"There wasn't really a place for me": A post-qualitative inquiry of gender diversity in the Physical Education assemblage and how bodies come to matter

Lois Ferguson

100048728

August 2024

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy University of East Anglia School of Education and Lifelong Learning

ABSTRACT

In this thesis I explore how gender diversity comes to matter within the PE assemblage. I examine how gender diverse young people materialise in the PE setting in English secondary schools, unpacking their PE experiences and considering ways to encourage more joyful PE moments. Additionally, I explore how PE teachers come to understand gender diversity in the PE setting, illuminating the entanglements within which these teachers could begin to develop more inclusive knowledges and practices.

This thesis combines new materialist and posthumanist ideas with a creative, post-qualitative methodology to gain insight on the way in which gender diversity emerges (or not) in the PE context through material, human and non-human entanglements. Nine trans and non-binary young people aged 11-18 years old, and 10 secondary school PE teachers from across England shared their thoughts and experiences through creative methods and semi-structured interviews. Following Maggie MacLure's idea of the 'data glow', the empirical chapters take shape through responding to the pull of affective moments, feelings and events that glowed from the fieldwork.

The findings indicate that the PE assemblage goes through periods of continuity and discontinuity in its inclusivity endeavours, with gender diverse youth and PE teachers experiencing moments of progress and empowerment, but also feelings of stuckness and regression. In a climate which is largely inconducive to supporting gender diversity, this research identifies the little pockets of joy that do occur and reflects on how the PE profession might look to facilitate killjoy endeavours which enable more joy in PE through a focus on recognising and celebrating gender diversity. This thesis therefore argues that the presence of gender diversity in PE is essential in encouraging us to consider how PE could be re-imagined in more inclusive and accessible ways, to the benefit of all young people.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, I would like to thank the young people and PE teachers who were involved in this research; without your passion and enthusiasm for change, this thesis would not have been possible. Our conversations energised me profoundly and I will be forever grateful for your time, your interest in the research and for your willingness to share your thoughts, experiences and artistic creations.

I am deeply fortunate to have been supervised by Dr. Kate Russell and Professor Esther Priyadharshini. Thank you, Kate, for your continuous encouragement, wisdom, laughs, and nurturing guidance throughout this doctoral journey, without which I do not think I would have reached this final stage. It has been an absolute privilege to work with you and I am deeply thankful for all the opportunities you have helped to facilitate. Thank you, Esther, for encouraging me to push the boundaries of academia and feel empowered to do things differently. Your enthusiasm, compassion and constructive comments throughout have been invaluable.

A huge thank you to my family and friends for the unwavering support and belief in me throughout my doctoral journey. At times when I could not believe in myself, you showed me that what I was doing was important and worthwhile. In particular, Mum, Dad, Ella, Maeve, Claire and Tegan – thank you for constantly rooting for me, for asking questions, reading drafts, and showing a genuine interest in my progress. Thank you, also, to my fellow PhD friends and colleagues for the sense of community that you brought to my life.

To Max – thank you for being you. For your complete certainty in me, for your care and reassurance, for cheering me up on difficult days, and for encouraging me to be the best that I can be.

Finally, my heartfelt love and support go out to all in the gender diverse community. I see you and wish you the most joyful of lives.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis emerges into the world at a particularly tumultuous time for gender diverse young people. It feels somewhat difficult to know where to begin, with such fast-paced change and disruption occurring even as I write. Of course, the world is forever changing, evolving, re-configuring towards something new, something different to before, and in this sense, it is never possible to capture the true 'state of things'. What's more, to immortalise something in writing is always to record such events from a particular perspective. As such, my own perspective is one with a focus on social justice and empowerment for the gender diverse community, and these principles underpin the way in which I view the world and approach this work.

I have been thinking about the moments in my life that led me to pursue this work, of which there are many. For as long as I can remember, sport and physical activity has been a key part of my life. It has enabled me to form positive connections to my body, to feel strong and liberated in my own skin. It has been a space for me to develop healthy, happy relationships with family and friends. It has given me respite from everyday struggles, alleviating low moods and filling my body with lovely endorphins. I am fortunate to be in a position whereby access and opportunities to sport and physical activity have been fairly straightforward and actively encouraged by those around me, throughout my life (more on this in section 4.3). For these reasons, I have always been a strong advocate of physical activity in any shape or form. But over the years, through conversations with friends, peers, colleagues and the LGBTQ+ young people I work with, I have become increasingly aware that the positive experiences I shared above are not felt by everyone, and conversely, that the sporting domain (and for some, Physical Education in particular) can have a distinctly damaging impact on one's sense of becoming in the world.

Whilst I have very fond memories of Physical Education (PE), gender always felt peculiarly present in these spaces. The dominant rhetoric was that boys were stronger than girls, boys were 'naturally' athletic, boys did football and girls did netball, and that was that. I

use the word 'peculiar' because to me, this emphasis on gender was truly odd. Afterall, I, a girl, could move my body with agility and speed, could learn strategies and techniques, could deceive opponents and win points. And then over the field in the boy's PE lesson, were boys who failed miserably in all these areas. How could things be so black and white when there was such diversity among us? Over time I began to recognise the unfairness of it all, the arbitrary beliefs that informed these ideas about sport and PE, where only certain bodies were considered 'able' or 'appropriate' to participate. Of course, these issues extend beyond gender, and race, disability, social class, and other social identities and experiences all feed into who can comfortably access and enjoy PE as it is constructed. But the explicit and implicit gendering of activities, uniforms, behaviours, changing rooms, expectations and ambitions in PE was undeniable to me.

Consequently, a key driver for this doctoral work has stemmed from my curiosity around who PE caters for, who it denies, and the transformative potential that it holds to become something that all can benefit from. Following my introduction to volunteer work with a local LGBTQ+ youth group in 2019, I became more aware of the lived experiences of those whose gender identity differed to the sex they were assigned at birth. For example, those who identified as transgender, non-binary or genderfluid. In this thesis, I often refer to these identities under the umbrella term of 'gender diverse'. I began to consider what PE might be like for this community given its deeply gendered practices. As my curiosity and academic journey unfolded, I began to explore this area through a masters programme, and have subsequently published this work elsewhere (Ferguson & Russell, 2021), as well as in areas relating more widely to gender diverse communities (Ferguson & Russell, in press; Leeder et al., 2023; Russell et al., 2022; Thelwall et al., 2022). Through this exploration, it became apparent that the very presence of gender diverse bodies in PE disrupts taken-for-granted ideas around gender which inform the configuration of the PE space. Whilst this proved difficult for gender diverse youth, it illuminated the potential that PE holds to be re-imagined in new and expansive ways which support the inclusion of this community, and many others. This thesis is therefore concerned with gender diversity within the PE context in UK secondary schools, particularly in relation to how

gender diverse young people (aged 11-18 years old) experience PE, how secondary school PE teachers understand and support gender diversity, and how these insights might help us to transform the PE setting towards greater inclusion. The way in which these understandings are shaped, and the forces that contribute to the configuration of PE and the wider school setting, emerge through a multitude of assemblages of the social, cultural and political world. In this first chapter, I set out some key ideas and events to demonstrate this evolving climate within which the young people and teachers in this research are inevitably entangled.

1.1 LEGAL DEVELOPMENTS

Whilst individuals with gender diverse identities have always existed in the world, there has been a long history of discrimination, marginalisation, pathologisation and violence towards the community in the UK (Faye, 2021; Hines, 2020; McLean, 2021). Over the past two decades, we have begun to see a greater recognition and visibility of these issues, with significant societal, cultural and political change in the discourse towards, and in some ways the experiences of, the gender diverse community. In 2004, the Gender Recognition Act (GRA) was passed, enabling trans individuals to legally change their birth certificates to align with their gender identity, without the requirement for surgical intervention. Whilst this act had limitations (through only allowing heterosexual marriage, only recognising those within binary gender categories, and in its arduous and highly bureaucratic process which relied on medical professionals' approval), it was considered an important step in the progress of trans rights in the UK (Hines, 2020), indicating the beginning of tangible legal recognition of this community. The passing of the Equality Act (2010) extended on this movement, with its legal protection against discrimination in various social domains (such as education and the workplace) through the protections of a range of characteristics, including 'gender reassignment'. This protected characteristic encompasses anyone who "is proposing to undergo, is undergoing, or has undergone a process (or part of a process) of…changing physiological or other attributes of sex"

(Wadham et al., 2016, p.20). Whilst the GRA does not recognise non-binary identities, the protected characteristic of 'gender reassignment' in the Equality Act has been interpreted as being inclusive of these identities (Barton et al., 2022). This is reflected in its use in court proceedings to support a case for discrimination against a genderfluid individual (*Taylor v. Jaguar*, 2020), highlighting the possible scope of the Equality Act in providing protections for the wider gender diverse community.

Whilst legal advancements are beginning to occur, the gender diverse community continue to face high levels of discrimination and prejudice. In response to particularly alarming statistics regarding trans youth attempted suicide rates, hostile media portrayals, and increases in transphobic abuse and violence, The Women and Equalities Committee (2016) developed a report on transgender equality in the UK. Their report highlighted a "complex and extensive hierarchy of issues that need to be addressed" (Women and Equalities Committee, 2016, p.9), and provided thirty-five recommendations for policy and legislative changes in a range of areas, from schools and healthcare to the prison system and sporting contexts. Theresa May's Conservative government was in power at the time and agreed to adopt just one recommendation from the report. This pertained to a simple and cost-saving legislative change to make the GRA process more accessible and less pathologising through reducing the need for extensive medical involvement, but following intense media backlash and campaigns from gender-critical grassroot groups, the proposed reforms were abandoned (Faye, 2021).

1.2 POLARISING PERSPECTIVES

Currently, the UK is at the centre of a 'gender war'; a heated debate on the meaning of gender, and with that, a culture war between those who are inclusive of gender diverse people, and those who are not, invoking intense media scrutiny, public conflict and censorship (Butler, 2024; Cooper, 2019; Mackay, 2021; Newman & Peel, 2022). The gender-critical feminist movement, sometimes referred to as the trans-exclusionary radical feminist (TERF) movement, represents a feminist perspective with essentialist

views regarding sex and gender. Whilst the TERF movement explicitly identifies within an anti-trans discourse, the genealogical shift to the label of gender-critical saw "'anti-trans' [become] 'pro-women' and 'trans-exclusion' [become] the protection of 'sex-based rights'" (Thurlow, 2022, p.6), with the aim of garnering legitimacy and mainstream support. However, scholars argue that both movements demonstrate similarly trans-exclusive perspectives which refute the notion of gender as social and cultural creation (Bassi & LaFleur, 2022; Thurlow, 2022), ultimately framing trans women as not 'real' women and gender as an ideology as opposed to a lived reality (Caudwell, 2020). Butler (2024) describes this form of a feminism as one which "actively supports the derealization of trans people and engages in forms of discrimination that arguably go against the commitment to equality for which feminism has stood" (p.137). I reject this gender-critical perspective entirely and share more about my own gender-affirming perspective in Chapters 2 and 4.

