienced by women and suggested;

> "I don't think like they [women] should just like, give up work just to do it [look after their children] cos they don't want to just spend their whole entire lives just staying at home, they want to do something for themselves. " (Chocolate Millionaire 03/02/16)

"Chocolate Millionaire's" comment shows her ability to challenge the notion of the family or the role of the mother. She disputed the "natural" role of women, highlighting the; "…family …is…a cultural creation." (Mitchell 2015: p. 99). The girls that discussed men taking on equal responsibility or how women should not stop work were rejecting the "natural" ideology of the family, and it was through these discussions they explored how they imagined families, but also negotiated and interpreted their role as a mother.

The girls may be discussing an "ideal mother" (Ex and Janssens 2000) that ultimately contrasts with the actual mother role they adopt (Schroeder et al 1992) however, this does demonstrate the process of negotiation and balancing the girls are prepared for. The girls were attempting to combine commitments to work, rejection of traditional roles and offer alternatives to the normative view of the family. This was discussed through the use of feminist language, with the girls pointing out how it was "unfair" to expect women to take the responsibility. These confirm findings by Connolly and Healy (2004) who suggests working-class girls appear less likely to accept the subordinate role that was traditionally linked to the position of wife and mother and

refutes the notion that working-class women would prefer the role of mother compared to worker as suggested by (Jordan et al 1992).

As mentioned above some of the girls suggested their mothers were examples of what they did not want their imagined futures to be like. Girls will be "…less traditional than their own mothers and to be more relationally orientated and more self-assertive." (Ex and Janssens 2000). "Margaret", "Chloe" and "Mildred" discussed this passionately with each of them critical of their fathers / stepfathers, either because they did not help or were "useless" if they tried to help. This conversation demonstrated the frustration the girls felt because of the inequality they experienced and saw in their homes;

> "Do you know when you see a man… on his arse don't you want to just slap him?...Me dad, no literally he's an…." (Mildred 22/03/16)
> "They [women] do all the work" (Margaret 22/03/16)
> "Yeh, they do everything…and men just sit back and do nowt" (Mildred 22/03/16)
> "…so they're expected to look after the kids, and do all the housework, and all the cooking and cleaning and stuff" (Margaret 22/03/16)

"Mildred" suggested her Dad was lazy and expected her Mum to do everything despite both parents working full-time. These girls were determined not to be in this position in the future, challenging the view girls learn their gender roles through what they

experience (Duncan 2005; Marks and Houston 2002; Corder and Stephan 1984), rather they had learnt what they did not want.

Another example of resistance to gender roles within the home emerged when talking to “Nina”. “Nina” was not sure if she wanted children, or what work she imagined doing in the future, discussed in Section 6.2.1.2. Basit (1996) suggested ethnic minority girls aspired to a career as well as marriage, however, in contrast to this, “Nina” resisted the notion of marriage, rather expecting to work but unsure of what role this may be. As discussed, “Nina” was the only girl in my research from a British-Bangladeshi background. In discussions about her imagined futures in the domestic sphere and the socialisation of children she indicated her home life reflected very traditional gendered roles, with her Dad and brothers doing little to contribute in the home whilst her Mum, sisters and herself took responsibility for the home. However, despite “Nina” being the only girl from a British-Bangladeshi background she discussed the gender role division in a similar way to the White-British and White-European girls and resisted the traditional gendered responsibilities. However, rather than imagine a future with a more equal division of roles “Nina” resisted the discourse of children and marriage in the domestic sphere and imagined a future with her Mum and sister. This is an area for further research to explore the similarities and differences in the girl’s imagined futures linked more deeply to the cultural or racial backgrounds of working-class girls (Section 8.3). (Section 4.3.3 discusses the volunteer sampling of participants meant the sample was not representative nor reflected the diversity of the schools;

Section 8.4 discusses this is a limitation of the study; and Section 8.3 identifies this as a potential area for future research).

The discussion demonstrates how the girls perceive their family socialises them into their imagined futures, however, key to this is how the girls demonstrate they are either modelling their expectations on what they experience in their families or in resistance to what they experience. The girls discuss their mothers as important, but despite claims by Plummer (2000), these girls did not necessarily expect to inherit their mother's lives, but rather were prepared to reject their mother's lives if these do not suit what the girls imagine. This rejection of gendered norms extends to the girls' engagement with media representations, whereby the girls reject or criticise what they see in media. The following section discusses how the girls perceive media representations and the role they believe media plays in their imagined futures within the family or home.

7.4 Girls perceptions of Media and their Imagined Futures

It is evident in the above sections how the girls were critical of gendered division in their own families, this critical tone is also evident when the girls discussed media representations of the domestic sphere.

7.4.1 Gendered and Classed Homes

A critical tone emerged from the discussions with the girls about media representations of women in the home. A key point to note when considering how the girls discussed media representations, is how class and gender was not clearly be discussed separately. The girls did not clearly refer to class as part of the representations, but as discussed in Chapter 5 the girls talked about not seeing "girls like them". Reflecting this the girls identified the idealised family or motherhood role which reflected the middle-class ideal, rather than reflecting working-class mothers. This section discusses how the girls understand the gendered and classed representations they see.

The girls identify how media restrict women to a limited range of roles and these are primarily weak, domestic and in need of a man. This supports findings from DeWitt et al (2013; Tincknell (2005); Carson and Pajaczkowska (2000); Smith et al (2012) and Byerly and Ross (2006), who suggest stereotypical images of women dominate media representations of women, with women often portrayed as being responsible for children, whilst men are more likely to be shown working outside of the home. The idealised dominant representation of the nuclear family is summarised by "Jupiter";

> "In the media, families, the most common family you will see is…the most, umm typical family you will see on anything is like, a man, a woman, and the man is always taller than the woman, and then a boy and a girl child…that's what people expect when they think about a family." (Jupiter 24/03/16)

This quote demonstrates an awareness of the "ideal" family, that many of the girls referred to, and they believed was shown through media such as, *Coronation Street* whereby the girls maintained the women characters were often positioned within the home, *Nanny McPhee,* where the father needs a woman to help with the children because he cannot care for children by himself, and *Spy Kids* where the family were "ideal" (eg a Dad, Mum and two children – one boy and one girl). However, when discussing this did not identify "white" as part of that "ideal", despite media representations portraying the "white" middle-class family as the ideal. This reinforces discussions in Chapter 5 and 6 whereby the girls did not "see" their own "whiteness" or the "whiteness" in media. This view of media representations was supported by comments from other girls;

> "Normally the woman stays at home…" (Galaxy 30/04/15)

> "[women]…they are always shown as weak…like, in like, every time I watch something, the girl, the female, always ends up cleaning, doing the weak stuff and the man saves the day, and he is a hero and it's never the opposite way round." (Peeweebabee 03/02/16)

These discussions support research by Chambers (2000) who suggests the ideal nuclear family is prevalent within the media which offers a white, middle-class nuclear family view of the family (Hadfield et al 2007). The girls were critical of this and

highlighted how the families that were represented did not reflect reality, drawing attention to their own, or friend's families that were often blended, or single parent families. This critique of representations of families in media refutes the suggestion the image of the ideal family "…permeates the fabric of social existence..." (Barrett and McIntosh 1991: p. 29), and creates social meaning, rather this creates a meaning to resist. However, as discussed above the girls critiqued this view of the family due to the structure and implicit class difference, rather than the dominance of "whiteness".

All of the girls denied media socialised or influenced them into their expectations or imagined futures, but they suggested media did influence what society expected mothers and fathers to do, (third-person effect, Davison 1983). This suggestion of media contributing to the development of gender roles, indicates a view of media socialisation being embedded with other agents of socialisation, whereby media does not have a direct impact but contributes to the development of social norms, that were also developed through education, family and wider society which, in turn, informs behaviour. This also links to points made by Anthias (2012) (Section 3.5.2) about disidentification, with suggestions media socialisation does not apply to them, even though it may shape "other's" perceptions.

"Margaret" went on to show an example of how the dominant messages they believed media gave about men and women's roles were reflected in their own lives. Firstly, through their families, where she did not see her Dad as contributing to domestic responsibilities, (Section 7.3.2) and also through the behaviour of boys within school.

“Margaret” had a Home Economics class prior to our discussion and through her experiences in this lesson suggest media influences how boys see girls and their roles;

> “Today all the boys were doing nothing and they were just sitting around and made all the girls, like, do the cleaning and were like you have to do the cleaning cos you’re a girl” (Margaret 22/03/16)

This complexity links to discussions by Fine (2010) and Couldry (2000) who suggest the cultural patterns in society are repeated, naturalised and presented as social fact in such a way people may implicitly take these norms on board, linking to the notion of the, “’…symbolic hierarchy of the media frame'..." (Couldry’s 2000: p.57). This is not to suggest media socialises the girls into accepting these norms, rather media may play a role in shaping expectations at a level beyond the conscious. So that when asked to imagine a future family or a domestic future, the “common sense” (Sternod 2011) version of this family is similar to that which dominates media, but also dominates other aspects of society, such as their own families, education, religion and their peers’ experiences. However, despite imagining futures that are similar to what they see in media and their own families, in terms of the structure of their families, the girls reject the roles they often see in media or in their own families. The girls argued women should resist the stereotypes shown in media;

> “Women should like, I don’t know, they shouldn’t be like, held back by TV programmes and like, men. They should be able to have equal rights as men..” (Memep 03/02/16 – co-participatory interview)

The discussion in this chapter demonstrates the response to media representations but also the key figure of their mother when considering their futures. Many of the girls discussed either being like their mothers or different to their mothers in terms of their futures, therefore implicating their mothers as agents of socialisation. “A daughter’s self-image, however, was more strongly related to the perception of her own mother than her ideal image of a mother…It can be speculated that in construing a self-image of motherhood, daughters rely more on their daily experience…” (Ex and Janssens 2000: p. 885). Although the girls often referred to a family similar to the “nuclear family” seen in media the criticism of this and particularly the criticism of the mother-role, whereby the woman is responsible for child-care and child-rearing whilst the man works, demonstrates a rejection of this rather than this potentially socialising the girls into this imagined future. Those girls that imagine a future with children also imagine a future with a partner, however, they often imagine a more equal future compared to what they see in media or in the home. This supports Hall (in du Gay et al, 2000) who maintains identity is constructed through difference and by understanding the relationship with the “Other”. Many of the girls construct an imagined future through identifying their difference to what they see in media or what they see at home.

7.5 The intersection of gender and class in media representations of domestic labour and motherhood.

As discussed in Section 7.4.1 gender and class cannot be separated when considering media representations of the family. The media representations the girls discuss demonstrate how the middle-class ideal dominates and runs along gendered lines. However, from this there is also the notion of "choice" evident through the girl's discussions about their own imagined futures and the representations. This supports the findings of Thomson et al (2003) who suggest "choice" and the "can do" discourse exists across class, culture and locality. The girls suggest they have choices for their role within the domestic sphere, and this dialogue supports Chen (2013) and Budgeon (2015) who suggest the language of "choice" and autonomy developed from an idealized version of femininity, whereby girls and women's "choices" are restricted by clear codes of appropriate feminine behaviour. This discourse of "choice" is therefore reflective of media messages.

As shown through discussions with the girls about media and mothering, the girls were critical of the representation of women shown primarily as mothers and also of the idealised notion of what a mother should be, especially within the confines of the idealised family. The girls were aware of the narrow representation of families, women and domesticity and although they did not critique this through the language of class, there appeared an awareness this was not compliant with either their experiences or expectations. Media serves to reinforce the gendered and classed notion of the family, and the girls in my research rejected this.

It became evident however, that the girls saw gender as their primary challenge rather than their class background. The girls did not discuss class directly; similarly to the discussion in Chapter 5, they identified the differences they saw in media compared to their own experiences and expectations, which were along class lines. The ideal mother being seen as someone who has "choices", was professional before becoming a mother, and then stays at home, or juggles a well-paid job with children. "Jorgie" discussed how *Bones* showed a woman that had a baby and took this to work because of trying to juggle child-care, and highlighted how this shows how women are expected to try and "do it all". This reinforces Brown (1997) who suggested working class women are aware of the dominant cultural values and the "…idealized notions of White middle-class femininity…"(Brown 1997 p. 698), however they vary in the extent to which they desired to be "this kind of girl". Findings from Brown's (1997) research and my research suggest working-class girls negotiate their own understandings of the media representations and choose how far they attempt to comply with the "norm". As with the girls in Sanders and Munford's (2008) study, the girls in my research unsettled the notion of young girls being "victims of girlhood" (Currie et al 2006) rather suggesting they had agency and power to resist traditional discourses of girlhood and womanhood and could shape their futures as they wanted.

What became evident through the discussions with the girls about their imagined domestic futures was the centrality of gender in the decisions, choices and compromises they expect to have to make. Even when the girls were critiquing the

middle-class family norms shown through media, the focus of these criticisms was based on the gender roles rather than the difference between the girls from a working-class background and the middle-class images shown. Unlike Chapter 6, lack of visibility linked to region and their regional identity were not highlighted when considering the family and domestic roles. This is a key difference to the discussion in Chapter 5 on sexualisation and media, because the girls critiqued they did not see girls like themselves, however when imagining their futures and considering the representations of domestic families in media the girls did not focus as much on this class difference, thus challenging the notion "…class operates on a daily basis that can reveal the pervasiveness of the 'difference' of class." (Hebson's 2009: p. 30). The family was a site of gender struggle whilst class and regionality was not considered within the domestic sphere. Rather the girls critiqued the notion of the ideal family, because they believed this represented a gendered notion rather identifying the class attributes of the "ideal". "All evidence suggests that however tenacious class identity and class consciousness may be, they are less fundamental than gender identity and the feminine and masculine subjectivities so profoundly engrained in our personalities." (Barrett and McIntosh 1991: p. 108).

The girls appear to reject the idealised middle-class image of the family in media, due to the perceived gender roles, however, do not identify the "whiteness" of this ideal. The girls expect two wages will be needed in their home to support the family and want to work rather than be a stay-at-home mother. This may lead to the rejection of

the middle-class notion of the family whereby the mother / wife can stay at home with the children because one salary is enough.

7.6 Conclusion

Key findings that have emerged from this chapter and offer a contribution to understanding how young working-class girls imagine their futures and negotiate media messages, confirm the centrality of mothers (as discussed in Chapter 6) in terms of who the girls perceive socialises them into their imagined future lives. As discussed in Section 7.3.1 mothers were either held up as an example of what they imagined, or at times, something they did not want to consider in their future. "…the family remains a vigorous agency of class placement and an efficient mechanism for the creation and transmission of gender inequality…" (Barrett and McIntosh 1991: p. 29). It was evident from the conversations with the girls there emerged two dominant elements in their home life that shapes their desire for their futures to be shaped be equality and sharing of responsibilities. One is through seeing this fairness and some equality within their own homes, whereby mothers and fathers / stepfathers share the roles. However, if the girls see unfairness or inequality in the home, this develops a resistance and determination within these girls, and a demand their imagined futures will be different, with an intolerance of inequality. This demonstrates these young working-class girls are striving for equality in the home, "The picture is of flinty determination amongst young working-class women as they mobilise an assertive discourse of fairness,…" (Pocock 2005: p. 105). This supports arguments by Connolly

and Healy (2004) that suggests working-class girls are less likely to accept the subordinate role of wife or mother, rather they seek a role that offers some equality and allow them to negotiate work and family life.

Other key contributions from this chapter include, the focus the girls have on independence and autonomy, whereby they want to focus on education and work before considering their domestic futures. As discussed by Sanders and Munford (2008) the girls in my research appeared to be prioritising their imagined working future (Production) rather than focusing on their role as mothers (Reproduction and Socialisation of children). This was apparent in the many conversations with the girls about whether they wanted children, and relationships and how they imagined their role should they have children. Although many of the girls did not discount motherhood as a part of their imagined future, they did not see this as the essence of who they were or who they would become. These findings conflict with discussions by Jordan et al 1992, McMahon 1995 and Crompton 2006, who focus on working-class women prioritising mothering over working.

The girls in my study expect to have to balance their domestic futures with their working lives, including an awareness the girls have of despite wanting men to play an equal role it is probably going to be them that has to sacrifice things. This balancing act influenced how the girls imagined their futures and the expectation of responsibility for caring which would fall to them. This links to findings by Lewis (2000) who maintains the gendered identity of caring remains, however, this appears to

transcend class. The girls discussed this caring role through their position as girls rather than working-class subjects, and when they expect difficulty or conflict this is based on gendered divisions and expectations rather than other aspects of their identity such as class. It was clear the girls were aware, that the notion of "having it all" is at worst an illusion or at best a balancing act, and they will be responsible for balancing their home lives with their work lives.

However, despite this acceptance of having to balance the demands of their public and private lives the girls expected and imagined they have "choices", irrespective of their class or gender, however, they acknowledge that "choice" will be harder because they are girls and therefore subjected to a range of gendered expectations. This supports Brannen and Nilsen (2002) who claim the discourse of "choice" is not limited to the privileged few but evident across the social divide, but the language of "choice" was diluted by the underlying understanding the girls expressed about being expected to be the primary carers for children.