The general topics of concern within the gender-critical movement pertain to the 'protection' of children and concerns over transition regret, the safety of women in gendered spaces, and issues of fairness in women's sport. These perspectives have taken traction in the mainstream, galvanised on social media by celebrities such as JK Rowling, the children's book writer, who has consistently issued her anti-trans views "behind various dog whistles and a veneer of respectable concern and pseudo-science" (Hotine, 2021, p.1). Scaremongering and selective evidencing are key tactics used by the gender-critical movement to rally support. As such, Trans Media Watch (2024), a UK-based organisation which aims to improve media coverage of trans and intersex issues, has described the media coverage of these issues as "a barrage of what appears to be deliberate misinformation and alarmist reporting by mainstream British media [which] has contributed significantly to a backlash against trans people" (p.2). That mainstream media is drawing on similarly uninformed and exaggerative perspectives of these issues is of particular concern when we consider how influential the media can be in shaping the public agenda, and as the scrapping of the GRA reform indicated, it can have a significant impact on how legislation on these issues can develop.

Part of this negative media rhetoric has stemmed from the way in which gender diverse lives have been used as a political football by Conservative and Labour parties in recent years, both of which have put forward damaging and contradictory messages and manifestos. For example, previous Conservative Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak, has voiced gender-critical views regarding his desire to reform the Equality Act and remove protections for trans individuals on the premise of 'protecting women' (Malnick, 2024), publicly mocked trans communities and demonstrated explicit anti-trans views in speeches (Williamson, 2023). Whilst new Labour Prime Minister, Keir Starmer, has spoken out in support of the banning of transgender conversion therapies (Billson, 2024), his support towards trans rights more widely has wavered significantly over the past few years. Allen (2024) has referred to this as a form of deflection politics, whereby politicians utilise trans issues in the media and political spheres to deflect attention away from serious social issues such as poverty and the cost-of-living crisis.

As a result, this dominant gender-critical rhetoric across media and political spheres has caused significant public division. Calls to improve the rights of gender diverse communities and educate society about their lives are met with anger from gender-critical groups who see these actions as disturbing the 'way things are' or taking something away from women's rights. Sara Ahmed (2023) explores the idea of the feminist killjoy; someone who reacts and exposes problems in order to spread joy to those most marginalised. In the eyes of the gender-critical movement, those who problematise social and cultural understandings of sex and gender are killjoys, disrupting the peace and causing problems that were not previously there. But as this thesis will explore, the killjoy endeavour is an essential part of facilitating inclusion, empowerment, and social change for the most marginalised communities, and these 'problems' were always there, simply hidden from view.

It is rather telling of the previous Conservative government's position regarding trans rights that it was not until 2021 that we saw a national (England and Wales) census which explicitly aimed to collect data on the gender diverse community, prior to which, we had

no official data on the UK population of this community. In this census, the Office for National Statistics (2023a) found that 262,000 people (one in 200) indicated that their gender identity differed to their sex registered at birth. Recently, the accuracy of this data has been called into question due to the possibility of a misleading question about gender identity (e.g., see Biggs, 2023; Booth, 2023). In response, the Office for National Statistics (2023b) stated that there would always be a level of uncertainty with this data for reasons related to the possibility of under-reporting but found the data to be broadly consistent with other available gender identity data from the GP Patient Survey and comparative international data. Whilst the data did not include those under the age of 16 years old, it demonstrates a social and political need to recognise that there is substantial group of people who identify as gender diverse and therefore refute the gender-critical perspective.

1.3 YOUNG PEOPLE, HEALTHCARE AND EDUCATION

As our language and awareness related to gender diversity in Western society has developed, it is reasonable to suggest that more young people feel able to comprehend and articulate their gender identity in ways that did not feel possible previously. As such, we are seeing a noticeable increase in gender diverse expressions and identities in the UK. Whilst statistics on this population are even fewer, there are several indicators to suggest this growth. The 2021 census indicated that those in the youngest age category (16-24 years old) were most likely to have said their gender identity differed to their sex registered at birth (Office for National Statistics, 2023a). Within the healthcare system, referrals to specialist children and young people's gender identity clinics are increasing (Kennedy et al., 2021; McKechnie et al., 2023) with referrals nearly doubling between 2015/2016 and 2019/2020 (Gender Identity Development Service, 2020). This increase, paired with a lack of adequate gender affirming healthcare services, has culminated in a healthcare crisis for this community, with significant waiting lists for initial consultations for gender affirming care and increasing mental health issues due to this lack of care

(Gentleman, 2024; Newman et al., 2021; WPATH, 2020). Additionally, contentious debates in the media and political sphere regarding the appropriateness of puberty blockers (a gender-affirming medication which delays the onset of puberty) for gender diverse youth have arisen, brought about by scaremongering practices from gender-critical groups. This resulted in the 'Cass Review' (NHS England, 2024a), a major healthcare review of gender identity services for children and young people, which resulted in an NHS routine ban of puberty-suppressing medication for gender diverse youth in England, Scotland and Wales (NHS England, 2024b). Whilst the review made some relevant points regarding the lack of adequate healthcare provision for gender diverse youth, it has been widely criticised for its prejudice, cisnormative bias, pathologisation and inconsistent standards of evidence (Horton, 2024), alongside "the intentional exclusion of service users and trans healthcare experts from the Review process" (Pearce, 2024, para. 3). The British Medical Association, the professional organisation representing medical doctors in the UK, has also highlighted its members' concerns, calling for a public critique of the Cass Review due to its "unsubstantiated recommendations driven by unexplained study protocol deviations, ambiguous eligibility criteria, and exclusion of trans-affirming evidence" (British Medical Association, 2021, para. 9). All in all, the review validates those with gender-critical perspectives, undermining gender diverse youth identities and their legal rights and compounding issues regarding the wellbeing of this already-marginalised community (McConnell, 2024).

Within the school context, there has been much conversation regarding the increasing visibility of gender diverse youth, and with this, significant anxiety felt by teachers and schools regarding their ability to support these students (Krasteva, 2022; Payne & Smith, 2014). A BBC survey of almost 7,000 teachers in England indicated that 75% of secondary school teachers had taught an openly trans or non-binary pupil (Moss & Parry, 2023). Likewise, a survey by Just Like Us (2022), a UK-based LGBTQ+ youth charity, found that nine in 10 (87%) secondary school teachers had taught at least one pupil who was openly transgender, and 80% of these teachers stated their desire for help and guidance on how best to support them. Research on the experiences of gender diverse youth in UK schools

highlights that transphobic bullying is rife, with 51% of trans students bullied by peers for being trans (Stonewall, 2017), and that many face discrimination through the cisnormative nature of the built environment, teaching practices and school curriculum (Bower-Brown et al., 2023; Horton, 2022). Given these findings, and the considerable need from teachers for more resources and advice on gender diversity in schools (Just Like Us, 2022), there have been developments in recent years towards such guidance. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), the UK's equalities watchdog, had been working closely with "school leaders, LGBTQ charities and families supporting trans children" (Hunte, 2022, para. 6) to develop guidance between 2017 and 2021 which aimed to provide schools with legal guidance on the Equality Act, as well as advice for good practice with regards to gender diverse students. The guidance was initially due to be issued in March 2018, however, reports from EHRC employees indicated that the guidance had faced significant intervention from government officials who required edits to ensure the guidance was not "too progressive, or too supportive of trans children" (Hunte, 2022, para. 3), causing almost four years of delays, before being scrapped entirely. During this time, there has been blatant opposition from other Conservative officials like MP and former Home Secretary Suella Braverman (e.g., see Milton, 2022), who have stoked the media frenzy around this issue, arguably polarising public attitudes further.

Now, in 2024, we are no closer to seeing inclusive, supportive guidance for the gender diverse community in English schools. Instead, the Department for Education (2023) has published non-statutory guidance (currently under consultation) which pertains to 'gender questioning' students in primary and secondary education. This guidance has been widely criticised by LGBTQ+ rights campaigners, organisations and academics for its gender-critical and paternalistic framing of gender diverse youth, many of whom have compared it to that of Section 28, a discriminatory law (between 1988 and 2003) which prohibited the teaching of homosexuality in schools and fostered a culture of silence and lack of LGBTQ+ support throughout education (Gendered Intelligence, 2023; Lee, 2023; Mermaids, 2024; Stonewall, 2023). The guidance presents the complex area of supporting gender diverse youth in a particularly infantilising way, calling gender identity a 'contested

belief', presenting gender diversity as a phase that young people will grow out of, and reinforcing the need to include parents in all decision making (which disregards the possible safeguarding risks of 'outing' students at home). This works to invalidate the lived experiences of children and young people in schools who identify as trans, non-binary or are questioning their gender, and could result in heightened poor mental health and wellbeing (Fontanari et al., 2020; Pollitt et al., 2021). Furthermore, the guidance discourages schools from supporting social transitions (such as changes to names, pronouns or appearance) without a period of 'watchful waiting' and encourages parental involvement before any changes are made. Research highlights that when a social transition is supported, even if the individual's gender identity does go on to evolve or change, then the individual experiences a range of positive mental health benefits (Belmont et al., 2024; Durwood et al., 2022). As mentioned, the guidance is non-statutory so schools are not legally required to follow it, but nonetheless, the guidance could be seen as a safety net for schools to continue enforcing damaging and exclusive provisions for gender diverse students. Furthermore, it sends a particular message regarding gender diverse young people's wellbeing and school experiences; that they are less valued than cisgender students. Whilst English schools required clearer guidance on how to support the diverse needs of their trans, non-binary and gender questioning students, the Department for Education's guidance barely touches upon transgender and non-binary experiences, and instead frames young people with different gender expressions as 'questioning' or going through a phase. By contrast, the Welsh, Scottish and Northern Irish governments have all developed school guidance which validates and supports not only those who may be exploring their gender, but those with a fixed understanding of their gender identity as trans or non-binary, as well as those who are intersex (Education Authority, 2021; Scottish Government, 2021; Welsh Government, 2023).

A consistent failing across these developments that dictate how gender diverse youth can live in the UK is the explicit lack of involvement or consultation with young people themselves. Both the Cass Review and the Department for Education's school guidance overlook the very voices of those who their recommendations will impact most intensely,

favouring the voices of adults who have no lived experience of gender diversity. This approach, labelled by authoritative figures as one which 'protects' young people, positions youth as immature, incompetent and incapable of understanding gender diversity and sexuality, thereby unqualified to have a say in such matters. This is reflective of a wider framing of how young people are often viewed within research on gender and sexuality (Allen, 2008; Mustanksi, 2011; Pickles, 2019). This thesis challenges this rhetoric through the platforming of gender diverse young people's experiences and desires in PE, centring their voices as key to shaping the PE setting towards more positive and inclusive trajectories.

1.4 GENDER DIVERSITY, SPORT AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Much of the above feeds into the way in which sport and Physical Education (PE) for young people emerges in the UK. Intense debates regarding the inclusion of trans women and intersex individuals in elite sport are rife (Cooper, 2023; Falkingham & Roan, 2022; Gleaves & Lehrback, 2016), and have contributed to the development of sport policies which exclude or marginalise much of the gender diverse community through the legitimisation of essentialist perspectives regarding sex and gender. Whilst the sporting world prides itself on its values of inclusion, acceptance, community and empowerment, what we are seeing in relation to discourse on gender diversity is the defining of particular criteria around the types of bodies that are (in)eligible to participate. This research, in part, explores the way in which such discourses trickle into the PE context, affecting the lives of both gender diverse students and PE teachers in various ways.

Research on the PE context and gender diversity largely explores this in relation to the experiences of LGBTQ+ students, and whilst this provides important insights into their lives, it fails to differentiate between experiences as they relate to sexuality and gender diversity, resulting in the homogenisation of a hugely diverse community and the common erasure of gender diverse experiences (Caudwell, 2014; Drury et al., 2017; Landi et al., 2020; Lucas-Carr & Krane, 2011). We are beginning to see the emergence of UK research

which has an overt focus on gender diversity and PE, though findings are largely based on trans and non-binary adults reflecting on their school experiences and rarely capture the voices of young people whilst they are in school (e.g., see Hargie et al., 2017; Kettley-Linsell, 2022; Williamson & Sandford, 2018), with two notable exceptions (Ferguson & Russell, 2021; Neary & McBride, 2021). In this sense, there is a continuation of gender diverse youth voices remaining unheard and unable to set the agenda in matters in PE that impact them directly.

Given the particularly volatile climate that gender diverse youth find themselves in within the UK, positive connections to their body, to movement, to physical activity and to their physical, mental and social wellbeing feel like particularly critical aims at present. As I argue throughout this thesis, PE has the *potential* to do just this. This research looks to explore how joyful PE experiences could emerge for these young people, how PE teachers might go about facilitating such an environment, and how inviting explorations of the material and more-than-human world could benefit the PE context in its inclusivity endeavours.

1.5 THE STRUCTURE OF THIS THESIS

This thesis captures the reflexive journey that I have embarked on over the past four years and could be considered an immortalisation of a research assemblage. An assemblage is a configuration of things, material, human and non-human, that *does* something. Assemblages are dynamic, fluid, and ever-changing, as the different parts within them flux and flow over time and space. For example, a PE assemblage could encompass a range of bodies (e.g., teachers, students, parents), objects (e.g., PE kits, sports equipment, rule books), spaces (e.g., changing rooms, playing fields), practices (e.g., rules, policies, pedagogies) or representations (e.g., beliefs, values, discourses) that come together in particular ways and create an affect. Part of this thesis involves exploring these affects, for example, in how a gender diverse pupil experiences a particular entanglement of things.

This research (which I consider to be an assemblage) has evolved over time, responding to the changing school climate and dominant rhetoric on gender diversity in society, responding to the research participants' needs and desires, and responding to my own philosophical unfolding as a researcher gradually turning toward affective, new materialist and posthumanist ideas. Given this evolution, you may notice the way in which new theoretical ideas and concepts emerge throughout the course of the thesis. Whilst this research did not initially set out to explore participant insights through the concept of the assemblage, these inquiries have emerged through the *doing* of this research. For example, through responding to the affective moments that arose during conversations with young people and PE teachers. These glowing moments and events propelled the research assemblage toward new and unpredictable paths, inviting me to explore my engagements with the participants in unexpected ways. Therefore, whilst the earlier chapters may present insights and ideas in a more conventional form, the empirical chapters and subsequent discussion aim to highlight this turn towards something different. The inclusion of 'assemblage' in the thesis title is a nod to the way in which this work has turned toward assemblage theory and other related theoretical ideas (which I explore in greater depth in Chapter 3). And yet, as I reflect upon in Chapter 4, this turn

toward affective, new materialist and posthumanist is not plain sailing, and I find myself to oscillate between different ways of making sense of the world. Therefore, explorations of assemblages and related theoretical concepts are not necessarily embedded consistently throughout this work. I wish to highlight this to demonstrate how my journey as a researcher is ever-changing, as I plug in and out of different assemblages, and therefore one cannot have complete theoretical consistency. To have consistency is to be certain, and that is something I do not ever claim to be. Afterall, it is through following the uncertainty that we may come across new ideas and ways of thinking and doing in academia and beyond.

I will now provide a brief breakdown of what can be expected in the subsequent chapters. The following chapter reviews existing literature at the intersections of sex, gender, gender diversity, sport, education and Physical Education. Then Chapter 3 introduces the theoretical work that underpins this thesis, expanding on new materialist and posthumanist ideas as they relate to this work and illuminating the transformative possibilities that they can bring to the field. Chapter 4 outlines the unexpected methodological journey that I found myself on. I reflect on the evolution of my philosophical underpinnings and how this shaped and continues to shape this thesis in unexpected ways. Chapters 5 to 8 share the outcomes of the post-qualitative analysis. Each chapter welcomes the reader with a vignette which outlines the glowing moment, feeling or event that struck me, followed by an exploration of data, memories, concepts, feelings and literature which explore how bodies come to matter in the PE assemblage and beyond. Finally, Chapter 9 brings together multiple threads of discussion and highlights two key aspects that emerged from this inquiry, followed by a range of practical, theoretical and methodological contributions and reflections for the future.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

As outlined in the previous chapter, there are a multitude of events and perspectives that flow into the configuration of the PE assemblage today. This chapter explores the literature as it pertains to many of these, and whilst there are many overlapping and interconnected elements here, I have attempted to provide a structure to it that introduces new concepts, ideas and findings in a logical manner, as follows:

- o Firstly, I will introduce key definitions and understandings regarding sex, gender and gender diversity, with the aim of demonstrating the multitude of ways in which these have shaped particular (and I argue, exclusive) ways of *knowing* and *being* in Western society.
- o I will then begin to illustrate the way in which some of these ways of knowing and being inform the development of particular sporting beliefs, values, policies and cultures, and the impact of this on particular groups.
- o Following on from this, I will introduce literature around how gender diversity is understood and policed within secondary educational contexts, exploring the wider school climate, social norms, schooling cultures, and teachers' knowledge and perspectives as they pertain to gender diversity.
- o I will then connect the dots between dominant sporting practices and cultures and the way in which they shape PE contexts, looking first at these in relation to gender and sexuality, before finally unpacking current insights into the intersection of gender diversity and PE.

2.1 UNPACKING SEX, GENDER AND GENDER DIVERSITY

2.1.1 Sex

Throughout history, understandings of sex have changed and evolved as different schools of thought take credence in society. Early Western scientific discoveries in psychology and neuroscience identified two sex classifications that had key biological differences, resulting in a prevailing understanding of the roles and behaviours of each sex as being fixed and unchangeable (Rippon, 2019). For example, the expectation that women should become pregnant and give birth because their bodies typically have this biological capability. Feminist movements from the 1960s onwards played an essential role in shifting our understanding of sex in the West away from such expectations, though our society is still permeated by beliefs regarding traditional gender roles (Witcomb & Peel, 2022).

Traditionally, sex is known as a dimorphic classification system, consisting of two binary categories: man and woman, each category with distinct differences by way of body type, reproductive capacity, hormones, and chromosomes (Green, 2004). Given its focus on the biology of the human body, it is commonly referred to as biological sex. However, it is a largely unquestioned "conviction that everyone is born either male or female, as evident in genitals, and that these genitals determine gender – how we identify and how we act" (Costello, 2023, p.67). Whilst Western society typically conforms to assumptions that humans belong to one of two clear biological sex categories, there is and has always been knowledge and language of ambiguous bodies (e.g., differences in sex development (DSD), intersex, hermaphrodite) whose characteristics do not neatly fit this binary classification (Wilson and Reiner, 1998). It has, therefore, been argued that this classification system is flawed and does not recognise the full diversity of human beings. Medical scientists have begun to consider this two-sex system as too simplistic (Ainsworth, 2015), and are "increasingly rejecting the notion of two sexes as … empirically inaccurate and adopting instead a spectrum view of biological sex" (Malleson, 2018,

p.606). Nonetheless, Western society is still predominantly shaped and informed by this understanding of sex.

Fausto-Sterling (2000) suggested that sex seemed more likely to be on a spectrum, with many people grouped in 'male' and 'female' categories but with a range of other variations possible in between. For example, developments in our understanding of intersex individuals (those with reproductive or sexual anatomy that does not align with dominant understandings of male and female bodies) highlights this variation and challenges essentialist assumptions of the two-sex system. Ambiguously sexed individuals (such as intersex people) are thought to make up between 2-4% of the global population, however public awareness of this is low due to the influence and dominance of the dimorphic sex system (Gough et al., 2008). On the topic, Kate Bornstein (1995) shared the following statement: "[i]t's a fairly common experience being born with different or anomalous genitals, but we don't allow hermaphrodites in modern Western medicine. We "fix" them" (p.59). Here, Borstein is referring to the way in which the dominant belief of a two-sex system has resulted in medical providers being "inclined to approach intersex as an emergency that necessitates medical attention" (Davis et al., 2016, p.490), with many 'corrective' surgeries taking place at birth to ensure the body can be aligned neatly with male or female characteristics. However, in most cases the emergency is not medical but *social* (Zeiler & Wickström, 2009). Therefore, categorisations of sex could be read as a construction, and if this is so then biology too could be considered a construction, a particular production of knowledge which creates selective processes for what is considered a legitimate body. This raises the question as to why the two-sex system is still so essentialised and essentialising within our society? Butler (1993) suggests that sex can no longer be a 'bodily given' but is a "cultural norm which governs the materialization of bodies" (p.3).

2.1.2 Gender

Much like sex, making sense of gender is complex, and a multitude of perspectives articulate gender in different ways. Hines (2018) summarises some of these viewpoints below:

> "For some people, gender derives from the biological, reproductive characteristics of sex – that is to say, from the physical, hormonal, and chromosomal differences that, they argue, definitively separate male from female. For others, gender is an expression of social norms – a combination of the behaviours, roles and expectations through which a society defines men and women. Many people see gender as a combination of these biological and social factors. But today, an increasingly large group of people say that gender is not hard-wired and can be understood and expressed in a far more diverse range of ways." (p.8-9)

The first approach, centred around the biology of the human body, is situated within the essentialist school of thought, and commonly called biological or gender essentialism. This understanding of gender posits that the social categories of 'man' and 'woman' have always existed and are natural and mutually exclusive (Gülgöz et al., 2019; Skewes et al., 2018). From this perspective, gender is based on "a binary, mandatory system that attributes social characteristics to sexed anatomy" (Hausman, 2001, cited Nagoshi et al., 2013, p.3). It has been argued that essentialist understandings of gender oversimplify and misrepresent how people understand human variation (Troncoso et al., 2022), and studies have successfully shown how gender differences are not innate (Hyde, 2005; Hyde et al., 2019).