Although the discussions suggest the girls do not perceive media as socialising them into their imagined futures expectations, the girls are very aware of the representations shown and are attempting to reject the gendered expectations around mothering and motherhood, but they know to challenge or negotiate a different future would be difficult. However, despite class playing a role in the "choices" the girls may be able to make (Thomson et al 2003) and class having an impact on the relationship between the private and public sphere (Shirley and Wallace 2004), the girls do not

acknowledge or reflect on their "choices" being restricted by their class position or regionality (Chapter 6) whereby regional identity was seen to impact on options and opportunities. The complexity between the role of media and role of their own families is evident in the discussions the girls had about their imagined working lives (See Chapter 6) and their imagined future within the domestic sphere. What they experience at home is often reinforced in media representations, but the girls attempt to challenge these particularly if this complies with traditional roles.

As mentioned, the girls did not "see" their "whiteness" and therefore did not discuss this within the context of the discussions about their imagined futures (Warren 1999). This supports Probyn (2004) who maintains "white" girls or women do not see their "whiteness" rather they focus on their gender identity which tended to deny their "white" privilege. "…privileges associated with whiteness emerge in some part from whiteness's occupation and definition of all that is normal,…this is discursively naturalised and thus whiteness becomes invisible despite the ubiquitously visible (yet racially unmarked) nature of whiteness." (Ganley 2003: p. 26). This is an area for further research (Section 8.3), whereby discussions of "whiteness" and the privileges this affords could be discussed.

The representation of women as primary carers or sacrificing their "careers" for children and their family was a site of dispute, with the girls holding these representations up for scrutiny but also as examples of what they do not want for their futures. Their imagined future identities are constructed through resistance to

media, however because media is one part of society that establishes norms, some of the girls imagined futures appear to mirror what may be seen, however these norms are also in evidence in their families, peers' families and often what is discussed in school. The girls do not perceive media as being influential but rather an example of what they do not want, therefore they attempt to resist the representations.

8 Conclusion

This thesis focused on investigating young working-class girls' perceptions of media socialisation in relation to their imagined futures (work and domestic). The child-centred feminist standpoint approach positioned the findings within an intersectional socialist feminist perspective to attempt to develop an understanding of how working-class girls imagine their futures and how they experience and perceive media. The aim of my research was to explore whether young working-class girls perceive media as socialising them into their imagined futures. As discussed in Section 4.2 the following objectives were adapted from Mitchell's (1971) spheres of subjection, in an attempt to understand the intersecting inequalities in working-class girls' lives and their perceptions of the role of media in socialising them;

I. To explore working-class girls' perceptions of media they consume, through their voices, and hear how they attempt to negotiate, resist and engage with media and dominant messages around femininity.

II. To explore how the sexualisation of women's bodies is negotiated and if working-class girls perceive this as socialising them into performing a dominant femininity or whether it provides opportunities for resistance.

III. To discover how working-class girls imagine their future working lives, and what they perceive socialises them into imagining these futures.

IV. To investigate how working-class girls imagine their future lives within the domestic sphere, including potentially having and rearing children, and what they perceive socialises them into expecting these futures.

My research acknowledged the need for an intersectional consideration to allow for the consideration of how the girls experience class and gender but also how their regionality impacts on their experiences and feelings of inequality and how "whiteness" is experienced. As the findings have demonstrated in Chapters 5, 6 and 7, to explore the girls' imagined futures there is a need to explore the relationships between Production, Reproduction, Socialisation of Children and Sexualisation (Mitchell 1971), to understand of how these are interwoven in the girls' lives and how the girls attempt to negotiate these oppressions particular to their class and gender position.

My research examined of how working-class girls (aged 11-12) engage with and negotiate their own reception of media texts and whether they perceive media as an agent of socialisation. This investigation offered some interesting and complex responses from the girls, with the perception of socialisation stemming from families and peers, rather than media, despite media being considered "influential" for younger children or boys (the "third person" effect Davison 1983). This explored the position of working-class girls as active and media literate agents, able to resist, challenge, critique and negotiate media messages, in comparison to research in the

past that considered young people, “dupes” (Sanders and Munford 2008), and portrayed young people as unable to engage critically with media (Downs and Smith 2010; Durham 1999). Despite the girls not perceiving media as socialising them, through discussions it was evident societal norms still created an expectation of femininity which the girls could not escape, however, the girls considered their peers as applying the most “pressure” to meet these norms. The girls were also aware of the risk of attempting to subvert norms, which would mean they may not “fit in”.

The development of co-participatory research, from a child-centred feminist standpoint epistemological perspective, offered working-class girls an opportunity for their voices to be heard and their perspectives to be the central focus. This approach to researching with young working-class girls, in Britain (outside of London) offers new insights into their experiences and media reception that has not been explored, and additionally offers contributions to research methods, that prioritises the voices of the oppressed or silenced. Through the girls working with me to develop the questions for the co-participatory interviews, the concerns and focus of the girls was emphasised, whereby they were, through the structuring of the questions and discussions, demonstrating what they believed was of concern with regards to media representations and media power.

8.1 Research focus

My research objectives engaged with Mitchell's (1971) four spheres of women's subjection that are intricately bound and "…form a structure of specific inter-relations…", (Mitchell 2015: p. 148). It became clear the girls were aware how these spheres of subjection informed each other in their imagined futures and were aware of the need for an "balancing act" to overcome the oppressions they perceived they face.

Sexualisation was very much part of the girls' present, whilst Production, Reproduction and Socialisation of Children were in the girls' futures. Whilst my research offered the girls a space to discuss sexualisation and how they perceived media sexualisation and objectification of women and girls, there was also an opportunity to explore how the girls imagined a future outside of this Sexualisation debate. Key to my research is the attempt to understand how girls perceive media contributes to their socialisation, and to hear the girls' own interpretations of the contribution media makes to their imagined futures. Academic discussions have attempted to explore the role media plays, however my research attempts to understand how the girls perceive the role of media. "…the dominant ideology works to regulate cultural norms of appropriate gender behaviour with respect to personal identity, social roles, work and marriage roles;…" (Walker and Barton 1983: p. 3). The focus of my research explored how the girls perceived media representations of women and how the invisibility of working-class women was understood by the girls, and how far they believed this played a role in the construction of their lives. Through these discussions there was also an

opportunity to investigate other agents of socialisation and how the girls perceived family (Crompton 2006), peers and media interact to create norms of behaviour. "As children we learn our place within the established hierarchies of the social world. Our place is defined by other people who impose on us definitions and values relating to gender, class, race…" (Plummer 2000: p. 46). My research provided an opportunity to explore who, or what, the girls believed imposed values and beliefs about gender, and to what extent this shaped how they performed girlhood or imagined womanhood.

My research adopted a socialist feminist approach, (Section 2.6) which called for a need to engage with intersectional thought, in an attempt to focus on class and gender, whilst not ignoring other differences, and as discussed, the regional experiences of the girls. This attempted to marry the structural inequalities working-class girls face, whilst allowing for the differences that may shape working-class girls' experiences and make these experiences particular to them. As demonstrated through my findings there is a complexity to how the girls experience their lives and imagine their futures. They showed a clear awareness of gender throughout discussions and how this may impact on their imagined futures. They also showed an understanding of their "difference" through their class position, despite not having the "tools" to label this class. Regionality offered a new contribution to discussions, which extends discussions by McKenzie (2015) who demonstrated the sense of belonging women feel from their home location (St Ann's) whilst feeling excluded from wider society. Whilst the girls in my research did not discuss feeling a sense of belonging based on their region, they were aware of the feeling of being excluded due to their

regional identity, and being "invisible". This contribution of exploring experiences and developing an understanding of how the girls perceived their regional identity and how they believe this may impact on their imagined futures contributes to a gap in literature. This includes their imagined educational or working futures, with the perceived difference between themselves and "posh" girls influencing what university they may wish to go to, but also what work and opportunities they may be offered. The girls were equally aware of their invisibility in media as working-class girls from the Midlands region. However, when discussing imagined future domestic / home life they did not suggest their regional identity would play a role. This may be due to the girls assuming their imagined future within the domestic sphere would take place within the region they had grown up (although some girls did suggest they would move away), or it may be regionality was not as evident as gender and class in these imagined futures. The focus on gender and class reflects the discussion by Skeggs (1997) in which (although the research took place in a Northern England town) the regionality of the women did not appear to be central, or remained unexplored. Rather, the focus was on working-class women and their balance of femininity and respectability, which concentrated on gender and class and their role as carers. My research further explored the dimensions of regionality, in relation to my young (11-12-year-old) Midland participants' gendered and classed identities. An important point to note and is discussed further in Sections 8.2 and 8.3 is that of "whiteness" and working-class girls. Throughout discussions the girls in my research (all "white" except one) did not identify "whiteness" as dominant in representations in media, or their position as "white" girls influencing their imagined futures or providing privilege

through their “race”. The girls appeared unaware of their own privileged position as “white” girls, and any privilege associated with this certainly did not register in comparison to their lack of privilege due to their gender, class or regionality.

My research focus was shaped by gaps in existing literature. A crucial area that has lacked focus recently in academia is that of class, whereby class had been lost as a focus both politically and socially, only re-emerging as a site of discussion (Savage et al 2013; Gill 2007; Duncan 2005; Skeggs 2005) recently. Through this re-engagement with class, my research offers a key focus and contribution, that of engaging with working-class girls and providing them with an opportunity for their experiences of gender and class to be heard through their voices. The focus of my research was to provide a platform for the voices of girls that have often been invisible or silent as this offers an opportunity to hear alternative contributions to the discussion about girls, media and their futures. This creates a space where the girls can discuss media reception and all aspects of their imagined futures. This is in response to existing literature that has focused on “career aspirations”, the successful girls discourse, or the can-do girls that ignored the position of girls from working-class backgrounds, or when research has considered class, these girls are often considered family orientated and less ambitious, without hearing the girls’ own perspectives. The position of working-class women and girls is unique, “The classes in which women enjoyed some economic independence and took part in production were the oppressed classes, and as women workers they were enslaved even more than the male workers.” (de Beauvoir 1997: p. 160). Working-class women have historically expected to work and

have not been afforded the luxury of choosing to work and stay at home with children. The economic and material stress of belonging to the working-class does not afford "choice" in the same way as it does for the middle-classes. Working-class women experienced a dual oppression of the gender and class, which refutes the neoliberal notion of "choice". My research allowed me to explore how the girls imagine their futures in the face of their gender and class position, but also their regional identity, whilst framed by the middle-class norms that permeate media (Raisborough and Adams 2008) and the balancing act of maintaining femininity (McRobbie 2009), and being seen as "respectable" (Skeggs 1997). This is situated against the invisibility of "whiteness" as discussed further in Section 8.2.

8.2 Reflection on the key findings

My research provided the opportunity to develop an understanding of how the girls experience their present, imagine their futures, and perceive media and other agents of socialisation.

Throughout discussions with the girls it became clear their primary focus in terms of Mitchell's (2015) four structures of oppression, was sexualisation. This was the focus of much of their discussions about media representations and seemingly of primary concern in their daily lives. They attempted to balance their critique of the representations of women with their own representations on social media, however this highlighted the conflict the girls faced. The girls appeared to be attempting to

walk a tight-rope of portraying themselves as attractive and feminine, but not too sexual or girly, whilst criticising and monitoring other girls' representations, and media representations. If they portrayed themselves too sexually, they would not "fit in" but equally, if they rejected notions of femininity they would also not "fit in". This was not their imagined future but rather their present life, which may explain why this was dominant, as it was their everyday. Due to the dominance of the sexualisation thesis in academic, media and societal debate it was not completely surprising the girls had absorbed this, and it framed how they perceived media messages concerning the women and girls, including the "tight-rope" of feminine / attractive but not too sexual. It became clear through the discussions with the girls that femininity was not something they just possessed but was "…very much a public performance dependent upon validation by others…They [appearances] are intimately linked to valuations of oneself, to knowing oneself and to being an accepted part of a group. They do not recognize themselves by the category of femininity but their appearance (amongst other practices) is central to how they know themselves. This suggests that women are not feminine by default but that femininity is a carefully constructed appearance and/or form of conduct that can be displayed." (Skeggs 1997: p. 107). It was clear the girls were involved in a constant balancing act based on what it is to be feminine or an acceptable girl. This performance of femininity is clearly shown through the regulation of their bodies and each other's bodies on social media, but also their critique of women in media, due to the perceived femininity that is performed. However, this focus serves to distract the girls from other concerns, such as equality in the workplace or within the domestic sphere, at least on the surface. As demonstrated by research,

the internalisation of gendered norms and beliefs about gender appropriate behaviour, as shown through the sexualisation and objectification of women, may shape young girls' self-perceptions and lead them to self-limit their futures outside of the feminine ideal (Dhesi 2011; Archer et al 2012; Koul et al 2010; DeWitt et al 2013). Therefore, although there is a need to consider all spheres of subjection (Mitchell 2015), the sexualisation of girls continues to be of concern, not least because of the amount of the girls' energy and attention it is taking that means they are vigilant, monitoring and self-monitoring. It was clear, as discussed by Hey (1997), these girls were doing the work of patriarchal and capitalist society, in monitoring femininity.

However, it was evident from my findings the girls were media literate and spent a great deal of time critiquing the images and messages they received from media. Young people are not "passive dupes" (Sanders and Munford 2008: p. 344 - 345), rather they engage with, and challenge what they see in media and often attempt to shape their own identity in opposition to this. My findings do not suggest the girls were entirely able to resist the messages of needing self-improvement (Connolly and Healy 2004: McRobbie 2009). At times this was shown through their discussions about their own images on social media, whereby they perceived themselves as needing makeup to improve themselves, whilst at the same time critiquing others for using "too much" makeup. This focus on their own image implies that despite the girls attempting to resist the powerful messages that surround appearance, "…media representations still got to them…" (Gill 2012: p.740).

However, I do not suggest the girls are primarily “influenced” by media, rather media contributes to the creation of gendered norms, along with family, education, peers and wider society that means the girls are surrounded by the message they need to focus on their bodies and their appearances. The girls refuted the idea media “influenced” them, rather they suggested media was something that may shape how “others” perceive themselves (third-person effect as discussed by Davison 1983; Connors 2005; Duck and Mullin 1995). The girls identified peer pressure as being more difficult to resist, feeling the need to comply with gender norms to fit in. This contributes to the discussion of young girls, body image and media with the girls highlighting peers as the crucial agent of socialisation. This finding is supported by observing the girls interacting in focus groups, when they supported each other, whether this was discussing “sexist media” or inequality in the home, the girls were more likely to be outspoken and would develop and take the conversation where they wished. However, if there was a conflict in the points of view, the girls were less sure or confident in developing their line of thought. The interaction in focus groups supported what the girls were saying, fitting in was important to them, and peers provided the pressure or monitoring to ensure they complied with the necessary behaviours to ensure they would fit in.

Linked to the need for self-improvement the girls discussed are the findings (Section 5.3.3) that focused on being “Ladylike”. These discussions showed the girls were able to resist and challenge the notion of performing a femininity that complied with middle-class norms, shown through media but also enforced through their families.

The embodiment parody that took place in focus groups, of what ladylike meant and how they perceived it should be performed, whilst situating themselves outside of this role, highlights the agency of the girls in resisting dominant messages. The girls took pleasure in competing as to who could walk with a book on their head (as they perceived "ladies" could), or who was sitting in the most or least ladylike manner. This shows the strength of peer support, whereby the group "against" "ladylike", empowered the girls to resist and subvert what they were "told" they should be like. This demonstrated that despite internalising idealised femininity (Tsaliki 2015) they could resist and play with this notion for their own amusement, and they understood the constructed nature of femininity, rather than assuming femininity was a "natural" state. Collectively the girls resisted the notion of "ladylike", despite media and family messages, suggesting because they were not policing each other's ability to be ladylike, it was easier to parody and resist it. Whereas, regulating the ability to appear correctly feminine or attractive, was something all of the girls took part in, including judging each other and feeling the pressure to try and conform, as discussed by Skeggs (1997), whereby she maintains women regulate their bodies to ensure they are seen in a way that signifies femininity and respectability.

Alongside the discussions of appropriate femininity and how far the girls perceived they resisted media messages, there was also a key finding that demonstrated how the girls did not "see" themselves in media. As discussed in Section 5.5 the girls did not see "…the average person" (Mildred 22/03/16) in media. This theme highlighted the impact of the girl's regional identity whereby "girls like us" did not just refer to

working-class but also to regionality as vectors of identity that separated the girls from representations they see. The working-class girls in my research perceived mediated girls and women as “posh”, “ladylike”, “fake”, “slutty” “dead skinny”, “really obese” with them assuming the position of “The Other” (Hall 1997). It is not enough for “ordinary” people to be visible; the content of that visibility was important (Williamson 2010). Merely seeing women from a working-class background was not enough to satisfy the girls’ wish to see “girls like them” rather the representations of these women had to tread a fine line between being too “chav” or too “posh”, attractive but not too skinny or sexy, had to behave appropriately, and, be credible. The girls were really wanting to see “girls like them” that reflected their class position and regional identity, that shared an accent, or experiences of similar locations to them, rather than being middle-class or coming from London, or other “posh” locations with “posh” accents. This representation of “ordinary” people reflects the complexity the girls’ have in negotiating their self-representations, searching for a femininity that satisfies numerous demands and balances messages of femininity. Skeggs (1997) argued the women in her research, “…do not have a possessive relation to femininity. This generates a temporality to the sign of femininity…Whereas they felt positioned by class they do not feel similarly positioned as feminine.” (Skeggs 1997: p. 106). This can be applied to the girls in my research they were constantly searching for or trying to achieve the “right” femininity whereas their class positioned them clearly and almost unquestioningly as “fitting in” in some places and others being either “too rough” or “too posh”. However, my research builds on these arguments and introduces the notion of region as another vector of the girls’ identity that shapes how they see

themselves or attempt to identify themselves. As with class (argued by Skeggs 1997), regionality positions the girls whilst they continue to try and negotiate femininity. This key contribution from my findings demonstrates the awareness the girls have of their regional identity and how this positions them as "different" to what they see, but also how this class and gender all work together to create a particular identity, as demonstrated in McKenzie's (2015) research that depicted how locality influenced the way in which her working-class participants perceived their "space" and sense of belonging.