The next understanding of gender outlined above sees a shift away from biological sex as an essentialising aspect of gender, focusing instead on social interactions and everyday activities. The theory of gender socialisation suggests that gendered behaviour is learnt, not inborn. This perspective suggests that from birth, we are assigned a gender and from that moment, treated in a particular way and encouraged to do particular things based on our gender (Hines, 2018). For example, traditionally girls would be clothed in pink clothes,

encouraged to be gentle, kind and pretty, and discouraged from participating in messy, strenuous activities. That girls are typically praised for the former behaviours, and punished for the latter behaviours, suggests that these behaviours become learnt to the point where they are assumed to be natural. However, scholars have begun to question the naturalness of this phenomenon.

In a pivotal piece of work, Judith Butler (1990) theorised gender as "radically independent of sex, … a free-floating artifice" (p.6). This perspective suggests that gender is a thing that we *do*, not a thing that we *are*. In this vein, individuals have the freedom and choice to talk, dress, behave and live in ways that make sense to them, regardless of their physical anatomy. However, Butler argues that the ways in which we do gender are informed by dominant societal discourses and therefore still shape gender in particular ways. We learn how to do gender correctly and regularly punish those who are seen to do gender wrong (Butler, 1990). For example, a man in a dress could be seen to be doing gender wrong as dominant Western discourse dictates that dresses are for women, not men (though arguably these sorts of gender disruptions are now celebrated in some domains!). Nonetheless, as Smith-Laing (2017) states, "[w]e are all born into discourse so we cannot help but learn and repeat it" (p.38), and it is this notion of repetition that is at the centre of Butler's take on gender. Through consciously and unconsciously performing repetitive behaviours, individuals are reifying gender; their performance of gender makes gender real. The repetition of these gendered performances, behaviours that are culturally accepted as belonging to a specific sex, results in the assumption of gender as natural and inherent to an individual's physical anatomy, when in fact it is through decisions to behave in particular ways. This is called gender performativity, and Butler argues that, as gender is a thing that we do, we can choose to do it differently and subvert social expectations.

The understandings of sex and gender outlined above are typically seen and experienced within Western cultures and societies. In other parts of the world, communities recognise a range of different genders. For example, in Samoan culture a third gender or non-binary

role called *fa'afafine* is recognised and accepted, and in India, *hijra* is used to identify those who are feminine-identified individuals assigned male at birth (Dutta & Roy, 2014). In West Africa, the social category of 'woman' did not exist amongst Yorùbá people until Western gender logics were imbued upon the community through academic inquiry which "[wrote] gender into that society" (Oyĕwùmí, 1997, p.xv), highlighting the impact of colonialism on gender developments. Amongst indigenous North Americans, the *two-spirit* identity is widely celebrated as someone who has a mix of gender expressions and roles. In the past, anthropologists suggested that the two-spirit identity could be compared to homosexual or transgender identities as two-spirit individuals were thought to transgress (what Western society sees as) normative sexual and gender roles (Hines, 2018). However, these 'normative' roles are relatively recent Western concepts and two-spirit individuals have been documented long before the introduction of these perspectives of sex and gender. Faye (2021), for example, describes 'trans' as a "twentieth-century word used to describe a Western way of thinking about gender variance" (p.xv). Therefore, it could be suggested that two-spirit individuals cannot be compared to a Western equivalent, positing that gender exists differently across cultures with no fixed form or definition. In this sense, gender could be understood as a fluid, diverse, mutable concept.

Before unpacking what is understood by gender diversity, it is helpful at this point to highlight some other terms which will be used throughout this thesis. As can be seen in earlier sections, understandings of sex, gender and other related terms are not clear-cut, and can have a range of different definitions and meanings. What follows are some key definitions that I plan to use throughout this thesis.

Gender identity is a term used to describe an individual's internal sense of self (Nagoshi et al., 2013). In Western culture, this is traditionally in relation to being male or female (Wilchins, 2004), but I understand gender identity to go beyond this binary and refer to identity between or outside of these categories. Conventionally, gender identity is positioned in alignment to one's biological sex and characteristics and behaviours of this

sex are then attributed to that identity i.e., a person assigned male at birth should have masculine behaviours (Green, 2004). Similarly, I do not accept this perspective and view gender identity (and its associated attributes) as something an individual has the agency to construct and define themselves, regardless of biology. This said, I recognise the impact that Western culture and society has in shaping dominant understandings of gender identity and the societal expectations of these identities, which poses difficulties for those wishing to identify outside of binary understandings of gender.

In relation to this, the **gender binary** is another concept that will be commonly used in this thesis. I understand the gender binary to be a social construct, informed and shaped by dominant Western beliefs regarding sex and gender. The gender binary describes the idea that there are only two genders; male and female and that these are natural, oppositional and fixed (Nagoshi et al., 2013). Given the points discussed previously regarding the ambiguity and variation of biological sex and the multiplicity of gender, I do not conform to this understanding of the gender binary as natural or innate. At times I will refer to identities, individuals or experiences that are **'beyond the binary'**, and in this sense I am referring to those who do not conform to the gender binary but transgress it in some way. This could be a transgender individual who was assigned male at birth but chooses to identify with a female gender identity. This could also refer to an individual who identifies as **non-binary** and does not conform to the gender binary through expressing themselves as male and female at different times, or not wishing to "experience or … have a gender identity at all" (Monro, 2019, p. 126). It could link to an experience that could be considered **gender fluid**, where an individual does not have a fixed expression or feeling of gender identity and may shift between masculine, androgynous and feminine expressions (Bornstein, 1995). These identities are more recently understood under the umbrella term of gender diversity.

2.1.3 Gender diversity

Gender diversity is a term used to refer to people with "gender identities that do not coincide with their birth assigned sex" (Rubin et al., 2020, p.163). For example, individuals who are non-binary, transgender or gender non-conforming. By contrast, a cisgender person does not experience this difference (Aultman, 2014). Gender diversity is therefore an umbrella term which seeks to encompass the wide array of unique identities that share the experience of not identifying in line with their birth assigned sex. Within the literature, some authors utilise terms such as 'trans' or 'trans*' to encapsulate this array of identities. Trans* (with an asterisk) was introduced as a way of "open[ing] up transgender or trans to a greater range of meanings" (Tompkins, 2014, p.26), with the asterisk being a 'textual disruption' that encourages readers to reflect on the variance of the community (Nicolazzo, 2021). Meanwhile, Faye (2021) provides the following description of 'trans':

> "To be trans is, on some level, to feel that this standardized relationship between one's genitalia at birth and the assignment of one of two fixed gender identities that are supposed to accurately reflect your feelings about your own body has been interrupted." (p.xiv)

Some consider 'trans' to signify binary connotations of transness (i.e., trans men and trans women), therefore excluding other variations of transness (Killermann, 2012). In their recent book, non-binary writer Travis Alabanza (2022) explores this idea of binary transness as imposed on the trans community by cisgender society. They refer to these categorisations as 'proper trans' or 'improper trans', having been asked once by a cisgender friend whether they were indeed 'proper trans'. Alabanza discusses how these categorisations indicate the way in which cisgender culture is typically unable to engage with fluidity or multiplicity, instead imposing binary standards to try and 'make sense' of transness. This is illustrated in academic theory, where Travers (2006) introduced the notion of 'gender conformers' and 'gender transformers', referring to those who either 'fit' with traditional gender identities or those who reject them. Whilst this viewpoint has since been criticised for its simplicity and lack of consideration into the multiplicity of trans

experiences (Caudwell, 2014), it demonstrates how cisnormative cultures trickle down in an attempt to define and make sense of non-cisgender identities.

Whilst gender diversity is considered an all-encompassing term for this community, it is important to reflect on what we mean by this. Gender diverse individuals are by no means a homogenous group, and amongst them there will be a wide array of behaviours, appearances, and expressions that intersect with, and are influenced by, other aspects of their identity (for example in relation to their sexuality, race or class). In this vein, Nicolazzo (2016, 2021) highlights the contestation of there being *one* community, given the variance and multiplicity of identities under this name and the influence of intersecting identities on experiences of transness. Some of these intersecting identities may be in conflict with one another and cause contradictions (DeFrancisco & Palczewski, 2007). For example, to have male genitalia but express yourself in feminine ways and be sexually attracted to men poses contradictions to dominant understandings of sex, gender and sexuality. But these contradictions are possible, and DeFrancisco and Palczewski (2007) suggest that they help "create spaces for a variety of ways of living and a diversity of identities" (p.24). Nonetheless, Nicolazzo (2021) suggests there are "things that bring us as trans* people together, including common understandings and ways of being, knowing, and relating to our worlds" (p.532). Faye (2021) proposes that these shared knowledges can be both joyous and painful. Joyous, in the way that gender diverse people are choosing to live authentically, as their truest self. Painful, in the commonality of experiences of discrimination, pathologisation and victimisation due to their decisions to challenge and disrupt hegemonic understandings of gender identity (Faye, 2021).

Given the multiplicity of possible gender identities that share the experience of difference to their assigned birth sex, but who may differ in many other ways, the use of the term 'gender diversity' feels best suited in this thesis to acknowledge the variance of gendered experiences, both with the participants of the research and in relation to the wider community. Therefore, this thesis will utilise gender diversity as a way of speaking to, and of, this group. My understanding of gender diversity is informed by a combination of

feminist, queer, trans, new materialist and posthumanist thinking. These perspectives highlight the importance of self-defining and constructing one's identity whilst acknowledging the socially constructed and embodied aspects of gender identity (Nagoshi et al., 2013), as well as the entanglements with material and non-human entities that shape our identities and experiences. During the discussion of participants' own experiences, their self-defined identity will be referred to, and their experiences explored in relation to how that identity and embodied experience intra-acts with other entities within the PE setting and beyond to bring about particular becomings. This perspective is gender-affirming, as opposed to gender-critical, whereby I recognise, respect and affirm an individual's own sense of gender identity, acknowledging that this may feel fluid or fixed, whilst also recognising the impact of the wider context that they are part of.

2.1.4 Other key terms

Sexuality – Sexuality refers to one's feelings, desires, and attractions towards other people. Categorisations of sexual identity have developed within more recent Western culture, such as heterosexual (straight), homosexual (lesbian or gay) or bisexual, to indicate the sex/gender that individuals are attracted to. However, given the evolving and fluid nature of gender diversity, these categories could be considered limiting in encompassing one's sense of sexuality which too could be fluid and unfixed.