These discussions highlighted the centrality of class when considering gendered representations, supporting findings by Skeggs (1997) who suggests, "…women never see themselves as just women; it is always read through class." (Skeggs 1997: p. 91). Without including class in the discussion this would have negated the experiences of working-class girls, and how they understand and perceive media. The girls, although they did not use the word "class", demonstrated the classist nature of media representations with "average" working-class girls invisible. "…This inability to find ourselves in existing culture as we experience ourselves is true of course for other groups besides women. The working class, blacks, national minorities within capitalism all encounter themselves as echoes, they lose themselves in the glitter and gloss of the images capitalism projects to them." (Rowbotham 1973: p 35-36). The girls did not see representations of their own lives, or how they saw themselves, they were situated somewhere between the middle-class norm, which they perceived as "posh", and the "chav" stereotype, which they perceived as belonging to a lower class.

This highlights the need for an intersectional socialist feminist approach to consider regionality as an aspect of their identity that sets these girls apart from others. The classist tone of media created an absence for the girls in terms of their potential future working lives, whereby women were often perceived as “posh”, their potential future domestic lives, whereby the “ideal family” bore no relation to their girls’ experiences, and their “now”, did not comply with the “posh”, “sexualised” or “chav” stereotype.

The findings from my research demonstrated the girls were attempting to resist the gendered norms they saw in media, girls, “…are quite articulate when it comes to condemning patriarchal values and resist conforming to traditional ideals of femininity. They actively read the many media texts they take in each day, often scrutinizing those they find troublesome or confusing.” (Lowe (2003: p. 139). However, despite this, the girls’ imagined futures often reflected gender traditional norms, for example, in Chapters 6 the imagined work in the girls’ futures was often gender typical, whilst in Chapter 7, the type of family the girls expected, with their responsibility for prioritising children also complies with gendered norms. This contradiction in what the girls critiqued and what they foresaw is reflected in McRobbie’s (1978) discussion, “…although aspects of the female role were constantly being questioned, such criticism precluded the possibility of a more radical restructuring of the female role because ultimately it was women who had the children…” (McRobbie 1978 in Bland et al 1978: p. 98). This suggests little has changed since the 1970s, whereby girls are attempting to challenge the female role, through their criticism of inequalities both within work, the domestic sphere and media representations; however, central to the

girls' understanding of their role and their futures is the biological fact of reproduction, which the girls appeared to accept placed them in a different position to men, a message reflected in society. The girls in my research did suggest a restructuring of the female role through suggestions of men taking a turn in child care, the potential to have child care for children or the resistance to complying with expectations, and their prioritising of work first and then a family, however the gendered norms were still evident in how they imagined their futures.

My findings demonstrate central to the girls imagined future was the focus on their imagined future work. "Occupation was the centrepiece of the future thinking of these young females. The future described by participants in these studies seemed to hinge on occupation and it was around this that they saw their identities being formed." (Sanders and Munford 2008: p. 343). These working-class girls were thinking about their futures, and prioritising a successful, autonomous and independent future, however this was shaped by their awareness of their gender, class and regional identity supporting claims by McKenzie (2015) that due to working-class women's understanding of their position within a community and their regional or classed identity "…after a time it becomes very difficult to move out through fear of stigmatisation…through the fear of not knowing how you may be treated and viewed by unknown others,…" (McKenzie 2015: p. 162). Although the girls in my research did not live on a council estate and did not have that collective identity in quite the same way as the women in McKenzie's study, the girls did share a sense of belonging and were very aware of their regional distinctiveness which lead to them being aware they

may not "fit in" to "posh" universities or work places. As Chapter 6 demonstrated when the girls discussed occupational and educational futures there was an awareness of where they felt they would "fit in", based on not being "posh", and not wanting to attend a university they perceived would not suit their backgrounds.

At the point the girls imagined meeting a partner and having children there was evidence of an expected gendered role as "mother". The girls were particularly close to their mothers or women relatives, therefore their imagined domestic future may well reflect, as suggested by Plummer (2000), the centrality of these women in their lives. Although the girls did not suggest their mothers were "role-models" they did respect their mothers and discuss their achievements far beyond the time or manner in which they talked about fathers. This was the case for girls with fathers that lived at home with them or were absent parents, suggesting the emotional connection is with their mothers rather than fathers, which is also supported by the findings that suggest the girls perceived their mothers as socialising them into their futures.

Whilst the girls resisted the notion of media socialising them into their expectations, and were critical of media, the girls highlighted their mothers or other women they were close to as socialising them or shaping their expectations (Ex and Janssens 1998). As discussed in Chapter 6, the girls often cited mothers or women they knew as reasons for their imagined future work outside the home, these women were talked about and seen as positive examples. The girls perceived these women as successful in their chosen work, with only "Chelsey" considering that her mother could not achieve

what she wanted because of having children. Little thought was given by the girls that these women may not have chosen the work they did. The women were also often seen as successful in combining work and home life, with most of their mothers considered as the person that did most of the work in the home and took most of the responsibility for children.

However, in contrast to how these women were regarded in Chapter 6, in relation to future work, Chapter 7 showed a more complex picture in the role of mothers as socialisation agents for the girls' imagined domestic futures. Whilst some of the girls respected and considered how their mothers managed their domestic responsibilities, some of the girls (Section 7.3.2) were outspoken in rejecting the traditional role their mothers performed, and, were critical of the lack of contribution from men. This contrasts with findings that suggested "…The more traditional the gender role attitudes of a mother,…the more traditional her daughter's attitudes appear to be." (Ex and Janssens 1998: p. 182). The more traditional the roles in the home, the more outspoken the girls in my research were about challenging these and refusing to conform to gendered norms in the home. Gender and class were not the only things at play in these discussions, but how the girls experienced examples of heterosexual relationships in their homes and saw the division of roles. Those girls that saw some equality in their homes, either with both father and mother working ("Dolphin", "Galaxy", "Dreamwolf"), or the father working whilst the mother looked after children or combined children with part-time work (as was the case for "Chelsey", "Jorgie", "Shortbread", "Chocolate Millionaire") were less critical of their homes, and although

they appeared to expect equality in their futures, they appeared to accept some compromise was necessary. Whilst those that experienced what they considered to be significant gender inequality ("Margaret", "Mildred" and "Nina") were very outspoken about their future expectations and the inability to "put up with" the lack of men's contribution to domestic work. In addition to this, as discussed in Section 7.3.2, ethnic background and cultural norms may also play a role in how the girls experience their lives and imagine their futures, as discussed with regards to "Nina", who is British-Bangladeshi and who appeared to wish to resist any notion of a traditional family and rather desired to live with her mother and sister, away from men family members, who she saw as not contributing to the domestic roles.

The assumed heterosexuality worked in conjunction with class and gender to shape experiences and understandings of the girls and their imagined domestic futures, there is a need to further explore the assumption of heterosexuality (discussed in Section 8.3) however, exploring the imagined futures through this lens allows an understanding of the pervasiveness of the heterosexual discourse that appears to overshadow class and gender when considering Reproduction and Socialisation of children.

In a similar way to the above discussion of heterosexuality, whereby the girls assumed all were heterosexual and therefore did not consider alternatives, "whiteness" was also not commented upon. Throughout discussions the girls in my research (all "white" except one) did not identify "whiteness" as dominant in representations in

media, or their position as “white” girls influencing their imagined futures or providing privilege through their “race”. As identified in Section 4.4.3, the demographic makeup of the geographical location of the schools were higher than average “white” and lower than average ethnic minorities, which may have also gone some way to identifying the girl’s lack of awareness of “whiteness”. Their location accustomed them to the “norm” that is “white”, alongside media representations, which may have led to the girls lacking awareness of their position as “white”. This is an area that would offer an opportunity for further research. “Whiteness” was something I was equally learning to discuss throughout the research and therefore feel this offers a key area to explore and consider in future research. As suggested by Lawler (2012) the white working class are now marked as problematically white, or linked to “extreme whiteness” in media, evidenced by the “chav” representation the girls discussed. The rejection of the “chav” suggests the girls did not see any similarities between themselves and this representation, demonstrating the “problematic whiteness” was not considered. This representation hides the whiteness of the middle-classes, which may explain why the girls did not “see” this “whiteness”. The girls see representations from their position as “white”, which as discussed by Frankenberg (1993) influences how the girls “see” media, themselves and others. “…whiteness is a location of structural advantage, of race privilege. Second, it is a “standpoint,” a place from which white people look at ourselves, at others, and at society. Third, “whiteness” refers to a set of cultural practices that are usually unmarked and unnamed.” (Frankenberg 1993: p. 1). As far as the girls were concerned the dominance of “whiteness” was unremarkable, but also appeared to be the unquestioned “norm”.

Overall, two key themes dominated the findings of my research, that of a balancing act, and complexity and contradiction. When discussing media, sexualisation, imagined futures in work and the home the girls consistently returned to the idea of having to strike a balance. "…Despite positioning themselves as independent, self-determining agents who are free to choose their own life paths, career and family life were constructed as potentially problematic and requiring negotiation." (Jacques and Radtke 2012: p. 455). The girls acknowledged the balancing act between being feminine versus too girly, sexy versus slutty, focused on work versus feminine and attractive, work versus home life, children versus work. This is supported by Skeggs' (1997) findings that demonstrate women have to negotiate between being sexual which is not valued and demonstrating sexuality which can be perceived as having value. Whatever imagined future, or in the case of sexualisation the present, the girls were constantly trying to balance what they wanted and what they perceived they should want or should do. The balancing act demonstrated the girls needed to try and negotiate between Production and Reproduction, Sexualisation and the "good" girl, and resisting codes of femininity whilst conforming to "fit in", supports the discussions by Taylor (1995 in Holland et al 1995). Whilst the girls discussed and showed how they wished to challenge gendered norms they were aware of the penalties for doing this and therefore often attempted to strike a balance to achieve a little of what they wanted, but still avoid being penalised, which for young girls could mean being excluded or losing their "respectability" or "femininity". Crucial to my research, which supports the need to explore this from my socialist feminist perspective, was the girls

were not just balancing the demands of their gender but also their class. If they resisted or challenged the feminine norm too much, they risked upsetting the middle-class norm, equally if they "aspired" to education in a university that was deemed "posh" they risked losing their ability to fit in, both at university and at home. "Recent work clearly demonstrates both the awareness girls have of their social situation and their ability to make rational choices about their lives…" (Taylor 1995 in Holland et al. 1995: p. 9). This balancing act was tempered by the risk of being "othered" even more than working-class girls already are, as discussed by McKenzie (2015) who demonstrates how women from a council estate in Nottingham were aware of the risk of stepping outside of their "area". "…Being St Ann's' has many meanings and values attached to it; it offers a certain amount of safety through being known and 'fitting in'." (McKenzie 2015: p. 206). Although the girls in my research did not discuss "being known" in their region, they were aware of their ability to fit in to the area, whereas stepping outside of the area would run the risk of being "othered" and an "outsider". Gender, class and regionality left the girls with a limited "choice", demonstrating the myth of "choice" (Chen et al 2013; Duncan 2005; Jacques and Radtke 2012), belonging to neoliberal thought. Working-class girls' "choices" are limited by their position as working-class girls.

The other key theme that was woven throughout the discussions, and closely connected to the balancing act was that of complexity and contradiction. Some of the contradictions discussed included: the notion of media "effecting" other people (third-person effect), but the girls did not think they were socialised by media; the criticism

of girls that complied to stereotypical images and used editing tools and a lot of makeup, whilst also editing their own images, but justifying this because they "needed to look better"; the criticism of "posh" ideal families, yet when discussing how they imagined their domestic futures these were often in line with the middle-class norms; and arguing for equality, whilst often conceding they would be the ones to sacrifice their work / time / dreams for children. These examples of the contradictions that emerged through talking to the girls demonstrated the complexity of the futures working-class girls face. Gender, class and regionality intersect to create greater inequalities, and the girls may desire a potential future however this may be contradicted by a future they expect and the line between the two is blurred. "…narratives of young people's expectations of lifecourse trajectories, revealing rich and complex patterns of young people's expected journeys to adulthood and their understandings of the possibilities open to them." (McDonald et al 2011: p. 80). The complexity and contradictions develop from the understanding of the balancing act the girls are aware they must manage, but also because the girls are told they have "choices", "public rhetoric of choice has been internalised" (McDonald et al (2011: p. 80), yet they show an awareness this "choice" is shaped by their gender, class and regional identity. Not only do the girls demonstrate how they are aware they must strike a balance, but they are also aware "choice" is only "choice" within the confines of gender, class and regionality, a condition specific to them.

8.3 Recommendations for Further Research

When developing my research and analysing the findings it became evident there were many potentials for further research. This section explores some of the areas for future research and how these have emerged throughout my research and build or develop on the themes that materialised. Some of these areas for future research are an extension of the findings discussed in Chapters 5, 6 and 7, and some are linked to areas that were not investigated or focused on.

As discussed in Section 6.2.1.2 the girls in my research often discussed how their imagined working futures were linked to hobbies, interests and things they were good at. However, what this does not explore is how far the girls perceived they did well in subjects they were interested in, or actually, if their interest meant they worked harder at developing the skills and knowledge to enable them to do well. It would be an interesting extension to the findings in my research to explore how the girls either have the interest which develops their ability or vice versa. If the girls have been encouraged to be interested in certain subjects or hobbies it may be that early socialisation impacts on the girl's imagined futures. If girls have been encouraged to "enjoy" gendered interests, and this has been their focus the girls may perceive they are more skilled in these areas. This may entail exploratory research with girls and families, or alternatively following girls in a longitudinal study, whereby interests, skills and subject knowledge could be assessed, with the focus on creating a picture of how these interact. This may shed further light on reasons why girls appear interested, and

/ or, good in subjects that are typically perceived as feminine. This may offer findings that would support the understanding of how young girls are socialised into believing they are good at certain subjects or should be interested in certain subject, and which aspect comes first, interest or talent.

As discussed in Section 6.3.2 my findings were in conflict with Lapour and Heppner (2009), as my research suggested the girls perceived their mothers as important in terms of imagined working futures, whereas Lapour and Heppner (2009) found girls are influenced by their fathers, however this research focused on girls "social class privilege". This therefore offers an opportunity for further comparison, with the focus of future research on the comparison between the socialising influences of mothers and fathers for girls from working-class, middle-class and upper-class backgrounds. As Plummer (2000) suggested working-class girls expect to inherit their mother's lives, whereas this may not be the same for girls from different socio-economic backgrounds. A comparative study would offer an opportunity to explore the similarities and differences of a range of girls and how they experience family socialisation. This would fill a gap in research whereby a greater understanding of the power of social class in how girls experience their families and imagine their futures.

Section 7.1.1 discussed the heteronormative discourse that shaped the girls' discussions of their imagined domestic and family futures. As demonstrated in this section none of the girls acknowledged an alternative to heterosexuality either for themselves or others. An extension to my research would provide an opportunity to

explore the dominance of heteronormativity, and how this is carried forward into the girl's futures. This future research would potentially provide two opportunities for contributing to literature, that of how far the young girls that perform heterosexuality at this age but adopt an alternative sexuality in their futures, perceive the heteronormative discourse they adopted was in response to socialisation pressures from peers, family members or media. Research (Martin 2009) suggested mothers convey heteronormativity, however this further research would provide an opportunity to explore how important other agents of socialisation are. Additionally, this area of research could explore how far the girls that attempted to explore alternative family structures (for example, in my research considering adopting children or not having children, which was in conflict with societal, peer, and media expectations) were actually attempting to explore alternatives to the heteronormativity that dominated the girl's discussions. Discussing sexuality within my research was not a key objective, however, the immediacy with which heterosexuality was assumed by the girls when considering their futures, offers key opportunities to explore further, and develops an intersectional consideration of girls' lives and research.