Queer - Originally a homophobic slur, the term queer was reclaimed by activists in the 1980s to challenge the perceived normativity of discrete, stable sexual identities (Love, 2014). Queer is associated with "nonnormative desires and sexual practices" (p.172) and is thought to represent sexual identification beyond gay and lesbian. Approaches which question or challenge normative ideas regarding sexuality are considered to be 'queering'.

Heteronormativity - Heteronormativity refers to "the institutions, structures of understanding, and practical orientations that make heterosexuality not only coherent …

but also privileged" (Berlant & Warner, 1998, p.565). Gender diverse identities are considered a challenge to heteronormativity as they disrupt taken-for-granted ideas regarding the naturalness of heterosexuality and associated "binary gender logic that positions men and women in relationships of opposition" (Drury et al., 2017, p.86).

Cisnormativity – Cisnormativity is the "assumption that everyone identifies with the gender assigned to them at birth; and, that sexed anatomy/gender identity congruence is immutable and fixed at birth" (McBride & Neary, 2021, p.1090). The co-constitutive effects of heteronormativity and cisnormativity are sometimes referred to as cis-heteronormativity.

2.2 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SEX, GENDER AND SPORT

"Few institutions maintain a sex-segregated structure more rigidly than sport" (Love, 2014, p.376)

Sport has traditionally been considered a 'gender factory', "a site where men made themselves into men" (Vertinksy, 2017, p.445), with its inception centring around the provision of physical activities for men that "privilege culturally sanctioned versions of masculinity" (Schultz, 2022, p.14). Messner (2002) describes sport as being "largely defined by physical power, aggression and violence … a space that is actively constructed by and for men" (p.xviii). Strenuous physical activity was once deemed incongruent with the dominant ideals of femininity and thought to impact negatively on women's reproductive capabilities, which for much of history was considered women's main purpose in life (Pfister, 1990). Consequently, the principles of sport centred around masculine ideals and worked to exclude those who were deemed inappropriate to embody such attributes. This is seen throughout sport history, from the development of the modern Olympics whose founder, Pierre De Courbetin, saw the Games as a space reserved for men to display athleticism to a dutiful female audience (Chatziefstathiou, 2008), to the Football Association's banning of women's teams on the grounds that it was 'quite unsuitable for females' (Skillen et al., 2022), to the eventual development of 'gender-appropriate' sports which granted women access to sport, so long as these activities were deemed feminine enough (Appleby & Foster, 2013). Even now, whilst we arguably have more equal opportunities to access sport than ever before, mainstream competitive and amateur sport continues to be framed by a 'soft essentialism' which empowers women to participate (albeit in gender-appropriate ways) whilst continuing to perpetuate the naturalness of men's involvement in sport (Messner & Bozada-Deas, 2009). These spaces are still framed by assumed sex differences in power and strength, with performance measurements still based on male 'norms' which therefore position their performances as superior. To this end, the sporting world continues to "unequally reward and recognize male athletes and normalizes the ideology of the two-sex system" (Travers, 2018b, p.652), enforcing the segregation of men and women in most sporting spaces, and in doing so

reinforcing the naturalness of the two-sex system and the gender binary, and erasing gender diversity.

2.2.1 Assumptions regarding binary sex differences

One rationale for the differential treatment of gender in sport centres around the notion of male biological athletic superiority (Messner, 1988). This ideology assumes fundamental sex differences by presuming the natural and inevitable superiority of men's strength and ability over that of anyone else (Travers, 2018b). As discussed previously, these assumed biological differences are not only seen in the sporting domain but across many aspects of society, yet in the sporting context this assumption has arguably greater impacts as it divides competition and sport provision in unequal ways. One example of the impact of this belief system can be seen through the development of gender verification policies within sport. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) and World Athletics (formerly the International Amateur Athletic Federation [IAAF]) have a long history of implementing various eligibility requirements to confirm one's gender, though these policies have always centred solely on the women's competition (Cavanagh & Sykes, 2006; Travers, 2018b). In the 1940s both organisations required women to submit certificates to confirm their gender, and in more recent years (International Amateur Athletic Federation, 2006), sport officials reserved the right to subject female athletes to medical tests in the event of 'suspicion' or to 'address the occasional anomalies that do surface'. Suspicion being, when a women's appearance, behaviour or performance is read as masculine (Schultz, 2022).

South African runner Caster Semenya was one such athlete who experienced significant scrutiny, with competitors, sporting officials and the media questioning her legitimacy as a woman due to her non-Western, androgynous appearance and record-breaking performance (Cooky & Dworkin, 2013; Longman, 2016). Semenya was banned from competing and subjected to medical tests to clarify suspicions, where it was found that

she had a condition called hyperandrogenism, which causes higher levels of testosterone to be produced. This was deemed to be an unfair advantage by sports officials and resulted in the IAAF implementing a further policy that restricted women from competing if their testosterone levels were above a particular threshold (International Amateur Athletic Federation, 2011). Those who do not meet the threshold face "the prospect of invasive, humiliating and potentially risky measures if they wanted to continue competing … [including] hormone-suppressing drugs and surgery to remove internal testes" (Longman, 2016, p.1). Noticeably, there are no such policies and tests required for male athletes, and the legitimacy of their sex is rarely questioned.

Additionally, scholars have highlighted how these eligibility regulations disproportionately affect Black women from the Global South (Karkazis & Jordan-Young, 2019; Munro, 2010; Nyong'o, 2010; Schultz, 2022). Krane et al. (2022) illuminate the numerous professional sportswomen from the Global South who have faced suspicion due to their deviation from "Western hegemonic femininity in their presentation and performances of womanhood" (p.58), consequently subjected to sex testing and bans due to hyperandrogenism. By comparison, they highlight how dominant White athletes, as well as Black athletes from the Global North, face no suspicion regardless of their athletic superiority and atypical bodies (Krane et al., 2022). Moreover, these regulations are based on assumptions of Western medical superiority, whereby Western medicine views differences in sex development (like hyperandrogenism or intersex bodies) as abnormal and in need of 'fixing'. Whilst Semenya refused to take medication to lower her testosterone levels, there are harrowing stories of other Global South sportswomen who were told they would not compete again unless they underwent medical intervention, the results of which have had negative and life-altering impacts (Abdul, 2019; Krane et al., 2022).

There is also a consideration to be made regarding the IAAF's decision to only apply these testosterone requirements to certain sporting events as opposed to a blanket approach without any clear rationale for this decision (for example, the requirement is in place for the women's 400m but not for the 100m). Interestingly, the women's categories that face

regulations are those which Semenya typically competed in, leading some to consider than the ban was targeted specifically to her (Schultz, 2022). The threshold for what counts as a legitimate woman in sport has changed considerably over the years, and evidently shows up differently across different sporting events too. How can someone be 'woman enough' for one race category, but not for another? This indicates the arbitrary nature with which women's bodies are continuously controlled and policed in sport on the supposed premise of 'fairness'.

These events demonstrate how prominent beliefs around male athletic superiority and fundamental sex differences are within the sporting context. The inability to recognise the diversity of bodies and abilities by persecuting women who may have a natural physical advantage in her sport, whilst doing little to regulate the men's bodies and abilities in competition, shows just how deeply society perpetuates the assumption that men naturally and, in all cases, should perform at a higher level than women (Patel, 2021). Given these hegemonic belief systems, sport has been and continues to be organised by a gender binary and therefore works to exclude those who exist outside of this.

2.2.2 Fairness in sport

Sport is built upon the principle of fairness. Sometimes described as the 'skill thesis', it is suggested that sports are supposed to "determine who is most skilful by maintaining a fair starting point" (Bianchi, 2017, p.1). This emphasis on fairness is informed by beliefs regarding the gender binary and fundamental sex differences; that it would be unfair for men and women to compete together given the athletic superiority of men. However, it is widely regarded that sport is often unfair and unequal, as athletes "regularly differ in physiological, psychological and sociological characteristics" (Coggon et al., 2008, cited in Cleland et al., 2021, p.2382), and have genetic advantages that make it impossible to achieve fairness (Bianchi, 2017). For example, Michael Phelps, the 'man who was built to be a swimmer', has double jointed ankles and elbows, an unusually long arm span, and

produces half the amount of lactic acid of a typical athlete (Hesse, 2019; Siebert, 2014), meaning he has significantly more power and a quicker recovery than his competitors. In a competition with Phelps, the starting line does not reflect athletes who have a fair and equal opportunity to win, and Phelps' abundance of medals proves this. Yet, as a man, he is not scrutinised or questioned for his successes, but celebrated. However, in Caster Semenya's case, the question of fairness and the myth of the level playing field was brought to the forefront and used as a deciding factor for her disqualification (Cooky & Dworkin, 2013). This contradiction highlights the differential treatment of athletes in relation to gender and fairness and is used in relation to gender diversity too.

There has been much debate regarding fairness and transgender women's position within the sporting world (Falkingham & Roan, 2022). You need only type 'Laurel Hubbard' or 'Lia Thomas' in a search engine to see the media scrutiny and negativity from officials, competitors, and the public, that transgender women athletes face in their attempts to participate. In fact, Scovel et al. (2023) identified the media rhetoric surrounding Laurel Hubbard as being hugely influential to public attitudes, with journalists platforming anti-trans researchers and science as objective and without criticism, resulting in widely polarised perspectives on the topic. The main debate centres around the assumption that transgender women have an inevitable unfair advantage over cisgender competitors due to having experienced higher levels of testosterone through puberty, which can improve athletic performance (Schultz, 2011). Bianchi (2017) puts forward several points to demystify this debate. Firstly, she highlights the point made previously that genetic advantages are frequent in sport and generally not considered unfair (particularly in relation to men's sport). Secondly, that increased testosterone levels do not necessarily result in improved performance, as it depends on how one's body responds to testosterone, and this differs significantly (Jordan-Young & Karkazis, 2019). And finally, that the debate surrounding fairness focuses solely on biology and ignores other factors that could result in an advantage. Schultz (2021) typifies this final point in the following statement: "For all the concern of 'fairness' in policies about gender diversity in sport,

there is very little concern for the social and cultural advantages many elite athletes enjoy over others — regardless of sex" (p.23).

With this in mind, science should not be viewed as an infallible tool for the exclusion of transgender athletes, as fairness is not simply a question of science (Barras, 2021). As much of the above discussion highlights, biological science evolves, gets debunked and disproved, with new knowledges emerging which re-shape understandings of the body and the sporting world in particular ways. Knowing this, how can biological science alone be considered a reliable indicator of fairness in sport? And what forms of biological science become privileged? These are philosophical questions which require the sporting world to think in more expansive ways if it truly desires greater inclusion. To digress slightly, this could also be a conversation for those within the education system, where there has been a significant silence in relation to curriculum content on intersex or DSD bodies, with young people continually taught a *particular* form of human biology which centres the dualistic sex-gender system.