As discussed in Chapters 5, 6, and 7, the girls did not "see" or acknowledge their "whiteness". Twenty-nine of the girls were "white", and they engaged with conversations about gender, class and regional inequalities, however, did not see "whiteness" as offering a privilege or examine the lack of "race" in representations they discussed. This offers an important further area of research to provide an

opportunity to explore the dominance of “whiteness”, how the girls would discuss this if it had been central to my aims, and also if they can acknowledge the privileges this offers. It may be, as suggested by Wray (2019 in Kindinger and Schmitt 2019) the privileges of “whiteness” are not felt by these working-class girls and are “…scarce to non-existent…” (Wray 2019 in Kindinger and Schmitt 2019: p. 39) for girls in their social position. This may explain why the girls focused so clearly on their gender, class and regional disadvantages, thus engaging with intersecting identities, however, did not feel “whiteness” as part of this identity and did not identify “whiteness” as offering them opportunities or privileges. However, it may be explained by research (Bhopal 20018; Warren 1999; Probyn 2004) that “white” people often take their identity for granted, and in the case of the findings within my research this may be the case. “Whiteness” was invisible to the girls and was an unquestioned “norm”. Discussing “whiteness” was not a key objective within my research, and as discussed this is a limitation of my sampling technique. However, the dominance of the “white” sample, the demographic of the areas the schools were located in and the invisibility of “whiteness” from discussions provides opportunities for further research and contributions to literature. This could focus on discussing “whiteness” with working-class girls and identifying if or how far they understand “whiteness” offers them privileges, or this could focus on how the girls are attempting to create identities that have not acknowledged “whiteness” despite the ideological messages around the “white” working-class (“chav”). Equally with an ethnically diverse sample comparative research would be equally interesting to explore how “race” develops the discussions into the imagined futures of working-class girls and media socialisation, particularly

given “white” working-class girls maintained they did not “see girls like us”, the invisibility of “race” would add an additional intersectional dimension.

In addition to the points discussed in the paragraph above, regionality offers further opportunities for research. The areas I sampled from returned a majority “white” sample, however, it would be interesting to do similar research in other regions of the UK and compare sample demographics. Equally adding regional identity as an intersecting identity into this research offers an opportunity to fill further gaps in literature to explore how different working-class girls from different regions in the UK imagine their futures, and experience media. This would offer opportunities to identify the role of region as one of the vectors of young working-class girls’ identities but also explore how far those regions that are often invisible in media representations experience this and if this is different from those regions that are more visible. This may offer opportunities to then start to appreciate the role of regionality but also how this interacts further with class and “race” and to extend intersectionality.

A key area that would expand my research would be to study the experiences of working-class girls from a greater variety of ethnic backgrounds. Whilst the areas my schools were located in gave the opportunity for girls from ethnic backgrounds to be involved the volunteer sample returned all white working-class girls, except “Nina”. With further discussion it emerged two of the girls were White European, however these girls did not explore this identity in relation to their perceptions of media or their

imagined futures. For example, "Mak" and "Peeweebabee" did not identify difference through their identity as European migrants, they focused on their identity as girls primarily, with an acknowledgement of class difference, compared to media representations. This may be because their whiteness overrides their difference, which offers an interesting perspective that needs to be explored, that of shared whiteness offers a shared identity beyond that of class or gender, that girls of colour will not experience. As discussed in Section 4.6 my research is not representative of working-class girls, and the lack of ethnic diversity is a limitation, which offers an opportunity for further research.

A longitudinal study could be engaged in to understand the imagined futures and the future reality of the girls (Schroeder et al 1992), to explore how far these imagined futures become the reality for these girls, whilst also examining how far socialisation contributed to this, for example, is there an agent of socialisation that becomes more or less important to the girls as they mature.

Further to the findings in Chapter 5, which demonstrated some working-class celebrities were deemed to be acceptable or relatable (girls from Geordie Shore, or Tulisa), whilst others (Cheryl) were not, offers an opportunity to explore this further. Some working-class representations were perceived as offering relatable figures for the girls in my research, for example, girls from Geordie Shore were acceptable, whilst other working-class celebrities, for example Cheryl Cole were not. The acceptance of some, appeared to be linked to the notion of the celebrities still having to work,

despite the criticism these women received from mainstream media about their behaviour, whilst the criticism of others, was linked to behaviour and body image, which was in-line with mainstream media critique. The focus of my research did not offer the opportunity to explore this further, however this would provide an interesting insight into what allows some working-class women to be seen as relatable whilst others are not, particularly as this suggests seeing more working-class women in media would not be necessarily positive for the girls, because these need to be the "right" kind of working-class women.

My research does not allow an understanding of how boys imagine their futures, or what they perceive socialises them into those futures. Research focused on working-class boys would offer an investigation that may be complimentary to the findings of my research as this would offer an understanding of what the boys perceived socialised them, but also how far their imagined futures complied with gendered norms.

Due to the limits of this thesis there was not the opportunity to explore in detail the media use of young working-class girls. This, although discovered to inform some of the focus group discussions, as discussed in Chapter 5, was not a key objective. However, this information could have been discussed in further detail to provide a further understanding of the girls' engagement with media, and also the range of media habits the girls have and how this develops. This was not the primary focus of

my research, but some of the data that was discovered would provide the basis for further research.

8.4 Limitations

As discussed in Section 4.6 there are limitations of my methodology and research approach, however these are outweighed by the opportunities this approach offered in developing an understanding of working-class girls' perspectives and imagined futures. It is worth noting that some of the limitations of my research, (discussed below), develop from my theoretical approach and research perspective, such as the inability to represent a range of working-class girls' voices, and the lack of conclusive detail about media habits of young girls.

Whilst media diaries offered my research an opportunity to identify some media texts and platforms the girls were engaged with this did not clearly identify or demonstrate a conclusive picture of what media girls of this age engage with. This may be due to the fact there is such a range of media texts and platforms that there is no clear pattern to media usage, and additionally in today's age of narrowcasting and time-shift, whereby, choice and control over when and where media is consumed, fragments the pattern of engagement. In part, this limitation emerges from the use of media diaries with the girls, whereby these were not kept uniformly up to date, and some were not completed fully. However, these did allow for the identification of some media platforms and texts that were then discussed in focus groups, which was

the purpose for my research, as media usage was not within my objectives. From media diaries it became clear the girls used online or digital media primarily, with social media being seen as a fundamental aspect of the girls' social lives. Beyond this, the choice of media texts was varied, with the girls accessing British and American texts, from a range of channels, aimed at a variety of age groups. This does not allow for a conclusion to be drawn on media usage, or clear identification of which texts the girls' criticisms of media were aimed at. However, my research demonstrated the media literacy of the girls, and their ability to critique a range of media from their own perspectives, which answered the objectives of my research.

Linked to one of the key findings of my research, that of the power of peers in contributing to the socialisation of the girls, particularly in relation to the discussion about sexualisation and body image, the use of focus groups may have influenced the findings. As the girls identified peers as crucial to the monitoring and self-monitoring they did with regards to their appearance and performance of femininity, it may be the girls also self-monitored their contributions in the focus groups, particularly when discussing body image, sexualisation and representations in media. This is particularly relevant in Chapter 5 when discussions showed girls did the work of patriarchal society. Therefore, the girls' wish to critique representations, attempt to show how they did not conform to the sexualised images they were criticising, whilst also attempting to demonstrate how they were appropriately feminine within the confines of peer group expectations, may have added a dimension of complexity to the discussions, whereby the girls said what they perceived appropriate. Whilst this is a

concern, and a limitation as it is impossible to know how truthful the girls' answers and discussions were. The use of co-participatory interviews supports the validity of the findings from the focus groups. This was particularly evident when "Galaxy", "Dolphin" and "Shortbread" worked with me to create questions for the interviews and led the decisions about what topics they perceived were important to the girls.

The dominance of the heterosexual discourse provided little space for girls to explore alternative sexualities. Whilst it was not the aim of my research to explore sexuality, this limitation did lead to the presumption by the girls in my research that boys were of interest to all girls. The power of this assumption offers an insight into the presumed heterosexuality young girls have, and the dominance of heteronormative discourses. Whilst attempting to engage an intersectional approach my research has been able to acknowledge how other power structures contribute to the working-class girls lives, however due to the constraints of the time and length of my research sexuality was not explored.

My research is not representative of all working-class girls, rather it provides a snapshot of the particular experiences of a small group of 11-and 12-year-old working-class girls from two locations in the Midlands. My research did not set out to offer a representative sample, rather the exploratory research aim attempted to offer those girls that volunteered a voice and develop an understanding of their position. This therefore excludes some working-class girls' experiences and voices. This therefore does not offer an opportunity to hear the voices of working-class girls from a range of

ethnic backgrounds. The lack of discussion about the dominance of "whiteness" was additionally a weakness (as has been discussed throughout the thesis), however this was in part due to the aims and focus of my research, but also, I was still learning to discuss "whiteness" in this context. This invisibility of "whiteness" needs further discussion and as mentioned in Section 8.2 offers further opportunities for research.

Focusing on two areas in the UK that offered the potential for most of the participants to come from a Traditional Working Class or Emergent Service Worker backgrounds (Savage et al 2013) does not allow for the consideration of how working-class girls negotiate their position when surrounded by the middle-class norms in media and a mix of middle-class and working-class peers.

A final limitation that may be commented on, is my research does not offer any absolute answers. As a piece of exploratory research that sought to hear the voices of the participants, this reports and analyses those responses. However, this does not afford the reader a solution to questions, but rather offers an insight into how the girls perceive their futures and the role they perceive media may play in shaping these future expectations. The findings, as discussed above, demonstrate the girls do not recognise media as a crucial socialising agent in their lives, rather peers, mothers, other women relatives, are perceived to shape how they imagine their futures. However, added to this is the perception that media may shape the expectations and beliefs of others, whilst "other's" beliefs (peers, parents, wider society) may act upon the girls in so far as creating barriers to overcome, expectations to negotiate and

norms to challenge. This offers areas for further research and poses opportunities for wider exploration, but true to the nature of interpretivist research does not offer a measurable, absolute conclusion, rather an interpretation of the world through the voices of these particular working-class girls.

8.5 Contribution

My research is a productive return to socialist feminism of the so-called "Second Wave", specifically Juliet Mitchell's discussions about the spheres of oppression women and girls experience. This re-focuses on gender and class and contributes to academic debates and understandings of working-class girls' experiences, not just in terms of Sexualisation but also the spheres of work inside and outside of the home, and the roles of motherhood and childcare. In summary the key findings are; an understanding of how working-class girls perceive and negotiate media as an agent of socialisation; how working-class girls engage with the sexualisation thesis; understanding how working-class girls imagine their futures, both in terms of Production and Reproduction and what they perceive shapes their expectations for these futures.

A key contribution is returning to socialist feminism as an opportunity to re-engage with gender and class. However, in addition to this my research also contributes significantly to furthering discussions of class linked to regionality. Regional identity has been shown to be a consideration of the girls' when considering their potential

opportunities and imagining their working futures, which furthers the intersection of identities the girls experience. Alongside this, and a contribution through its invisibility, is that of the dominance and lack of ability to "see" "whiteness". As the girls did not consider "whiteness" as part of their identity and did not "see" the dominance of "whiteness" in media this offers a contribution to discussions about the multiple intersecting vectors of working-class girls, and also provides a point for further research.

One of the key contributions from my research is further developing the understanding of young working-class girls as media literate, as discussed in earlier academic work such as, Duit and van Zoonen (2011), Egan and Hawkes (2008), and Jackson and Goddard (2015). However, linked to this, and supporting research by Lamb et al (2015), Brinkman et al (2014) is the contribution the girls in my research took part in "othering", (third-person effect Davison 1983), whereby they perceived themselves as able to resist dominant media messages, whilst others may be at risk. The girls perceived this would shape what "others" expected of girls. This links to the balancing act discussed above in Section 8.2, whereby the girls perceived they were balancing their ability to be critical and resist media messages, whilst needing to comply with the expectations of others, whose perceptions and expectations were shaped by media.

Linked to the contribution from my research discussed above, my research offers a further contribution to the discussion of media socialisation, as it gives evidence media

frames what the girls think about. This is shown through the focus of the girls on sexualisation, a theme reflected in media and wider societal discourse, that the girls would often return to. As argued by Cohen (1963) media "…may not be successful in telling people what to think, they are stunningly successful in telling us what to think about." McCombs and Shaw (1972: p. 177). From the focus of the girls' discussions, and how they often returned to discussing sexualisation this suggested media framed their focus. This focus not only shapes what the girls, and others, discuss but in turn neglects the need to focus on other inequalities such as division of gender roles in the family and work. Chapter 5 demonstrates that while the girls discuss sexualisation, and wish to challenge this representation of women, they are less ready to discuss or challenge other inequalities faced by women, societally or through media. Although, as was demonstrated in Chapter 6 and 7, the girls were prepared to argue for equality at work and in the home, this was not their first concern. This may be due to sexualisation, as mentioned in Sections 3.1 and 5.5, being part of the girls' present and therefore a priority now, whilst their imagined future work and domestic lives will be a priority at a later point. However, as media frames these debates, and the focus is on sexualisation, the gender norms in work and the family continue unfettered, without equal attention or discussion that provides opportunities to challenge them.

Despite sexualisation being part of the girls present, it was clear from my research the girls could and did imagine futures outside of this discourse. A significant contribution from my research is developing an understanding about the imagined futures of young working-class girls, how they create a space for imagining these futures when

discussions are focused on sexualisation, and their considerations when imagining their futures. The girls in my research demonstrated a clear awareness of the considerations that were necessary when considering higher education, work and children in contrast with suggestions, "…Young women may have little conception of how their choices carry long-term financial and career consequences, which also bear on a future that includes having children…" (Kanji and Hupka-Brunner 2014: p. 136). My research demonstrates the focus the girls had on their future work (Section 7.2.1.1), whereby they wished to prioritise work and becoming independent, before having children. This demonstrated working-class girls do not have lower "aspirations" compared to middle-class girls, (Allen and Hollingworth 2011; Gordon et al 2005), and they do not prioritise children or identify with the "primarily mother position" (Duncan et al 2003).

This contribution from my research demonstrates the girls were focused on developing an independent, autonomous futures for themselves, which would prioritise work and education. Throughout these discussions the "can-do" discourse (Harris 2004; Thomson et al 2003) and neoliberal notions of "choice" (Brannen and Nilsen 2002) did exist, at least on the surface, with the girls initially discussing potential futures as open to them irrespective of class and gender. However, when discussions developed the girls reflected on their gender, class and regional position which often led them to identify potential barriers that may restrict them (See Sections 6.3.3 and 6.3.4). "…Despite the rhetoric of individualism, our relationships lock us into places, responsibilities and obligations that are gendered and classed." (Thomson et al 2003:

p. 45). My research contributes to developing an understanding of how working-class girls imagine their futures, with consideration and understanding of how their gender, class and regional identity may hamper them, showing an awareness of the "remnants of choice", (Gottfredson & Lapan 1997; Archer et al 2010; Correll 2001; Budgeon 2015: Harlan and Berheide 1994), offered by their unique position as working-class girls. From a feminist perspective this offers a contribution to the provision of careers advice young people receive, with the need for young working-class girls being advised early on to ensure they do not restrict their options, but also ways to overcome barriers. Using the contributions from my research may offer insights into how best to challenge the barriers working-class girls face and attempt to transform the gender and class inequalities the girls were aware of. "Feminist researchers…ultimate aim is to contribute to a transformation of gender relations and the gender system." (Crawford and Kimmel 1999: p. 5).

When considering the girls' imagined futures another contribution from my research is the centrality of mothers or women relatives to the girls' lives. This supports research by Martin (2009), Crompton (2006) and Duits and van Zoonen (2011) who suggest mothers are key to the socialisation of girls. As discussed in Sections 6.3.2 and 7.3.1 mothers were perceived as important by the girls in terms of shaping them into their expected or imagined futures. However, this was not as straightforward as suggesting mothers and other women relatives provided the girls with role models or the girls copied these women. Rather mothers and other women at times provided examples of womanhood the girls wished to emulate and at other times mothers, in particular,

offered the girls examples of what they did not wish to be, or futures they did not wish to have. "Children do not necessarily absorb what their mothers tell them without alteration, resistance, and integration with other cultural ideas and knowledge." (Martin 2009: p. 193). This highlights the complexity of the girls' relationships with their mothers as socialising agents, and the girls' ability to resist the norms they are subjected to.

The contributions offered by my research are all important and further develop academic understanding of working-class girls, their futures and their perception of media. However, the fundamental contribution of my research comes from igniting debates on how class and gender intersect to shape the experiences and expectations of working-class girls by returning to socialist feminist thinking from the so-called "Second Wave". As shown through my research, "economic analysis of women's subordination…cannot be fully developed without *simultaneous* [original italics] attention to the structure of particular forms of sexual ideology, as they maintain and reproduce relations of domination and subordination in the productive and reproductive sphere." (Bland et al 1978: p. 172). Forty years later and this remains the case with women's subordination linked to traditional ideologies surrounding gender. Although the girls did not have the language to discuss class as a concept, their discussions often pointed to an understanding of class inequalities and their position within the class structure. The girls were aware of the "…unacknowledged normality of the middle class..." (Savage 2003: p. 536- 537) and showed an explicit awareness of their social status having an impact on their imagined futures, with their class

influencing their life chances (Bottero in Sveinnson 2009). As highlighted by Wood and Skeggs (2011) class inequality is increasing, and is, "…is deeply embedded in everyday interactions,…the stuff of conflict, both internal and external…" (Reay 2005: p. 924).