Sadly, recent policy developments within a range of sporting bodies both nationally and internationally *have* been framed by selective science, banning many transgender women from competitive sport. In the Sports Council Equality Group's (2021) recent guidance for transgender inclusion in domestic sport, one of their guiding principles states that "the goals of acceptance, social inclusion and physical activity may be best achieved outside of the sex binary in grassroots and domestic sport" (p.7). Yet, what follows in the document are a range of recommendations leaning heavily on the 'science' of a binary two-sex classification system which ultimately positions transgender women as unequivocally advantaged. Policy developments within a range of sport national governing bodies (NGBs) have since emerged in different forms, with some banning transgender women from women's categories and introducing open categories instead (British Rowing, 2023), others banning those who have experienced a male puberty before transitioning (FINA, 2022; World Athletics, 2023; World Rugby, 2021), and some enforcing an outright ban to transgender women regardless of whether they transitioned

pre- or post-puberty (Rugby Football Union [RFU], 2022). At first glance, the eligibility criteria of some of these policies appears to propose an element of inclusion to *some* transgender women (i.e., those who transition pre-male puberty), and yet, in reality very few transgender women will have medically transitioned before hitting puberty. The medical system (in the UK at least) makes sure of this, with transgender children and young people on lengthy waiting lists at gender identity clinics (Gender Identity Clinic, 2023), and increased restrictions on the availability of puberty blockers to children and adolescents (Mermaids, 2023; NHS England, 2024b). The possibility of a medical transition before hitting male puberty is therefore extremely low, so these policy developments effectively ban almost all transgender women from participating competitively in these sports.

These policy developments are poorly evidenced and typically rely on selective science to support their arguments. Furthermore, the evidence base used tends to compare cisgender men and cisgender women's performance levels to support the argument of unfairness, as opposed to drawing on performance levels of transgender women. This becomes an issue as transgender women are likely to have differences in physiology and performance due to bodily changes through hormone or surgery-related intervention and the related side-effects or recovery periods. Subsequently, the IOC commissioned new research to compare the performance metrics of transgender athletes to cisgender athletes, the findings of which highlighted that transgender women athletes were at a relative disadvantage to cisgender women athletes regarding athletic and cardiovascular ability (Hamilton et al., 2024). Whilst the study had limitations in relation to its cross-sectional design and sample size, it is encouraging to see research that recognises transgender women as their true selves as opposed to categorising them within a male bodily category, and acknowledges the way in which their bodies and performances have (and may continue to) change through transitioning.

In relation to transgender men, there is an interesting paradox present in the way in which they are policed within some of these policy documents. For example, the RFU state that

transgender men can participate in men's rugby if they provide their written consent and have a risk assessment carried out prior to their participation (Rugby Football Union, 2023). In essence, this framing of their participation says this: if you are a transgender man then we do not consider you a risk to others or a challenge to the 'fairness' of the sport, so you can participate at your own risk (demonstrated by the requirement for written consent). On the other hand, transgender women are automatically deemed a risk to others and maintain an unfair advantage, regardless of their actual size, strength, or ability. This contrasting framing of transgender men and women's participation highlights the ingrained ways in which some sporting institutes view the sexed body in extremely black and white ways. Additionally, it indicates a level of misogyny that is present towards transgender men's experiences; that they are perceived as women and therefore automatically athletically inferior.

There are a range of critiques to these exclusionary policies which have been explored in more detail elsewhere (e.g., see Torres et al., 2022; Walker & Zychowicz, 2023), but namely these centre around the way in which physiology and biology, and in particular the "narrow and distortive" science of testosterone (Jordan-Young & Karkazis, 2019, p.223), is privileged as the "path to legitimacy" (Wahlert & Fiester, 2012, p.20). Ultimately, this works to reinforce rigid binary constructions of sex and gender along biological and medicalised lines, meaning that competitive sport is not just exclusionary to transgender athletes but also those who identify outside of binary gender classifications (such as non-binary athletes), or those who have differences in sex development (such as intersex athletes). What feels particularly harrowing about this ongoing debate is the way in which sporting organisations frame these conversations and employ language with a particular discourse that revolves around inclusion, acceptance, community, and empowerment, perpetuating a view of sport as 'for everyone', whilst simultaneously defining specific criteria around the types of bodies that are (in)eligible to participate.

2.2.3 Gender diversity within recreational and grassroots sport contexts

Whilst much of the focus in recent years has centred on the elite sport context and the 'transgender debate', research on recreational sport and physical activity contexts is wide ranging and builds a clear picture of the experiences of those with diverse sexual and gender identities in less formal spaces. Large scale surveys in the UK have indicated the significantly lower levels of sport and physical activity participation, opportunity, and enjoyment from the LGBTQ+ community, with gender diverse communities the least active and engaged, when compared to cisgender, heterosexual communities (Pride Sports, 2016; The National LGB&T Partnership, 2015). Within the UK higher education context, similar outcomes were found, with LGBTQ+ students identifying a range of cultural, structural, and physical barriers which impacted on their participation in sport, particularly for those who identified as trans (National Union of Students, 2012).

Research focusing explicitly on gender diverse individuals and their experiences of recreational sport and physical activity indicate how these settings are typically not set up to cater for their inclusion. Physically, there are barriers to their inclusion due to inadequate changing facilities or toilets (due to the explicit gendering of these spaces along binary lines), with research highlighting common fears over safety, surveillance and failing to pass which deterred many from participating (Caudwell, 2020; Greey, 2018; Hargie et al., 2017; Herrick & Duncan, 2020; Jones et al., 2017). Other research highlighted cultural barriers in relation to fears of being stigmatised, stereotyped, or the subject of transphobic attitudes, harassment or abuse within recreational sport settings (Elling-Machartzki, 2017; Muchicko et al., 2014; Travers & Deri, 2010). Given the dominant organisation of sport in line with a gender binary, structural barriers were also highlighted by gender diverse individuals. Research has shown how single-gender sports teams are unappealing to gender diverse individuals (Hargie et al., 2017) who may not feel as though they will be welcomed or may not be allowed to join the gendered team they align with (Pattinson et al., 2022). Whilst there have been greater efforts by sports councils and organisations to address the range of issues outlined above in recent years through policy

reviews and consultations (e.g., UK Sport, 2021; Youth Sport Trust, 2021), the outcomes of these policy developments have not been positive for the gender diverse community and result in further exclusion (Pride Sports, 2021). The creation of exclusionary policies regarding transgender women in many sports, and the repeated erasure of intersex and non-binary individuals within these policies, alongside the intense media scrutiny which divides public opinions on these matters, is likely to be impacting on grassroot and recreational sport organisations' abilities to facilitate truly inclusive provision for gender diverse communities.

2.3 Gender diversity in the school context

2.3.1 The school climate

Research highlights that there are structural and systemic issues in schools which result in the oppression of gender diversity, with schools typically upholding cis-supremacy, forcing gender diverse youth into "positions of vulnerability" (Horton & Carlile, 2022, p.169). McBride and Neary (2021) argue that cisnormativity, the assumption that everyone identifies as the sex they were assigned at birth, "permeates all aspects of school life" (p.1090). The belief that gender is of a binary and fixed, oppositional nature dominates the school setting, and shapes many aspects of the student experience, from the built environment of the toilets and changing rooms, to the curriculum, uniform policy and language use. For example, school policies often disregard gender diverse students by enforcing rules that certain bodies must be in particular changing rooms and wearing a specific uniform, regardless of whether the student feels that they align with the characteristics of that gender (Bower-Brown et al., 2023; Ferguson & Russell, 2021). Therefore, particular gender expressions are punished if they do not conform to the cisnormative structuring of the school, impacting on the educational experiences of gender diverse youth (McBride et al., 2020) and privileging cisgender young people (Miller, 2016). Multiple scholars indicate that cisnormativity is embedded in school policy, attitudes and practices, and whilst these may not aim to cause harm, can have an acute impact on gender diverse students' educational experiences (Bartholomaeus & Riggs, 2017; Riggs & Bartholomaeus, 2018), causing long-lasting stress (Newbury, 2013) and even "contributing to school drop-out and trauma" (Horton, 2022, p.1).

Because of these cisnormative assumptions, schools have been identified as a particular setting where gender diverse youth feel unsafe and face considerable discrimination (Bower-Brown et al., 2023; Greytak et al., 2009; Kosciw et al., 2019; LGBT Youth Scotland, 2018; Wyss, 2004). Studies indicate that gender diverse youth regularly experience a range of negative behaviours from their peers and teachers, due to a lack of societal

understanding on gender diversity, typically in the form of bullying behaviours such as spreading rumours, outing the participants, and making negative comments about their body (Bower-Brown et al., 2023; Kosciw et al., 2013). Whilst bullying predominantly seemed to come from peers in these studies, there were occasions where teachers engaged in bullying behaviours too. This inability for teachers to challenge negative behaviours and, at times, display similarly transphobic perspectives could be seen as validating these behaviours in school, therefore reinforcing cisnormative ideas and further marginalising gender diverse youth. Since the release of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, schools in the UK must legally have anti-bullying measures in place (Department for Education, 2017). However, a 2017 Stonewall report on UK schools highlighted how 64% of trans youth are being bullied for their gender identity at school, with a third of trans students feeling unsafe in school and 9% receiving death threats. The possible consequences of such experiences can be severe, as gender diverse youth who have experienced transphobic bullying and other negative school experiences are "more likely to report self-harm, suicidal ideation and attempted suicide" (Jadva et al., 2021, p.106).

Whilst these are concerning findings, the recent introduction of a new Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) curriculum in 2019 in England may have a positive impact on the school climate for gender diverse youth. This curriculum outlines that state schools are expected to deliver 'LGBT content' to all students, in line with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 which ensures the protection of students based on sexual orientation and gender reassignment (Department for Education, 2019a). This has the potential to increase awareness and understanding of gender diversity within the school setting, in turn reducing animosity towards those with gender diverse identities. However, the statutory guidance is limited by its lack of clarity on what this content should include, leaving it up to schools and educators to interpret and deliver, which could result in inconsistencies in the learning experiences of students across the country. Additionally, the curriculum has been critiqued for its suggestion to teach LGBTQ+ content "at the point at which schools consider it appropriate" (Department for Education, 2019a, p.15) as opposed to embedding this learning throughout the curriculum as a normative

experience, alongside heterosexual and cisgender experiences (Setty & Dobson, 2023). By contrast, the Welsh RSE curriculum repeatedly refers to LGBTQ+ experiences, provides explicit examples of areas it should cover, such as relationships, sexual health and wellbeing, discrimination and bullying, and recommends it be embedded across the whole school curriculum (Welsh Government, 2021). Looking at the teacher's perspective, doctoral work by Stevens (2023) highlighted that RSE teachers felt overwhelmed by the perceived responsibility of the curriculum to fix societal issues such as LGBTQ+ discrimination, particularly as many felt unprepared professionally to address such issues (e.g., through a lack of training) and often faced backlash or pressure from parents about the nature of this content. Lee (2021) explored the impact of the new RSE curriculum on LGBTQ+ teachers, highlighting how the curriculum sparked a moral panic which resulted in hostility towards LGBTQ+ teachers in the form of protests from parents and religious groups. Though more time is required to truly understand the impact of this new curriculum, it is evident that its introduction has caused a range of tensions. Nonetheless, it has the *potential* for positive outcomes, and further research is needed to articulate how this new curriculum may be affecting the wider school culture and school experiences of gender diverse students.