The discussions with the girls were shaped by gender and class, and this was demonstrated through the "balancing act" they perceive they face, and the complexity and contradictions they imagine in their futures, and experience in their present. The girls were aware they faced challenges due to their gender, which led them to face conflicting messages about femininity, sexualisation, women in work and the home, and contributed to their understanding of balancing their imagined futures with the gendered norms they understood. However, the girls were also aware they did not share the same attributes as many women and girls they saw in media, they were the "Other" in relation to the middle-class norm, girls that were either invisible or demonised, with no place for "girls like us". The class difference added a layer of complexity to the girls' discussions, and their attempts to identify their position. They were not "posh" girls, or "chavs", or "career" women that have it all, they did not belong to the "ideal" family, they were "normal" girls, yet in media normal girls did not exist. This lack of recognition links to arguments by Skeggs (1997) about recognition and at times working-class women's inability or refusal to recognise themselves. The working-class girls in my research did not recognise themselves in media. "Refusal to be recognized meant a great deal of energy was spent displaying that they *are not* that which is expected…Performativity was only one of many techniques deployed in the processes of identification…" (Skeggs 1997: p. 164). The already narrow range of

gender representations were reduced to almost invisible representations of working-class girls from their local regions. Whatever future the girls imagined, they have little opportunity to "see" girls like them in that role, which may be why they do not perceive media as socialising them, because they do not see themselves, however as argued by Skeggs (1997) the categories used to identify them as "white" working-class girls are imposed on them by me, rather than an outcome from their own subjectivity, "…I impose categories onto them which they use very differently to produce their own subjectivity…." (Skeggs 1997: p. 165), which may suggest how I perceive or label the girls is not how they perceive themselves. It was clear from the discussions they do not perceive themselves in line with the gendered or classed images they see which are aligned to the structural positionings that have existed for working-class women, however this does not detract from the work the girls do to ensure "…they *are not* that which is expected" (Skeggs 1997: p. 164). However, despite the lack of recognition of the girls in seeing themselves it was clear from the discussions gender, class, and regionality shaped their experiences and awareness of themselves, and therefore if research does not engage with class and gender the position of working-class girls is obscured in academia as well as in media and society.

Whilst the girls often discussed resisting gender norms and adopted a feminist tone to argue against gender inequality, they discussed their class position as providing barriers or as evidence of their difference, rather than something they had the potential to overcome. The gender and class of the girls interacts to place them in a unique position, which poses a complex set of oppressions that interconnect through

the girls' engagement with media, sexualisation and their imagined futures in Production and Reproduction. My research has demonstrated there continues to be a need to consider all of Mitchell's (2015) spheres of subjection to understand the position of women and girls, and these spheres of subjection overlap to create oppressions that are distinctive to working-class girls.

9 Appendices:

9.1 Appendix 1: TV Consumption

TV	Eastenders The Apprentice X-Factor Catchphrase The Next Step Benidorm Life of a four year old I'm a celebrity Cuffs KC Undercover Tipping point Coronation Street Simpsons Paul O'Grady for the love of dogs Only Fools and Horses Porridge Holby City Birds of a Feather Fawlty Towers Danger Mouse Mothers Nightmare Wifes Nightmare Britain's got Talent The Chase ITV News Arthur Emmerdale Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles Fringe Gravity Falls The Amazing World of Gumball Regular Show Friends Gymnastics programmes Assault course programmes	BBC News Storage Hunters The Big Bang Theory Neighbours Paul O'Grady show Paul O'Grady Animal orphans Futurama The Voice Walking Dead Supervet Zoo How I met your mother Melissa and Joey Baby Daddy Rude Tube Rude-ish Tube CSI Miami and New York NCIS Hollyoaks Mrs Browns Boys Come Dine with me Downton Abbey The Next Step Jessie Liv and Maddie Family Guy American Dad Officially Amazing Dennis the Menace Fleabag Monkeyface Max Steel Pretty Little Liars Big Cook Little Cook Miranda Ski Sunday Bones Ex on the Beach

<table>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mako Mermaids
Teen Titans go
Adventure Time
Casualty
Home and Away
Good Morning Britain
Top Gear
The Dumping Ground
5News
Starz TV
Tracey Beaker
Help My Supply Teacher is Magic
Junior Masterchef
Horse Doctor
Jersey Shore
Take me Out
Geordie Shore
The Undateables
Horrid Henry
Sidekick
The Office
Glee
Broadchurch
Lee Evans
Jennifer Elliston Dance School
Death Note
South Park
Sam and Cat
The Librarians</td>
<td>Russell Howard
Cleveland Show
Educating Joey Essex
Big Brother
Sherlock
90210
Doctor Who
Criminal Minds
Peppa Pig
Rizzolie and Izzles
Inbetweeners
Murder She Wrote
Wolf Wood
Scooby Doo
Law and Order
The Only Way is Essex
Waterloo Road
Our Girl
Hannibal
Victorious
Austin and Dooy
Crystal Maze
You've Been Framed
Takishis Castle
Pointless
QI
Buffy the Vampire Slayer</td>
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9.2 Appendix 2: Film Consumption

Film Title	Age certificate
Polar Express	U
Up!	PG
Big Momma 1 and 2	Both 12
Nanny McPhee	U
The Grinch	PG
Teen Beach 1 and 2	U
Elf	PG
Spectre	12
Hairspray	PG
Memoirs of a Geisha	12
Enchanted	PG
Home Alone	PG
Finding Nemo	U
Sky High	PG
Spy Kids	U
Jurassic World	12
Pitch Perfect 1 and 2	Both 12
Sound of Music	U
Mary Poppins	U
Hunger Games	15
Pixels	12
Minions	U
Big Hero 6	PG
Pan	PG
Maleficent	PG
My Babysitter's a Vampire	12
Despicable Me 1 and 2	U
Harry Potter	PG + 12
Penelope	U
Fast and Furious – all films	12
Twilight	12
Jurassic Park	PG
The Last Witch Hunter	12A
Pirates of the Caribbean	12
Lord of the Rings	12
Hobbit	12
Deep Blue Sea	12
Eight Below	PG
Inside Out	U
Forrest Gump	12
Dark Shadows	12

Cinderella	U
Poltergeist	15
Descendants	15
Frozen	PG
Lion King	U
Shaun of the Dead	15
Angus, Thongs and Perfect Snogging	12
A Christmas Carol	PG
Santa's Little Helper	PG
Mama Mia	PG
Wild Child	12
Get Santa	PG
The Chronicles of Narnia	PG
Chappie	15
Eragon	PG
The Boy in the Dress (TV Movie)	PG
Nightmare on Elm Street	18
Walking on Sunshine	12
Step Brothers	15
Clueless	12
Mean Girls	12
White Chicks	15
The Little Mermaid	U
Titanic	12
Honey I Blew Up the Kid	U
Secret Garden	U
Rapunzel	12
Love Actually	15
Prom	U
Princess Diaries	U
Bee Movie	U
The Ring	15
Child's Play	15
Just Go With It	12
Bad Teacher	15
Grown Ups 1 and 2	12
Annabelle	15
Paranormal Activity 2, 3, 4	15
MAMA	15
Scream 1, 2, 3	18
Love and Honour	12
Parent Trap	PG
The Odd Life of Timothy Green	U
Monsters University	U
Step Up	PG

St Trinians	12
Hot Fuzz	15
Armageddon	15
Skyfall	12
Woman in Black	15
Marley and Me	PG
Fault in Our Stars	12
Winnie the Poo	U
Wizard of Oz	U
Marvel Avengers	12
Insidious	15
Enchanted	PG
I Know what you did last summer (video)	15
The Conjuring	15
Dumb and Dumber	12
Ouija	15
Guardians of the Galaxy	12
Human Centipede	18
Scary Movie	18
Keith Lemon The Movie	18
SAW 1, 2 3,	18
Private Peaceful	12
Alvin and the Chipmunks	U
Bambi	U
The Shining	15
Sleepover	PG
The Grudge	15
How to train your Dragon	PG
Boy in the Striped Pyjamas	12

9.3 Appendix 3: YouTube consumption

Zoella	Fashion / Beauty / Vlogger
Sprinkle of Glitter	Beauty / Fashion / Vlogger
Pointlessblog	Interviews / Vlogger
ThatcherJoe	Vlogger / Pranks
Caspar Lee	Vlogger / Pranks
Oliwhite	Vlogger / Pranks
Roman Atwood	Vlogger / Pranks
Tanya Burr	Fashion / Beauty / Vlogger
Jim Chapman	Vlogger / Challenges
Vixella	Beauty / Fashion / games / lifestyle
Popularmmos	Gamers (Minecraft)
Pixiwoo	Beauty / fashion
Crazy Russian Hacker	Life hacks
Seven Super Girls (SSG)	Tween beauty / lifestyle
Marcus Butler	Vlogger / Health
Naomi Smart	Vlogger / Fashion / Food
Nikki Tutorials	Beauty / fashion
Shaaanxo	Beauty / fashion
Lauren Curtis	Beauty / fashion
Joe Weller	Vlogger / Music / FIFA
Gabriella	Lifestyle
Lucy and Lydia	Beauty / fashion / music
Sacconejolys	Family Vlogging
Pewdiepie	Gaming Videos
Cutiepie	General interest
Fun2draw	Art challenges
LD Shadow Lady	Gaming Videos
Jackseptieye	Gamer / vlogger
Miniminter 7	Comedy shorts / gamer
Bezingha	Linked to Miniminter 7 similar content
Zerkaahd	Real life videos and challenges
Bf v gf	Challenges / pranks
Pup	Band
KSI	Real life videos / rapper
Vikkstar 123	Gaming channel
Wrotetoshow	Challenges
Tbjzl	Gamer
Fifa Manny	Gamer
Calfreezy	Real life
Callux	Linked to Miniminter 7 and Bezingha
Smallish beans	Gamer
Miranda sings	Vlogger / Joke Music Videos

Laura Devaney	Crafting
Tyler Oackly	Challenges and fun videos
Will Derbyshire	Artistic videos and conversational clips
Omgitfire foxx	Gaming commentator
Joey Graceffa	Gaming commentator
Yammyxoxo	Gaming commentator
Furious Destroyer	Minecraft gamer
Stampylongnose	Gaming
Stamplylovely world	Gaming and commentator
iBallisticsquid	Minecraft gamer
Supergirlygamer	Gamer
Gymnastics floor music	Gymnastics
Music Videos	Music videos
Minecraft stuff	Minecraft gamers
Bratayley	Family fun vloggers
Shaytards	Family fun vloggers
Haschal Sisters	Dancing and music vloggers
David Parody	Makeup
Wolfie Raps	Rapper / vlogger
Everyday Jim	Lifestyle / reality vlogger
Its ye boi	Vlogger
Deej Haye	Interior designer, makeup
TGFBro	Pranks
Adam Waithe	Pranks / lifestyle vlogger
Jake Boys	Pranks
Jake Mitchell	Comedy
Saffron Barker	Lifestyle / beauty
Casey Barker	Comedy vlogs and challenges
Eloise Mitchell	Art / makeup
Merrell Twins	Lifestyle / fashion
Levi Jed Murphy	Comedy
Alfie Deyes	Lifestyle / comedy / often with Zoella
My Life as Eva	Comedy / music
Alisha Marie	Pranks/ lifestyle / beauty
Mamamia makeup	Beauty
Desi Perkins	Beauty

9.4 Appendix 4: Social Media consumption

Instagram	Age Limit of 13
Snapchat	Age Limit of 13
Facebook	Age Limit of 13
Pinterest	Age Limit of 13
Tumblr	Age Limit of 13
Vine	Was Rated 12... Now rated 17+ by Apple
OOVOO	Age Limit of 13
Skype	Legal Age to be bound to a contract
Kik	Age Limit of 17
Whatsapp	Age Limit of 16
Messenger	Age Limit of 13
Star Stable	Parents Responsible for Under 18
Pottermore	Age Limit of 13
Accapella	No Idea
Twitter	Doesn’t ask for an age

9.5 Appendix 5: Music Consumption

James Bay John Newman Adam Levine Ed Sheeran Megan Trainor Charlie Puth Ariana Grande Scouting for Girls Justin Bieber David Guetta Adele Sam Smith Little Mix Nicki Minaj George Ezra Walk the Moon Fall out boy Tiesto Calvin Harris Avici Martin Garrix Swedish House Mafia One Direction 5 seconds of summer Becky G Fifth Harmony OMI Jessie J Bring me the Horizon Taylor Swift Marron 5 Pink Pharrel Williams Jess Glynne Olly Murs Bruno Mars Fleur East Ben Haenow Classical Music Whip Nae Nae Twist	Sigala Lady Lashurr Beyonce Sentinel Olly Murs Michael Jackson Overtones Soul Classics Album Usher Kind Ink Nathan Sykes Fleur East Goldigger Trey Songz Rita Ora Bruno Mars Tinnie Tempah Fuse Odg Shaggy Wham Mariah Carey Grace ft G Eazy Leona Lewis Little Mix David Guetta Fetty Wap Blackstreet Shaun Mendes Jason Derulo Kelly Clarkson Chris Brown Dlow

9.6 Appendix 6: Gaming Consumption

Minecraft Little big Planet Fifa Star Stable Cooking fever Friv Dragon City Disney Free falls My Talking Angela Peggle Blast Temple run Kaleidoscope SIMS 1 - 4 Agario Games for girls Frip Kizi Silvergames Just Dance Donkey Kong The Devil Within Indie Games Skyrim Five Nights at Freddies Slender	Reaity Sonic EXE Town of Salem Corpse Party Pokemon Love Tester Love Meter / Love Calculator Pearls Peril Kizzi Games Habbo Hotel Movie Star Planet Rust Counter Strike Global Offensive Team Fortress Flappy Birds Angry Birds Spike Cars Rat on a Scooter Circle Arrows MMM Fingers Disney Infinity Brain Training Halo 3

9.7 Appendix 7: Other Media Consumption

Newspapers	The Sun The Daily Mail Ilkeston Advertiser
Radio	Capital FM Radio One Radio 2 Kiss Gem 106 Heart Planet Rock Kerrang Smooth Radio
Magazines	Whats on TV Shout! Top of the Pops Go Girls Tiger Beat Pony Horse and Rider Rock Sound Soaps Kerrang We Love Pop

Websites	New Look Google River Island Shopping sites A-Z lyrics Metro lyrics Ebay Amazon Acapella (Music app) Smule (Magic piano app) Netflix Games for Girls Spotify Horse Horse and Country Pogo Boohoo Topshop Select Creepy Pasta Putlocker Odeon Cinema Footlocker Hollister Ted Baker Now TV Victoria's Secret Youtube Wikipedia Buzzfeed Kerry Ledger School of Dance Ebay

9.8 Appendix 8: Ethics Checklist

Bournemouth University

Research Ethics Checklist

Reference Id	3181
Status	Approved
Date Approved	23/04/2014

Researcher Details

Name	Georgina Newton
School	Media School
Status	Postgraduate Research (PhD, MPhil, DProf, DEng)
Course	Postgraduate Research
Have you received external funding to support this research project?	No

Project Details

Title	An investigation into what role the media plays in the gender socialisation process of young working class girls.
Proposed Start Date	11/05/2014
Proposed End Date	03/07/2015

Summary (including detail on background methodology, sample, outcomes, etc.)

The research proposes to examine role the media plays in the socialisation process of young working class females, with a particular focus on the media representations of women in the workplace and the post-educational goals of these young females. This seeks to question how young working class females engage with the media; how they perceive women in the workplace are represented within media texts they use; and investigate if there are any links between the media representations and their own future aims. The research is motivated by the continuing inequality within the workplace between men and women, including evidence this segregation emerges with educational choices and develops further as choices about employment, family commitments and roles within society are made. The research aims to develop an understanding of the role of the media in the development of young working class

female's ambitions. The focus of the study will be eleven and twelve year old females from the classes identified by Savage et al (2013); the 'traditional working class', 'precariat' and 'emergent service workers', these categories remove the reliance on occupation as a class distinction, using social, cultural and economic capital to identify classes within the UK. The focus of the research will be located within areas identified by Savage et al (2013) that have a high population of the desired class categories to maximise potential for participants to fall within these categories. Schools within these areas will be approached to gain access to the age group. Areas identified include traditional industrial areas (most populated by 'traditional working class and precariat', or urban "cheaper" areas, (Savage et al 2013) locations within cities, particularly the centre of London (emergent service workers). These areas will be selected as there will be the highest proportion of and potential to reach the desired participants. However due to the sampling within schools in areas such as these, this may collect data from young girls outside of the intended demographic, all girls that volunteer and agree to participate will be included, and all data will be included within the study and their voices acknowledged within the report equally with those from the desired demographic. When analysing the data participants 'class' will be identified according to the social, cultural and economic measurements according to Savage et al's study (2013).Schools will act as the gatekeepers, with the researcher approaching schools in appropriate areas to gain access. Participants will be asked to volunteer to take part in the study, due to the age of the participants assent will be sought, with the details and requirements of the research explained and participation information given out. Consent will be sought from the parents / guardians of the young girls due to the age of the participants.The research will be mixed methods, combining media diaries, for the participants to record their media usage, analysis of these media texts, use of a structured questionnaire for potential participants to identify if they would be categorised within one of the above mentioned class categories, and focus groups.Media Diaries – to identify what media texts 11 and 12 year old working class females are engaging with. Participants will keep these for a period of a month to identify media texts and platforms they interact with. This will enable analysis of these media texts to identify representations of women and provide a discussion focus for the focus groups.A structured questionnaire will be distributed to the participant's parents / guardians, to identify the socio-economic category and demographic details of the young females to be used to identify the class of the participant and later to be analysed to identify links between class, the media and future goals.Co-created analysis of media texts: This will initially be an analysis of the representations of women in the media texts and platforms identified by the media diaries. This will examine the range of representations of females; the roles women are portrayed in; the representations of women in the workplace and dominant stereotypes of women evident. The development of this analysis will take place during the focus groups to understand how the participants negotiate a meaning from the representations and how they decode the representations of women in the texts / platforms.Focus groups – 4 young working class females per group. Recorded / filmed to discuss and fulfil the primary aims of the research into young female's media engagement, perception of media representations and future ambitions, and to identify if there is a relationship between their goals and their engagement with the media.

External Ethics Review

Research Literature

Does your research require external review through the NHS National Research Ethics Service (NRES) or through another external Ethics Committee?	No

Is your research solely literature based?	No

Human Participants

Question	Answer
Will your research project involve interaction with human participants as primary sources of data (e.g. interview, observation, original survey)?	Yes
Does your research specifically involve participants who are considered vulnerable (i.e. children, those with cognitive impairment, those in unequal relationships—such as your own students, prison inmates, etc.)?	Yes
Is a DBS check check required?	Yes
Does the study involve participants age 16 or over who are unable to give informed consent (i.e. people with learning disabilities)? NOTE: All research that falls under the auspices of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 must be reviewed by NHS NRES.	No
Will the study require the co-operation of a gatekeeper for initial access to the groups or individuals to be recruited? (i.e. students at school, members of self-help group, residents of Nursing home?)	Yes
Will it be necessary for participants to take part in your study without their knowledge and consent at the time (i.e. covert observation of people in non-public places)?	No
Will the study involve discussion of sensitive topics (i.e. sexual activity, drug use, criminal activity)?	No
Are drugs, placebos or other substances (i.e. food substances, vitamins) to be administered to the study participants or will the study involve invasive, intrusive or potentially harmful procedures of any kind?	No
Will tissue samples (including blood) be obtained from participants? Note: If the answer to this question is 'yes' you will need to be aware of obligations under the Human Tissue Act 2004.	No
Could your research induce psychological stress or anxiety, cause harm or have negative consequences for the participant or researcher (beyond the risks encountered in normal life)?	No
Will your research involve prolonged or repetitive testing?	No
Will the research involve the collection of audio materials?	Yes
Is this audio collection solely for the purposes of transcribing/summarising and will not be used in any outputs (publication, dissemination, etc.) and will not be made publicly available?	Yes
Will your research involve the collection of photographic or video materials?	Yes

Question	Answer
Will financial or other inducements (other than reasonable expenses and compensation for time) be offered to participants?	No

Please explain below why your research project involves the above mentioned criteria (be sure to explain why the sensitive criterion is essential to your project's success). Give a summary of the ethical issues and any action that will be taken to address these. Explain how you will obtain informed consent (and from whom) and how you will inform the participant(s) about the research project (i.e. participant information sheet). A sample consent form and participant information sheet can be found on the Research Ethics website.

The focus of the research is the role of the media in the socialisation of young working class females, therefore 11 and 12 year old females are the focus of the study. Due to the age of the participants it is proposed schools are used as appropriate gatekeepers. The participants will have the opportunity to voluntarily share media texts / platforms they use and any photographic or video footage they have either accessed or created, this will / may form part of the media diaries however could vary between each participant depending on what they access / use and

if they wish to include it in discussions. As such this will become part of the media that is co-analysed. This will remain confidential, and will only be accessed with the permission of the participants and parents / guardians. This will be explained when initially requesting consent.Ethical issues: As the research is proposed to use schools as gatekeepers permission will be sought initially from the schools. This will include gaining consent from the relevant principals, informing the school of the focus / purpose or the research, and requesting permission to use the school as a location for the focus groups. A DBS will be completed as required when working with young people.As the proposed participants are classed as vulnerable, assent will be sought from them to ensure their wish to take part in the research. Consent will be sought from parents / guardians. This will be done through appropriate assent / consent forms with detailed information about the research, funding and purpose of the research. In addition to this all participants will have the research explained to them, ensuring participation is voluntary, informed and they have an understanding of the purpose of the research, this will be done with the distribution of a participant information sheet but also verbally to answer any questions participants may have and due to the age to ensure points are clear. Permission will include the use of videoing the focus groups to ensure accuracy in recording contributions and discussions, this will also allow for the checking of accuracy when analysing the data as the footage will be transferred to the analysis software and coded, rather than transcribing which could lose detail.Media diaries may identify participation in / with age-inappropriate media texts / platforms (eg Facebook has an age restriction of 13 however research suggests 50% of 10 year olds have a Facebook account), this will involve researcher evaluation of the potential harm to participants, (child protection issues), parental consent for the participants to engage with this, and guaranteeing privacy. This point is raised on the parent / guardian participation information sheet, to ensure parents / guardians are aware the participants will not be challenged over their use and engagement with these platforms, rather the researcher will use this, should it arise to discuss the need to ensure personal safety, privacy online (including guidance on online privacy settings) and the need for age restrictions on media texts. The researcher has received child protection training and worked with young people and online education, therefore will evaluate risks and inform parents / guardians / schools if there is a perceived child protection issue.Questionnaires to identify demographic details will remain confidential and will be used to generate an appropriate sample.Focus groups – proposed to take place within schools as this is where participants will feel comfortable and surroundings familiar. Alternatively a participant’s home or community centre / space, where the participants feel comfortable and is in a safe location with organised transport to and from the location. Permission for use of the location needs to be sought. Timings of the focus groups will ensure these do not impact on education. The groupings to be negotiated with participants to ensure participants are comfortable with the peers they are discussing the topic with. The timing of the focus groups will need to take place outside of school hours to avoid interrupting the education of the participants.Confidentiality will be guaranteed with the research data being used for the purpose of the research, and publications linked to the research. All video footage will remain confidential and only the researcher / supervisors will have access to this. Identities of participants will protected with pseudonyms chosen by participants and used when analysing and reporting data.The use of co-creational methods will allow participants a voice and collaboration with the findings. It is proposed to revisit the focus groups to check details / analysis and develop a rapport in an attempt to ensure participants are comfortable and feel their views are appropriately represented.

Final Review

Will you have access to personal data that allows you to identify individuals OR access to confidential corporate or company data (that is not covered by confidentiality terms within an agreement or by a separate confidentiality agreement)?	No

Will your research involve experimentation on any of the following: animals, animal tissue, genetically modified organisms?	No
Will your research take place outside the UK (including any and all stages of research: collection, storage, analysis, etc.)?	No
Please use the below text box to highlight any other ethical concerns or risks that may arise during your research that have not been covered in this form.	

9.9 Appendix 9: Field Notes for Bebb's School

Bebb's School is an Academy which specialised in art / creative subjects – however at the time of being there the school was going through cuts and reducing some of the art/ humanities subjects like Media.

The School is located in the East Midlands, an area with above average levels of Traditional Working Class and Emergent Service workers, and was situated close to two areas with high levels of the Precariat (Savage et al 2013). The area had one of the highest levels of deprivation within the borough and falls within the 10% of the most deprived areas of England (https://observatory.derbyshire.gov.uk).

The school had one new building (opened during the research period), the other buildings were very much older. The school had been in special measures, and therefore was under scrutiny from Ofsted. The school went through a change of Head during the research period. The girls clearly felt a sense of community within the School, and the Year 7 and 8 girls were comfortable with each other. Sports and drama productions helped form this sense of community.

The girls did not like the area and talked a lot about drug use in the area, or lack of jobs, with many people claiming benefits. Although the girls did not vocalise the term "class" they could and did identify people that were different, either higher or lower

on the socio-economic scale. They would often refer to areas in the town that were "rough". The girls often ventured into the bigger towns in the area.

9.10 Appendix 10: Field Notes for Mikes' School

"Mike's" School, is located in the West Midlands. This was an Academy and part of a Multi-Academy Trust. The School had been in special measures, with the Ofsted report requiring a focus on literacy and numeracy. The School had introduced reading at the beginning of lessons and tutorial times focused on reading, and had improved the rating of the School. The library was a clear focal point during the School day with students having lessons in the library but also changing books frequently and being encouraged to challenge themselves through reading.

This school was located in an area within the top 15% of deprived areas within England (https://www.gov.uk/) and had a high proportion of Traditional Working Class and Emergent Service Workers.

The school buildings were purpose built. A sixth form provision had been developed within the town and was growing, with the focus on the students continuing their education within the School rather than moving to college. There was a clear division between years in the school with the Year 7 and 8 girls not being comfortable with each other.

The girls talked of areas near the school that were "rough" and did not tend to venture out of the local area. The contact within the School also commented on few students

ventured outside of the immediate area, even when older, and therefore had little experience of the larger towns in the area.

9.11 Appendix 11: Introductory Letter to parents

The Media and Communication Faculty
Weymouth House
Bournemouth University
Fern Barrow
Talbot Campus
Poole
Dorset
BH12 5BB

Tel: 07886 741701
Email: gnewton@bournemouth.ac.uk

5 November 2015

Dear Parent / Guardian

I am writing to you further to meeting with students at the XXXX Academy today (5 November 2015).

I am a research student at Bournemouth University and am hoping to undertake some research at the XXXX working alongside XXXX. This research is looking at media use and young girl's goals for their future and will lead to the completion of my PhD thesis. I am hoping this research will also contribute to the girl's understanding of the media and options for their futures.

I introduced the research to Year 7 and 8 girls today and have asked for volunteers. Your daughter has expressed an interest in taking part in my research, therefore I enclose further details of the focus of the research, information for both yourself and your daughter and consent forms if you agree to participate. All girls that wish to participate need parental / guardian consent, are free to withdraw at any time and all parents / guardians will be kept up to date with the progress and stages of the research.

If you are willing to give your consent for your daughter to participate, please read and sign the consent forms and return these to either XXXX, your daughters form tutor, or the reception at the school.

I would really appreciate if you would consider allowing your daughter to participate should she be willing. Please do not hesitate to contact me either by email or phone if you have any questions or concerns.

Yours sincerely

Georgina Newton
PhD Researcher / Part-time Lecturer
The Media and Communication Faculty
Bournemouth University

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9.12 Appendix 12: Introduction of Research for teachers.

An investigation in to what role the media plays in the socialisation process of young girls.

The research is aiming to examine the role the media plays in the socialisation of young girls and their post-educational goals, with a particular focus on the media representations of women in the workplace. This seeks to question how young girls engage with media and how they perceive women in the workplace are represented within these texts. It will investigate if they believe there are any links between media representations and their own future aims.

The research is motivated by continuing gender inequalities within the workplace and evidence that suggests segregation emerges from educational choices. This research will examine how far young girls perceive they have choices and seeks to identify if the media contributes to their perceptions of the future / role models / and choices.

The focus on media that young girls engage with, develops from the persistence of stereotypical representations of women offered by popular culture, whereby women continue to be confined to a narrow range of representations with traditional feminine values evident. The analysis of the media will emphasise the representation of women working outside of the home; the messages and values attached to the role of women and the occupations women are shown in. Previous research has examined the importance of role models, parental influence and academic ability for young women when choosing careers but has neglected to focus on the media or the impact of social class on these goals.

The focus on girls between the ages of 11 and 12 is proposed as this is prior to GCSE options and also an age where young people have been shown to be aware of individual gender and class status and how this shapes future options. The research is focusing on working-class females (however will not exclude girls from a range of backgrounds if willing to participate). The proposed focus on working-class girls is due to the lack of visibility of these females in much research and particularly from research into career aspirations or future goals. There is a wish to move away from research focused on STEM careers and acknowledge a range of young girls and range of future goals. The research is aiming to give these girls a voice to express their future aims and the understanding, readings and reception of media.

The proposed methodology would require the participants to keep a diary of their media use, for approximately a month. This would enable the research to identify what media forms, platforms and texts the participants are using and to then discuss these with the participants. The main stage of the research would be undertaking focus groups. It is expected that the researcher would need to meet with the

participants prior to the research starting and then two (possibly three) further meetings after the media diaries have been kept, to discuss the representations of women in the media, how the girls deconstruct the media texts, what they want to do when they leave school, and who they perceive as role models.

All participants and schools / colleges' details would be confidential and the research would be organised / structured to ensure this does not interfere with the education of the participants.

It is expected the research will be published as a PhD thesis with chapters of this published in academic journals.

It is expected the research could contribute to:

- understanding the goals and aspirations of working-class females and influences on continuing inequalities within the workplace.
- Discussions about the role of the media, questioning the position of the media as an agency of socialisation, and the relationship between the media representations of women in the workplace and young working-class girl's future goals.
- The focus on class will fill a gap in existing literature, contributing to understanding the impact of class on female's aspirations, the role models that exist for females from a working-class background and how young females negotiate messages about class, gender and their ambitions.

It is hoped by undertaking the research with this age group of young girls the participants will also benefit. This could be in terms of: media literacy and developing the ability to question and negotiate media representations; starting to consider the future and goals / aspirations they may have; career advice – being able to identify and find out early what subjects are needed to pursue future goals; giving young females a voice to speak out about the media, role models, the future and their position in society.

9.13 Appendix 13: Parent / Guardian information sheet.

Parent / Guardian Participant Information Sheet

Full title of project: An investigation into what role media plays in the gender socialisation process of young girls and their imagined futures.

Research topic:

The research is focused on investigating how young girls imagine their futures and how they perceive media plays a role in their lives. It is hoped the research will identify what media young girls use, how women are shown within this media, what young girls want to do after they leave school and if the girls believe media can be linked to their future goals. The results from the research will help understand how to bridge the gender gap within the workplace and how to offer young girls a range of choices for the future.

Taking part in the research:

Participation in the research is voluntary, with both, the young girls and parents/ guardians asked for their consent to take part. Research participants can withdraw from the study at any point during the research process, and parents / guardians can withdraw their children without giving reasons or any experiencing negative consequences. The young girls can decline from answering particular questions should they wish.

The research is focusing on 11 and 12-year-old girls. Initially the girls will be asked to keep diaries, (either written, visual, digital, or verbal) of their media use for one month, to develop discussions about what media they use, how they view the females shown in this texts and what alternatives they would like to see. This will be the basis for analysis of how the media represents women to young girls.

When gathering this information, it may become apparent the girls are using media that is not age appropriate, for example viewing films / TV, reading magazines designed for older audiences or using social media platforms that have age restrictions. The researcher will respect the girl's rights to privacy about their media use, and therefore will not be reported to parents / guardians or teachers unless there is concern for the safety of the participant. However, as part of the discussions with the young girls the need for safety and safeguarding of themselves when engaging with the media will be discussed. Should media use of this nature arise as the researcher will use this as an opportunity to discuss, educate and ensure the girls are aware of risks, issues and debates around age appropriate media and the need for personal safety and safeguarding of their privacy online.

Focus groups will be held, with four to six participants per group, to discuss questions such as; what they think about the representation of women in the media; who they identify as role models from the media; what alternatives they would like to see; and, what goals / aims they have for the future, after compulsory education. It is proposed these focus groups meet a number of times to discuss the topic. It is hoped that the focus groups would take place at some point during the school day, at the participant's school, and will be timed to ensure it does not impact on educational commitments. The suggestion from the school is these may take place during tutorial time however this will be discussed further with the school.

There will also be opportunities for the girls taking part to meet with the researcher on a one to one basis, to discuss their goals for the future and media consumption if they wish.

Focus groups will be filmed to ensure accuracy.

Outcomes of the research:

The research aims to contribute to understanding the continuing inequalities in the workplace and young girl's future goals. This research will contribute to academic knowledge by focusing on the role of the media and investigating the relationship between the media representations of women in the workplace and the participant's future goals.

The research will allow the participants to discuss their own interpretations and views, allowing them to explore media representations, what these mean for them and what they want to do in the future. Participants will be encouraged to critique the media, whilst developing awareness of the gendered divisions in society. This may encourage them to further explore their own aims and expectations for the future.

Protection of participants:

When analysis of the information gathered during the research is undertaken the responses will be coded to ensure only the researcher will have access to the identity of the participants. This will ensure participants and parents / guardians will remain anonymous. Recordings of focus groups will be held only by the researcher, and used only for the research purpose. The location of the school will not be disclosed within the research to ensure further anonymity.

The research will form a PhD thesis and therefore once the thesis is completed will be within the public domain, however the identity of participants, locations / schools / parents / guardians will remain anonymous.

The research is funded by Bournemouth University. **Address**: The Media School, Talbot Campus, Poole, BH12 5BB. **Tel**: 01202 524111.