Although prior research has typically presented the school climate as a hostile one for gender diverse youth due to discriminative and bullying behaviours from peers, work by Bragg et al. (2018) presents another perspective. In their study they found that young people (aged 12-14) from diverse socio-economic and geographic school locations in England exhibited a clear understanding of the complexity of gender identity and expression, were critically reflexive of their own positionality and displayed commitments to principles of gender equality and justice for the rights of gender diverse groups (Bragg et al., 2018). In this sense, the young people here showed a willingness to be inclusive, practice acceptance and embrace difference within the school setting. However, due to the binary structures of the school system, the participants were typically inhibited from navigating the school setting with these principles at the forefront, as their "immediate social cultural worlds are constructed in such a way that gender binary choices are

frequently inevitable" (Bragg et al., 2018, p.420). Therefore, whilst young people may have progressive attitudes that recognise and validate gender diversity, the school setting often invalidates these and expects students to conform to binary notions of gender.

2.3.2   Teacher perspectives towards gender diversity

In relation to the above, an additional concern in the school setting centres around the lack of knowledge or awareness teachers themselves have regarding gender diversity. Research in the US identifies fear and anxiety as common feelings that teachers discussed when asked how they felt about the presence of transgender students in their classrooms (Payne & Smith, 2014). This was owing to their perceived lack of competence and preparedness to know how best to work with and support those who challenged the binary gender structures within the school setting. These anxieties are reflected in a range of other studies from North America which document the lack of training and resources provided to teachers to address the needs of LGBTQ+ students (Jennings & Macgillivray, 2011; Macgillivray & Jennings, 2008; Martino et al., 2022). Research in the Australian context has also highlighted the need for additional teacher training to enable teachers to better intervene and challenge transphobic behaviours in schools (Hillier et al., 2020; Robinson et al., 2014). Some studies highlight how teachers are beginning to challenge cisnormativity in schools and promote gender diverse-inclusive practices, however these are predominantly in the North American context (Kearns et al., 2017; Marx et al., 2017; Meyer et al., 2016). Ullman (2016) found that teachers' positivity towards gender diversity directly impacted on gender diverse students' sense of connection to their school environment and those students "report[ed] higher academic self-concept and being more confident and motivated learners" (p.285). Teacher positivity was identified by measuring gender diverse participants' perceptions of whether their teachers showed support and acceptance of alternative gender expression, challenged transphobic behaviour and discussed gender diversity in a positive way. Therefore, teachers who are well-versed and knowledgeable about gender diversity are likely to impact positively on

the school experiences of gender diverse youth. Nonetheless, there appears to be considerable gaps in our understanding of how or to what extent content on gender diversity is covered within teacher education programmes. This area is explored in more depth in section 2.5.5.

In the UK we are beginning to garner an understanding on teacher perspectives of gender diversity, though there remains little comprehension on the forms of knowledge that teachers hold or the types of practices they may utilise to support gender diverse students. A recent survey by BBC News with nearly 7000 teachers in England highlighted that 75% of secondary school teachers had experience of teaching a trans or non-binary student, with just over half stating that they would not feel confident in knowing how to support a student socially transitioning in school (Moss & Parry, 2023). Likewise, recent studies with English secondary school teachers have indicated that teachers feel they lack the knowledge and confidence to address issues relating to gender diversity and are fearful about making mistakes which may impact negatively on their students or result in resistance from the parental and wider community (Burnham, 2020; Markland et al., 2023). In the Northern Irish context, where the deeply religious context is often thought to act as a barrier for gender diverse communities in schools, research has highlighted that, whilst there is similar sense of fear and lack of knowledge present amongst teachers, these teachers found that Christian values of acceptance and compassion supported them in developing more inclusive attitudes within faith schools (Simmons, 2020). Research by the LGBTQ+ youth charity Just Like Us (2021) found that 78% of teachers in the UK detailed that they would like more help with supporting trans students in school, illustrating a clear desire from some teachers to increase their understanding of gender diversity. Encouragingly, these intentions for greater knowledge and training on gender diversity were reflected in the previously mentioned studies too (Burnham, 2020; Markland et al., 2023; Simmons, 2020). As more young people begin to express themselves in gender fluid ways, and with significant rises in youth referrals to gender identity services in the UK, the ability to provide these young people with support becomes a much greater consideration for schools, as increasing numbers of young

people may not be having positive and engaging school experiences. Whilst we have recently seen the publication of non-statutory guidance for English schools regarding 'gender questioning' pupils (Department for Education, 2023), this has been widely critiqued for its framing of gender identity as an ideology as opposed to a lived reality, therefore erasing the experiences of many gender diverse students, and for its lack of clarity and practical guidance for teachers (Gendered Intelligence, 2023; Lee, 2023; Mermaids, 2024; Stonewall, 2023). To this end, the guidance does not support teachers in developing genuinely inclusive practices for gender diverse students but may instead heighten their anxieties and develop further confusion over this matter.

2.4 PHYSICAL EDUCATION, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY

This next section takes a closer look at the literature surrounding Physical Education, gender and sexuality, before ultimately exploring gender diversity and its place within the PE literature. The chapter concludes by discussing the theoretical and methodological limitations of this field which this thesis aims to address.

2.4.1 The purpose, benefits, and structure of PE

Within the UK, the subject of PE has gone through many changes in structure and aims. To this day, there is still contention over its purpose, with different meanings and foci depending on the stakeholders involved (Bowler et al., 2020; Whitehead, 2020). This is in part due to the common conflation of the terms PE, school sport and physical activity which, whilst closely related, have different definitions and goals within the school setting (Morgan, 2006). PE is a "compulsory subject under the National Curriculum at all key stages" (Long et al., 2023, p.1), whilst school sport refers to voluntary sport which takes place at school, but outside of the timetabled curriculum (such as lunchtime sports clubs or fixtures). Physical activity is referred to as any bodily movement that requires energy expenditure (World Health Organization, 2022), and in the school context there is an expectation set out by the UK Chief Medical Officers that at least 30 minutes of physical activity is delivered per day at school (Department for Health & Social Care, 2019). There are, of course, entanglements across all these terms and how they operate in the school setting, and different understandings of sport (e.g., elite sport policies) and physical activity (e.g., in relation to public health) have, and continue to, feed into today's PE provision.

The PE profession has suffered from unclear priorities due to changes in educational policy, attempts to keep up with shifts in contemporary society, and the diverse range of beliefs held by PE teachers themselves which have all resulted in the subject trying to do 'too much' (Bowler et al., 2020). On top of this, given the gradual academisation of schools

in England since the early 2000s (West & Wolfe, 2018), there is arguably even broader scope in the purpose and delivery of PE as increasingly fewer schools are required to adhere to the National Curriculum for PE (NCPE). This poses significant questions as to the future direction of PE and how (or if) students can receive the same quality of education. Nonetheless, all schools are still required to provide some form of physical development for students in the UK (Academies Act, 2010; Long et al., 2023).

Bailey (2006) succinctly outlines a range of benefits that PE and sport (PES) can provide to children and adolescents:

> "It is suggested that PES have the potential to make distinctive contributions to the development of children's fundamental movement skills and physical competences, which are necessary precursors of participation in later lifestyle and sporting physical activities. They also, when appropriately presented, can support the development of social skills and social behaviors, self-esteem and proschool attitudes, and, in certain circumstances, academic and cognitive development." (p.397)

These benefits can be organised into five overriding domains; physical, lifestyle, affective, social and cognitive (Bailey, 2006), and can aid young people during their school years and long into their future. On top of this, quality PE can also help to tackle wider public health goals (Siedentop, 2002) such as addressing obesity and poor mental health in the UK. Therefore, the importance of young people experiencing positive and engaging PE seems paramount to both their own development and in the interests of public health. This is particularly true when considering the inequalities that young people face in accessing sport and physical activity outside of school, for example due to structural or financial barriers (Ofsted, 2022; Youth Sport Trust 2022).

Given the variation in the purpose and aims of PE, it is understandable that PE experiences amongst young people will differ. However, dominant belief systems and structures within PE and the wider school setting (informed by wider historical and cultural systems in society) shape the content, organisation and pedagogy of PE, and these result in the

development of PE settings which value some students whilst rejecting or erasing others (Drury et al., 2017; Penney & Evans, 2005). For example, Kirk et al. (2006) describe how research with young women, those from working class backgrounds, minority ethnic communities and disabled young people have highlighted the often-problematic nature of PE and its contribution to disengagement from physical activity amongst these groups. Reflecting on Bailey's (2006) quote above, whilst PE has the *potential* to develop a wide range of skills and behaviours, in reality the subject tends to emphasise a particularly narrow set of skills and behaviours that do not reflect or empower the full diversity of students in PE. For example, throwing, running and passing skills for use in traditional games-based activities which are competitive in nature. In this vein, Riley and Proctor (2022) argue for the need to "challenge historically situated, culturally located and socially mediated discourses" (p.268) that cause certain individuals to become erased in PE, advocating for the emergence of new theories and practices that encourage a sense of belonging for those most disengaged.

Gender diverse youth are one such group who remain largely unheard within the PE setting (Landi et al., 2020), and in subsequent sections their distinct PE experiences will be discussed. At this juncture, it feels crucial to point out that this group of young people are perhaps in considerable need of positive, engaging and inclusive PE, sport and physical activity experiences. Gender diverse people are thought to be significantly more vulnerable to a range of mental health challenges due to the multiple societal oppressions that many face (Connolly et al., 2016). A study commissioned by Stonewall found that 70% of non-binary people had experienced depression, 71% of trans and 79% of non-binary people had experienced anxiety, and 46% of trans and 50% of non-binary people had considered taking their own life (Bachmann & Gooch, 2018). These percentages increase significantly for gender diverse people who are also disabled or people of colour, as they face further oppression due to their intersecting identities. A large-scale survey in the US found even higher percentages when they explored the mental health of gender diverse youth specifically (The Trevor Project, 2021). It is well known that physical activity is promoted as a method to improve poor mental health and wellbeing, with it commonly

used as a medical prescription to reduce depressive and anxious symptoms (Paluska & Schwenk, 2000; Saxena et al., 2005). Therefore, through positive PE and school sport experiences it may be possible to reduce the possibility of poor mental health amongst gender diverse youth and foster lifelong engagement to sport and physical activity, providing long term health benefits.