Name and contact details of researcher: Georgina Newton, Post-graduate student / Part-time lecturer, W405 Weymouth House, The Media School, Bournemouth University. Email: gnewton@bournemouth.ac.uk. Tel: 07886 741701**.**

Supervisors: Dr Heather Savigny, Dr Jenny Alexander and Dr Helen Jacey. The Media School, Bournemouth University.

9.14 Appendix 14: Participant Information Sheet

Participant Information Sheet

An investigation into what role the media plays in the gender socialisation process of young girls.

What is the research about?

The research wants to look at the role the media plays in the lives of young girls. The aim is to find out what media you watch / listen to / play / read / use, and then talk about what you think about the girls and women shown within these media forms. The research is also interested in what you want to do when you leave school. This is because there is still a divide between girls and boys in terms of what subjects they take at college and university, what jobs they do in the future, what they earn and what they do within the family. So the research would like to try and find out if there is a link between the media and what you want to do in the future.

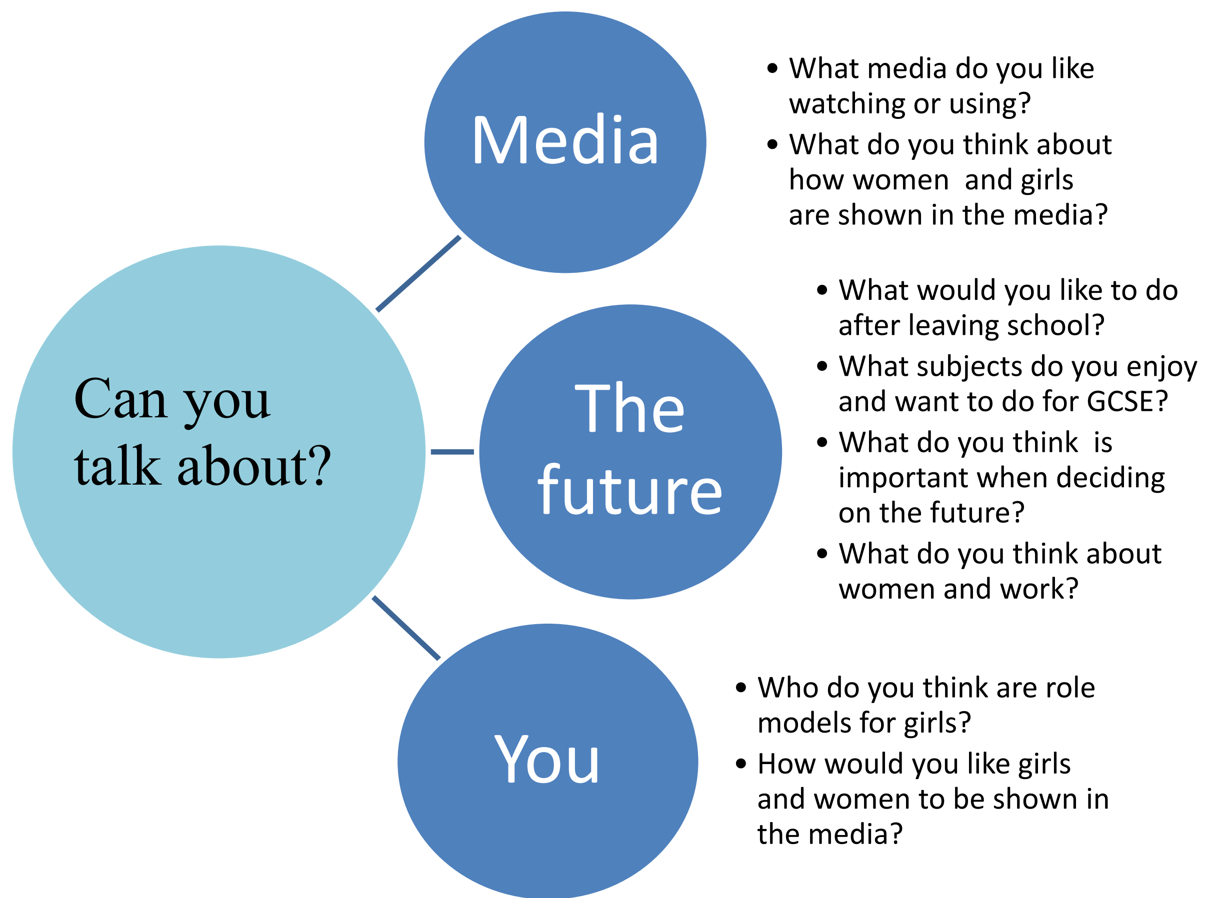
You will be asked to keep a media diary. This could use words, pictures, film, or voice recording to keep track of what media you use every day for a month. You can use this to discuss the media in the groups however you do not have to disclose to the group the media you use if you don't want to.

Taking Part:
The research is focused on 11 and 12-year-old girls. To take part you need to volunteer, and agree with your parents, as they need to consent to this. If you change your mind you can withdraw from the study at any time, without having to explain why. You can also choose not to answer particular questions.

The group discussions will take place at your school, but will not interrupt your lessons. The discussions will be filmed to make sure the researcher accurately records all contributions. All information you give during the study will be confidential, this means only the researcher will know who you are, what school you attend and what you said, so when the information is included in the report no-one will be able to identify you.

You will also be asked to join a group, with four to six others to talk about the following:

If you would rather meet with the researcher on your own this can be arranged.



Aims of the study:

The study will be a PhD thesis. It aims to help understand the differences between males and females in the workplace, what girls and boys want to do after they leave school and if the media has a role in the development of these goals.
The study wants to listen to your opinions about the media, your future aims and help you to question the differences between males and females at work, home and in the media.

The research is funded by Bournemouth University. **Address**: The Media School, Talbot Campus, Poole, BH12 5BB. **Tel**: 01202 524111.

Name and contact details of researcher: Georgina Newton, Post-graduate student / Part-time lecturer, W432 Weymouth House, The Media School, Bournemouth University. Email: gnewton@bournemouth.ac.uk. Tel: 01202 962408 / 07886 741701.

Supervisors: Dr Heather Savigny, Dr Jenny Alexander and Dr Helen Jacey. The Media School, Bournemouth University.

9.15 Appendix 15: Parent / Guardian Consent Form

Parent / Guardian Consent Form

Full title of project: An investigation into what role the media plays in the gender socialisation process of young girls.

Name, position and contact details of researcher: Georgina Newton, Post-graduate student / Part-time lecturer, W432 Weymouth House, The Media School, Bournemouth University. Email: gnewton@bournemouth.ac.uk. Tel: 07886 741701.

Name, position and contact details of supervisors:
Dr Heather Savigny, Senior Lecturer in Politics, Head of Research CMC, Weymouth House, The Media and Communications Faculty, Bournemouth University. Email: hsavigny@bournemouth.ac.uk. Tel: 01202 962407

Dr Jenny Alexander, Lecturer in Media and Advertising, W441 Weymouth House, The Media and Communications Faculty, Bournemouth University. Email: alexanderj@bournemouth.ac.uk. Tel: 01202 962243

Dr Helen Jacey, Senior Lecturer in Scriptwriting, Programme Co-ordinator MA Scriptwriting, W214 Weymouth House, The Media and Communications Faculty, Bournemouth University. Email: hjacey@bournemouth.ac.uk. Tel: 01202 96111

To Be Completed by Parent / Guardian	**Please Initial Here**
I confirm that I have read and understood the participant information sheet for parents / guardians for the above research project and have had the opportunity to ask questions.	
I understand that my child's participation is voluntary and that she is free to withdraw at any time / be withdrawn at any time, without giving reason and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should my daughter not wish to answer any particular question(s), she is free to decline.	
I give permission for members of the research team to have access to the anonymised responses. I understand that my daughter's name will not be linked with the research	

materials, and she will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the research.	
I agree to consent for my daughter to take part in the above research project.	
I agree to take part in the research by completing the requested questionnaire.	

_________________________ _______________ ___________________________________

Name of Participant Date Signature of parent / guardian

____

Relationship to participant

__________________________ _________________ ________________________________

Name of Researcher Date Signature

9.16 Appendix 16: Assent form

Assent Form

Full title of project: An investigation into what role the media plays in the gender socialisation process of young girls.

Name, position and contact details of researcher: Georgina Newton, Post-graduate student / Part-time lecturer, W405 Weymouth House, The Media School, Bournemouth University. Email: gnewton@bournemouth.ac.uk. Tel: 07886 741701**.**
Name, position and contact details of supervisor:
Dr Heather Savigny, Senior Lecturer in Politics, Head of Research CMC, Weymouth House, The Media and Communications Faculty, Bournemouth University. Email:hsavigny@bournemouth.ac.uk. Tel: 01202 962407
Dr. Jenny Alexander, Lecturer in Media and Advertising, W441 Weymouth House, The Media and Communications Faculty, Bournemouth University. Email: alexanderj@bournemouth.ac.uk. Tel: 01202 962243
Dr Helen Jacey, Senior Lecturer in Scriptwriting, Programme Co-ordinator MA Scriptwriting, W214 Weymouth House, The Media and Communications Faculty, Bournemouth University. Email: hjacey@bournemouth.ac.uk. Tel: 01202 96111
To Be Completed by Participant: **Please Initial Here**

I have read and discussed the information sheet for this research and have asked any questions I want to.	
I have volunteered to take part, and know I can withdraw at any time. I know I can choose not to answer any particular question during the study.	
I agree the research team can access my confidential responses. I understand my name or school will not be identified in the report or reports written on the research.	
I assent (agree) to take part in the above research project.	

______________________________ ________________ ____________________________________

Name of Participant Date Signature

________________________________ _________________ _______________________________________
Name of Researcher Date Signature

9.17 Appendix 17: Girls' profile

Pseudonym	Ethnic group	Imagined work future	Interests / Comments	Media use
Ilama	White British	Veterinary nurse	Dance / drama / animals. Interested in boys and fashion.	Social media is central to media use. Phone or tablet is in constant use, and often has more than one media active at a time. Likes programmes about animals.
Amelia-Rose	White British	Law	Helps her Mum with her younger sister, beauty, makeup and boyfriend	Social media, but not overly active and engagement with media is often around family time with consumption of films with her Mum, that are usually above her age.
Dreamwolf	White British	Artist	Reading, art, photography, youth groups.	Does not engage with a lot of media, she has a group / activity four nights of the week and then reads a lot. Does not have social media profile and does not appear to be worried about this.

Ariana	White British	Singer	Listening to music, enjoys American teen TV shows	Fan of Ariana Grande, tends to engage with media her friends also like, and watches films with friends. Does not have social media, but does want it so she can talk to her friends and share things with her friends on it.
Dolphin	White British	Actress or PE teacher	Drama productions, helps look after her younger sister, and spends time with her Moma (grandmother) after school. Very sporty, on the school football, athletics and hockey teams.	Engages with a range of media, often as a family when they have time or with her sister. Believes playing in the football team gives her confidence to be herself.
Galaxy	White British	Chef / entertainer / holiday camp	Drama, baking cakes, going into the town with friends	Range of media, particularly on social media to engage with friends. Also watches pranks on YouTube and shares these with Shortbread.
Shortbread	White British	Youth worker	Reading, art, photography, youth groups	Social media, likes to take pictures and use filters. Engages with a lot of YouTubers particularly prank vloggers.

Spring	White British	Residential home worker	Reading, likes to watch films.	Moved schools part way through research so lacked the opportunity to develop a full understanding of Spring
Amethyst	White British	Artist / illustrator	Likes drawing, she draws at home with both parents.	Watches programmes about design, art and drawing. Also paints when she is allowed.
Black Widow	White British	RSPCA / animal rescue	Interested in animals, helps her Grandma out at home, and goes to Scotland to stay with family a lot.	Watches a lot of programmes about animals, pet rescues, and films that are focused on animals.
Chocolate Millionaire	White British	Interior Designer	Quieter participant, but had some very thoughtful things to say. Interested in design, art, and enjoyed being creative at home with her Mum	Watches range of media with family and friends.
Mak	White European	Architect / interior designer	Aware of gender challenges she may face. She watches films with her Nan, although she is White European she was born in the UK.	Range of media, social media is used to communicate with friends. YouTube pranks and beauty vloggers

Rapunzel	White British	Gymnast / PE teacher	Sport. Qualified to compete internationally in gymnastics	Uses Instagram to post pictures with her team mates. Does not use media a lot due to other interests
Roo Roo	White British	Detective	Likes to read, go into town with friends	Watched Silence of the Lambs and thought the lead female character was a role model. Enjoys crime dramas and crime films. Watches a range of programmes / films that are out of her age range.
Superwoman	White British	Chef	Uncle has a restaurant and she lives with him, so she is interested in food. She helps at home a lot as lives with her Uncle and Grandmother. She likes baking cakes at home.	Range of media, particularly social media to connect with friends
Jupiter	White British	Teacher / musician / beautician	Helps at home a lot, helping with siblings that are younger, and also spends a lot of time with cousins that are also younger.	Tends to engage with media with her siblings or cousins. They watch a lot of children's programmes after school and in the holidays.

Peeweebabee	White European	Artist / architect / army	Changed her thoughts about her futures work but was aware of the challenges she may face through not conforming to gendered roles (army). Plays a lot of football and does athletics for the school. She also reads about artists and has a number of favourite paintings. Moved to the UK when she was 1.	Sometimes watches holiday programmes as she would like to travel. Enjoys watching sports programmes and animal rescue programmes.
Ali	White British	Teacher	Mum is a careers advisor so talks to her about the future and has thought about what she wants to do and the qualifications etc she needs to achieve.	Spends time on Social Media talking to friends. She does not have siblings and therefore tends to use media for company when parents are busy. Watches a lot of TV particularly when she gets home from school

Catherine	White British	Personal investigator / author	Reads a lot of books, excels in English and said she would rather read than watch TV etc.	Prefers to read to engage with media. Said she does watch some of the YouTubers that focus on beauty and fashion. She also enjoyed watching films that are based on books she has read - such as Harry Potter, Twilight and the Hunger Games.
Emma	White British	Artist	Wants to go to College to study art, she spends a lot of time drawing with her Uncle or Grandma	Range of media, particularly likes watching soap operas with her parents and younger children's programmes with her siblings.

Memep	White British	Vet / animal rescue / zookeeper	Loves animals. Has four dogs and would often show pictures of them. Likes helping care for their pets and looking after extended family animals. Sees her Mum as an example of how to juggle work and family. Plays football in her spare time and at school	Lots of YouTube prank vloggers. Likes watching football on the TV and programmes about animals.
Olivia-Rose	White British	Vet or FBI	Loves animals, walks her family dog, and likes feeding the neighbours pets when they are away.	Likes watching range of media, particularly about animals.
Chelsey	White British	Midwife	Very close to her extended family, helped her Mum at home a lot due to having five siblings that were younger than her. Likes practicing hair and makeup on her younger cousins.	Watching TV and films with younger siblings, likes watching vloggers that focus on hair and beauty.

Nina	British-Bangladeshi	Not sure	Reading, watching YouTube, she had to help out at home a lot	Engages with a range of media, enjoys the same YouTubers as Margaret, Chloe and Mildred, but does not engage as much as them
Margaret	White British	Photographer / singer	Singing in the school productions. Self-professed popular girl	Spends a lot of time on YouTube, listening to music, practicing makeup and hair designs.
Chloe	White British	Hairdresser	Self-professed popular girl, loves experimenting with hair and makeup. Mum has her own salon	Particularly YouTube for hair and beauty ideas
Jessica	White British	Hairdresser	Joined the research late because her friend was doing it. She became quite chatty. She enjoyed most subjects at school.	Watched TV with her younger siblings, and helped her mum looking after them, so monitored tablet and internet use of them
Mildred	White British	Primary teacher	Has to help in the house. Likes to spend time with friends going into town.	Watching films and TV with her Mum. YouTube to talk to friends about (Margaret and Chloe shared media / YouTube interests)

Louisa	White British	Author or physio	Likes practicing dancing with her friends, spends times with friends practicing makeup and hair looks, and her Mum	Loves Zoella
Jorgie	White British	Vet, teacher, forensic anthropologist	Reading, watching boxsets of TV on Netflix / catchup. Loves animals.	Media use - catchup or boxsets. Uses the internet a lot to research things - such as her job ideas, and also how much she can earn, opportunities etc.

9.18 Appendix 18: Media diary outline example

Film:	**TV:**
Radio:	**Social media:**
Websites:	**Computer Games:**
Music:	**Books:**

Newspapers:	**Magazines:**
Advertisements:	

9.19 Appendix 19: Focus Group Guide / prompts

Focus Group guide

To explore working-class girls' perceptions of media they consume, through their voices, and hear how they attempt to negotiate, resist and engage with media and dominant messages around femininity.

In the first focus groups that I worked with some of the girls forgot to keep the media diaries on a regular basis – so to overcome this at the start of meetings we discussed what media they had used / watched – so this is something to continue with the other girls – although the other groups appear more organised! what TV / films / YouTube (run through different types of media) have you used / watched / read this week. This is often used at the start of focus groups to start them talking.

Explore how participants perceive appropriate and inappropriate 'feminine' behaviour through discussions about representations of women in the media.

Q: How do you think women and girls are encouraged to behave by media?
Q: What do you think the media suggests / shows girls is appropriate or good behaviour for girls? - how does it show / tell you this? - can you give me examples of media texts / platforms that show this?
Q: What do you think media suggests or shows girls as inappropriate or bad behaviour? - how does it show this? Can you give me examples?

To explore how the sexualisation of women's bodies is negotiated and if working-class girls perceive this as socialising them into performing a dominant femininity or whether it provides opportunities for resistance.

The language used depends on what medium we are discussing eg music / film / TV / YouTube etc.

Q: what characters do you like / dislike in ...?

Q: are there any people that you think are similar to you - why and what similarities do you see?

Q: are there any people / characters / musicians you identify with?

Q: what differences do you think there are between you and the characters / people / musicians (other than fame etc)

Q: are there any people / characters you would like to be like ... If so who and why... If not why not?

Q: how do you think the characters / people's life's are similar / different to yours?

Questions depend on if we are talking about one specific text or generally. And I have used images from the media texts they have identified as prompts.
Q: what do you think about the women / girls you see in the media you are using?
Q: How do you think media portrays / represents women?.
Q: What do you think media texts show as important for women / girls to do / to be / to look like?
Q: Do you think the images / representations of women and girls in the media is positive or negative - why?.
Q: How realistic do you think the female characters / women / girls shown in the media are - why?
Q: If you could change the images of girls and women in the media how would you change them?.
Q: What do you think are the key / most important things about the images / representations of women and girls in media texts?
Q: Do you worry or have concerns about the images of girls and women that you see?

To discover how working-class girls imagine their future working lives, and what they perceive socialises them into imagining these futures.

Q: what type of work would you like to do when you leave education?
Q: Why do you want to do this?
Q: Do you know anyone that already does this?
Q: Do you ever see this type of work shown in media texts - if so what do you imagine it will be like?
Q: Do you think the portrayal / representation of this work in the media is realistic / do you think what you see in the media about this work and the actual work is similar? Who or what do you think influences you when you consider your future? - this question often suggests parents - particularly mothers as an influence.

To investigate how working-class girls imagine their future lives within the domestic sphere, including potentially having and rearing children, and what they perceive socialises them into expecting these futures.

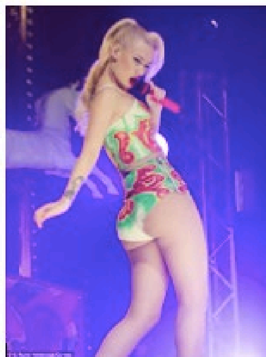
So far the girls have volunteered information about their home life eg who lives at home, if they have siblings etc so it is easier to tailor the questions to the girls in the group - eg if they live with one parent / parents / step-parents / siblings / step-siblings etc.
Q: Tell me about your home - who does what at home?
Q: Do you help out at home now - if so what things do you do and what about other siblings and your parents / guardians?
Q: When you grow up / leave home do you have an idea or vision of where / how and with whom you may live?
Q: If you live with another adult what jobs / chores around the house do you think you would do and what would the other person do?
Q: Do you expect these chores to be equally divided?
Q: What about household chores when shown in the media, who do you see / think does this type of work according to the media?
Q: If you lived alone are there any things / chores / jobs at home that you would worry about not being able to do?
Q: What about children - has anyone considered if they expect to have children in the future?
Q: What do you imagine your role would be in terms of caring for children - for example would you expect to take all of the responsibility / more or less than someone you lived with / or the same responsibility?
Q: Do you imagine you would combine children with working - if so how do you think this would be combined?
Q: How do you think parenting / being a mother is shown in the media? Can you give me any examples?
Q: What about at home at the moment - do your parents / step-parents / guardians work and look after you and any siblings?
Q: Do you imagine having a similar lifestyle to this?
Q: Do you see anyone in the media that reflects the sort of home life that you would like?
Q: Do you see any one in the media whose home life / parenting style that you would like to be like?

Understand how young working-class girls perceive their role within future relationships / families. - this is covered by the questions above that discuss domestic expectations.

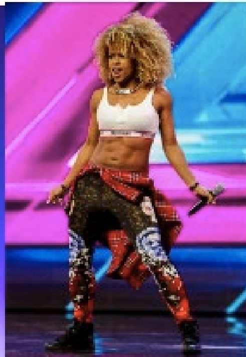
Explore the connections the girls make between female representations in the media and their imagined future selves *(focused on production and reproduction)*

Q: What role do you think the media plays in girl's lives?
Q: What role do you think the media plays in women's lives?
Q: What about yourselves - what role does the media have in your lives?
Q: How influential do you think the media is - on girls / boys / women / men?
Q: Do you think there a difference between the influence it has on these groups of people and if so why?
Q: Do you think the impact has an impact on people's decisions and behaviours - if so what sort of things?
Q: Does the media encourage or discourage you when you think about what you want for your future - what things does it encourage or discourage you to consider or want?

9.20 Appendix 20: Images of women musicians used in focus groups

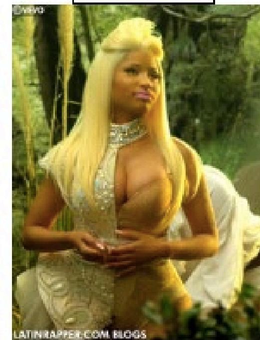


Iggy Azalea

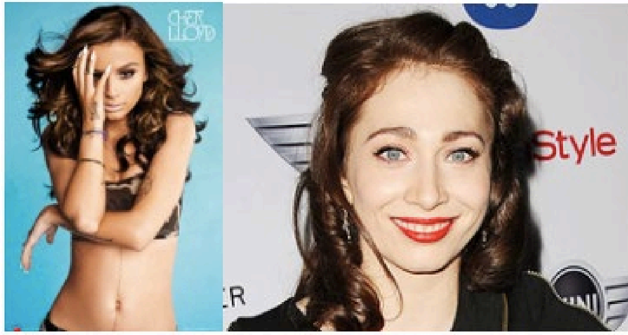


Fleur East

Miley Cyrus



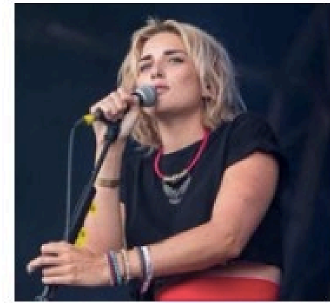
Nicki Minaj



Cher Lloyd

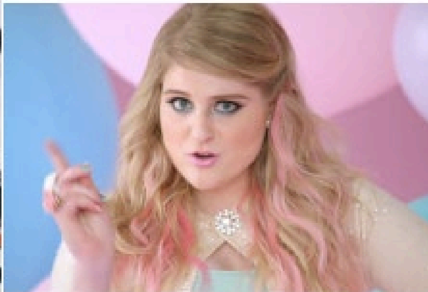
Regina Spektor

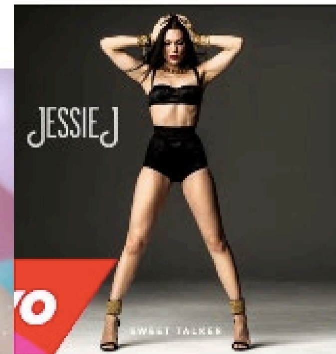
Elizabeth Gillies



ZZ Ward – 365 days of summer

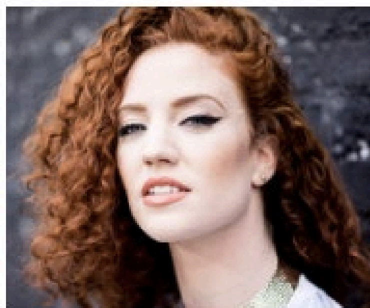
Indiana

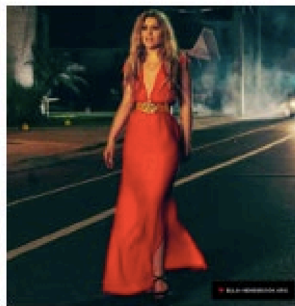




Victoria Justice

Meghan Trainor





Jess Glynne

Ella Henderson

9.21 Appendix 21: Images of women music stars used in co-participatory interviews

Female Music Artists

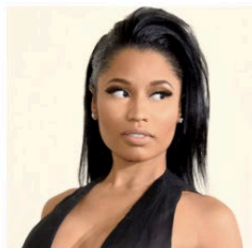
Ariana Grande

Taylor Swift

Lady Leshurr

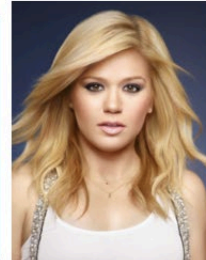
Beyonce

Meghan Trainor



Nicki Minaj

Rita Ora

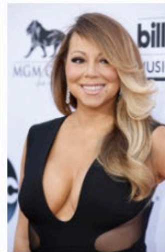


Kelly Clarkson

Female Music Artists

Leona Lewis

Adele



Mariah Carey

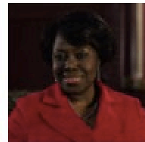
Fleur East

Jessie J

Little Mix

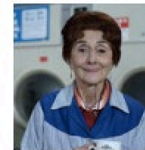
9.22 Appendix 22: Images of women characters from Eastenders discussed in focus groups and co-partipatory interviews

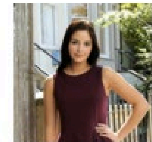
Carmel Kazemi


Claudette Hubbard

Jane Beale

Abi Branning

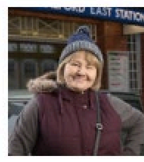

Dot Branning


Lauren Branning

Kathy Sullivan

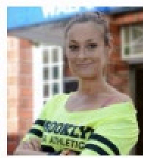
Stacey Branning

Shirley Carter

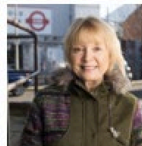

Aunt Babe

Linda Carter

Nancy Carter


Tina Carter

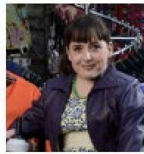
Whitney Dean

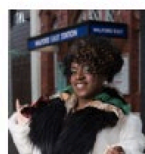

Pam Coker

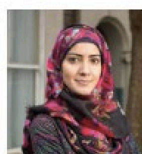
Rebecca Fowler

Sonia Fowler

Denise Fox

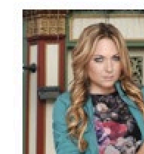

Donna Yates


Kim Fox-Hubbard


Shabnam Kazemi

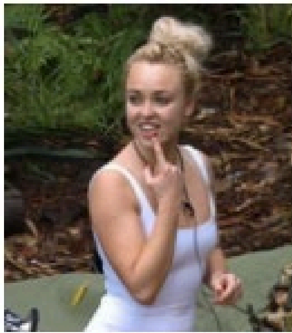
Honey Mitchell

Ronnie Mitchell


Roxy Mitchell

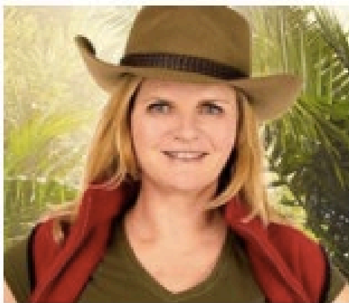
9.23 Appendix 23: Images of women celebrities from "I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here" used in focus groups and co-participatory interviews

I'm A Celebrity Get Me Out of Here - Female Contestants



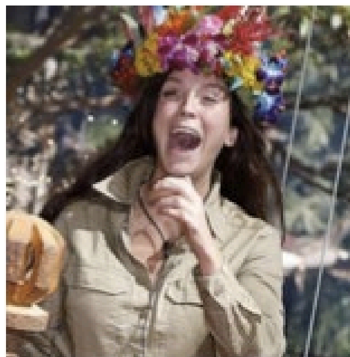
Jorgie Porter

Lady C

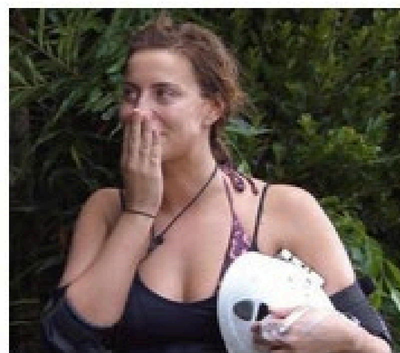


Susannah Constantine

Yvette Fielding



Vicky Pattison



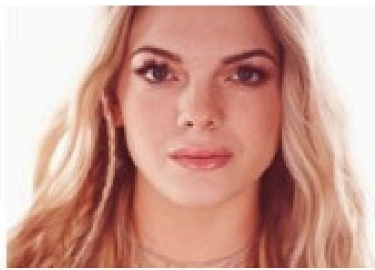
Ferne McCann

9.24 Appendix 24: X-Factor finalists used in focus group discussions

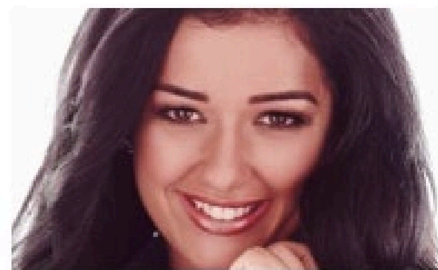
X-Factor 2015: Female Finalists

Bupsi

4th Impact

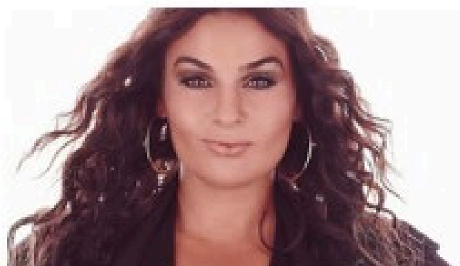


Louisa Johnson

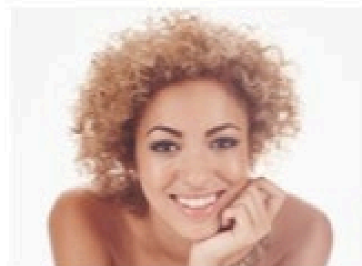


Lauren Murray

Alien Uncovered



Monica Michael



Keira Weathers

9.25 Appendix 25: Questions developed by “Shortbread”, “Galaxy” and “Dolphin” to select from for the co-participatory interviews

Questions about media use:

Q: Do you watch or use similar programmes / films / Youtube / music as your friends?

Q: When choosing what TV shows / Youtubers to watch are you encouraged or influenced by what your friends use?

Q: Do you talk to your friends about what films, TV or Youtubers you watch or use?

Q: Who do you watch TV and films with?

Q: Who do you watch Youtube with?

Q: What encourages you to watch / listen to something?

Q: What music do you like?

Q: Do you listen to music with friends or on your own?

Q: Which female music artists do you like? Why?

Q: What type of media do you think is the most important for your age group or friendship group?

Q: What media could you not live without?

Questions to use with the images:

Q: Why do you watch these texts?

Q: Which of the female characters do you like / dislike in these shows?

Q: Why do you like or dislike them?

Q: Are there any people that you think are similar to you - what similarities do you see?

Q: Are there any characters you look up to or would like to be like?   If so, why?

Q: How do you think the characters lives are similar or different to yours?

Q: Do you think the representations of women and girls in these are realistic?

Q: What do you like about these media texts?

Q: What do you dislike about these media texts?

Q: Do you think these programmes and youtubers offer a realistic view of women and girls? Why?

Q: What jobs do you see women doing in these media texts?

Q: Do you think the jobs women are seen in are important? If yes or no – why?

Questions for discussions around influence of media:

Q: Do you think the media influences girls and boys?

Q: Who do you think is the most influenced? Why?

Q: Do you think the media influences what people think they should look like? – How?

Q: Do you think the media influences what people expect other people to look like? Can you give examples?

Q: Do you think the media influences how people behave – if so how?

Q: Do you think the media puts pressure on young people – what sort of pressure?

Q: Do you think things you see on the media leads to people being bullied or picked on?

Questions about social media discussion:

Q: Do you use social media such as Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, Pinterest?

Q: How do you think images on social media (Facebook / Instagram / etc) represent girls?

Q: Do you think there is a pressure on girls to look a certain way for social media pictures?

Q: Do you think there is a pressure on boys to look a certain way for social media pictures?

Q: How do you think girls try and portray themselves on social media?

Q: Do you think girls use filters etc. for their pictures on social media?

Q: Do you look at other people's pictures on social media – why?

Q: Do you think you are critical of your own pictures and what you look like in them?

Q: Is there anything about using social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Snapchat that concerns you – if so what?

Q: Do you think young people are concerned about the images they put on social media? If so why?

Q: What impact do you think social media has on friendships / bullying or self-confidence for young people?

Questions about how women and girls are represented by the media:

Q: Do you think the images / representations of women and girls in the media is positive or negative - why?

Q: How does the media portray women?

Q: what do you think it is important for women and girls to look like according to the media?

Q: Do you think the representation of women and girls is realistic?

Q: If you could change the images of girls or women seen in the media how would you change it?

Q: What do you think the media show women and girls should do?

Q: What do you think the media shows women and girls should be?

Q: What do you think the media shows women and girls should look like?

Q: What do you think are the most important things about the images / representations of women and girls in media texts?

Q: Do you worry or have concerns about the images of girls and women that you see?

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