2.4.2 Gendered PE

Much like the wider institution of sport, PE has historically reflected and reinforced dominant understandings of sex and gender as interconnected, fixed and of a binary nature. Researchers argue that the gender binary is at the core of the PE setting, reinforcing gendered stereotypes and norms through the very practices and structures of PE (Neary & McBride, 2021; Scraton, 2018). These taken-for-granted societal assumptions regarding the gender binary have, for some time, remained unquestioned in the PE sector. As Sykes (2011) puts it; "[m]en's and women's sport along with boys' and girls' physical education have been, and continue to be, ubiquitous and unquestionable ways in which to organise physical activity and, thus, physical education" (p.36).

This gendering of PE has been a prominent feature of secondary school PE for many years, typically seen through its organisation of the students, physical space, curriculum, uniform, patterns of staffing, language use and more (Hargreaves, 1994; Kirk, 1992; Penney, 2002; Sykes, 2011; Wilkinson & Penney, 2023). For example, students are typically segregated based on the gender binary; in separate male and female classes, participating in 'gender-appropriate' activities, with separate changing rooms and uniforms. Whilst there is no mention of gender-segregation or of any requirements for gender-specific activities or policies within the NCPE, this remains a central way in which PE is organised in many schools. So, why is this? And who makes these decisions? The historical belief of sport as a male bastion, whose purpose was to emphasise and promote masculine ideals, has informed ideas today around who sport is for, and what types of

sport are deemed appropriate and 'possible' for different bodies (Schultz, 2022; Sykes, 2011). Kirk (2002) argues that PE practices have, since their introduction in compulsory schooling, been "strongly associated with stereotypical views about the behaviours and activity that is appropriate for girls and boys respectively and with notably singular images of femininity and masculinity" (p.25). For example, for some time rugby has been deemed an activity that is suitable for boys, yet unsuitable for girls, due to its aggressive nature and high risk of injury. Again, whilst there is no reference to this within the NCPE, these concerns tend to shape provision in different ways for students. Wilkinson and Penney (2023) found that PE teachers made these decisions based on rules from NGBs for sports such as the Rugby Football Union (RFU). In this sense, whilst the NCPE does not frame PE in relation to a gender binary, PE teachers' decisions are often shaped by other prominent sporting discourses and policies.

Kirk (2002) notes that PE in the UK takes a particularly "masculinised form" (p.35), further reinforcing ideas around who PE is for and privileging certain forms of gender, particularly hegemonic masculinity (Gard, 2006). Schultz (2022) argues that this divergence in the development of sports and PE curricula for boys and girls works to naturalise the perceived differences between the sexes. This discursive framing of gender in PE has resulted in long-term inequalities in the experiences of boys and girls in PE, as it serves to erase commonalities across experiences by perpetuating assumptions that boys and girls have inherently different characteristics (Hargreaves, 1994), and therefore should participate in separate, 'gender-appropriate' activities (Larsson et al., 2009). Consequently, there is a growing field of research which explores the issues, barriers and motivations of girls' participation in PE, alongside the development of new frameworks and practices which attempt to provide more equitable PE experiences (Fisette, 2013; Gibbons et al., 2011; Larsson et al., 2009; Murphy et al., 2014).

Whilst this increasing body of literature is promising in the sense that it works to critique and transform the PE setting towards greater equity, research typically frames girls' experiences of PE in opposition to the experiences of boys (Penney & Evans, 2002), and

is therefore flawed in the sense that it does not consider gender beyond the binary. Instead, gendered discourses in PE continue to be framed by a view of gender that reduces it to two binary and opposing identities with contrasting individualities, and this viewpoint has become taken-for-granted in the PE setting (Sykes, 2011), preventing an understanding of gender as diverse, complex or fluid. It reinforces narrow conceptions of gender, and with that, the behaviours and expressions expected of young people in PE. Wilkinson and Penney's (2023) recent survey of 818 English secondary schools indicated that, whilst there were some instances of change, PE continued to largely "reproduce and legitimate restrictive binary gender discourses" (p.1) through its continuation of sex-segregated practices and policies, particularly in relation to grouping practices. Therefore, it appears there is still a critical lack of awareness within the PE profession regarding gendered discourses and the impact of these on gender diverse young people.

2.4.3 Cis-heteronormativity in PE

This understanding of gender as binary and oppositional in the PE setting has caused researchers to suggest the subject as one which reinforces cis-heteronormative assumptions (Berg & Kokkonen, 2022; Devís-Devís et al., 2018; Fitzpatrick & McGlashan, 2016; Larsson et al., 2011; Herrick & Duncan, 2023). Cis-heteronormativity describes the "system of gender and sexuality that reproduces a normative order, privileging those who are cisgender, heterosexual and gender-conforming" (Neary & McBride, 2021, p.1). Researchers have found that cis-heteronormativity in the PE setting conditions students into behaving and presenting in different ways, with girls wishing to appear feminine and avoiding aggressive, competitive behaviours, whilst boys aim to avoid effeminate behaviours and projected masculine behaviours and confidence (Larsson et al., 2011). Those who are seen to transgress these 'normative' behaviours are considered abnormal and commonly labelled 'butch lesbians' or 'poofs', which are often perceived negatively. When heterosexuality is considered the norm in a context shaped by the gender binary, homosexuality is positioned in binary opposition to this and consequently "devalued and

discredited because it does not adhere to rigid gender role expectations" (Ayvazo & Sutherland, 2009, p.57). Given that cis-heteronormativity reinforces a binary logic that places men and women in opposition, its regulating force does not just act on sexuality but on gender identity too (Drury et al., 2017), meaning that cis-heteronormativity within PE can impact on both sexually and gender diverse young people.

Multiple researchers have provided evidence as to how cis-heteronormativity comes to be in the PE setting, and the impact of it on LGBTQ+ students. Fitzpatrick and McGlashan (2016) argue that a dominant 'straight pedagogy' "reproduces multiple forms of exclusion" (p.102) in PE, impacting specifically on those with 'non-normative' sexual and gender identities. Drury et al. (2017) highlight the teacher's role in maintaining this 'straight pedagogy' through perpetuating gender and sexuality stereotypes in PE, manifested through their disapproval of students participating in 'inappropriate' sports for their gender (e.g., girls participating in football). They also found that teachers left homophobic and transphobic comments and bullying unchallenged in PE, consequently fortifying the view that these types of behaviours are acceptable. This resulted in LGBTQ+ students facing abuse from peers and feelings of inadequacy and being 'out of place' as their desires to participate in certain activities were frowned upon. In the Finnish context, Berg and Kokkonen (2022) found that cis-heteronormativity was readily apparent in the PE context, with PE teachers largely 'tolerating' LGBTQ+ students as opposed to creating a truly equal environment for them. This tolerance of non-heterosexual identities was regarded a process of heteronormativity, as it assumes there to be something different to the 'norm' which must be tolerated, therefore marginalising non-heterosexuality to a lesser, minority position. Other research supports this, with LGBTQ+ students feeling that they are a 'problem' to PE teachers because they don't fit in with the heteronormative culture of PE (Landi, 2019). Although Berg and Kokkonen's (2022) findings generally pointed to the PE setting as a cis-heteronormative climate, they found that some PE teachers did, to a degree, challenge these beliefs to create more equitable and inclusive lessons. For example, they found that some teachers paid "attention to diversity in gender

and sexuality in their thinking, speaking, and practices" (Berg & Kokkonen, 2022, p.368) and therefore challenged the cis-heteronormative status quo.

In Australia, researchers have identified PE as an overly cis-heteronormative space which perpetuated 'hyper-masculine behaviour' and allowed homophobic bullying to take place (Storr et al., 2022). They highlighted how both PE teachers and other students in PE perpetuated the notion that PE is about "toughness, stoicism and competition" (Storr et al., 2022, p.612) which links to masculine and heterosexual ideals. Homophobia was therefore utilised to police masculinity in the PE setting, particularly in team sports, which worked to marginalise sexually diverse students. Ultimately, these examples highlight how a heteronormative PE setting results in inequitable, and often negative experiences for LGBTQ+ youth. Research suggests that if young people have negative sport and physical activity experiences during their early years, this is likely to impact on their health and well-being as well as decisions to pursue physical activity in later life (Armour et al., 2013; National Union of Students, 2012). Therefore LGBTQ+ youth who endure negative experiences due to cis-heteronormative practices in PE may be less likely to take up healthy, active lifestyles in the future. This is supported by other work which identified LGBTQ+ students as less likely to participate in sports compared to heterosexual and cisgender students due to persisting cis-heteronormative cultures (Clark & Kosciw, 2020; Kulick et al., 2018; Müller & Böhlke, 2021).

Whilst the above studies shine a light on the wider experiences of the LGBTQ+ community in PE, it is valuable to explore the unique experiences of gender diverse youth to avoid conflation or the erasure of certain experiences (Caudwell, 2014). This conflation is common across the literature on LGBTQ+ sport participation and physical activity: the employment of the term 'LGBTQ+' (or other iterations), but without the explicit exploration and separation of sexuality from gender identity. Caudwell (2014) suggests that its use commonly results in the homogenisation of the lives and experiences of a distinctly diverse community. Often, research utilising 'LGBTQ+' has centred around the experiences of lesbian and gay individuals, overlooking gender diverse experiences or

including them in tokenistic ways. This becomes an issue as it can result in the perception that issues of sexuality and gender are the same, ignoring the unique and nuanced experiences that individuals may have in relation to gender identity (Drury et al., 2017). As Lucas-Carr and Krane (2011) explain, "while there are some common experiences among LGBT individuals, issues surrounding gender identity differ from those related to sexual orientation" (p.533), and therefore it is helpful to understand these experiences individually. Accordingly, this next section aims to explore key literature within PE contexts with an explicit focus on gender diversity.

2.5 GENDER DIVERSITY IN THE PE CONTEXT

There is a small, but growing, body of literature which has begun to go beyond explorations of wider LGBTQ+ experiences of PE and school sport, centring explicitly on those voices and experiences least heard within this field; the voices of those with gender diverse identities (Landi et al., 2020). As Caudwell (2014) argued, there is a need to gain insight on the intricacies and complexities of gender diversity within sporting contexts, given that sexually diverse experiences (e.g., lesbian and gay) have dominated the field of study for some time. Therefore, this section unpacks existing literature on how trans, non-binary and gender diverse individuals have experienced PE and school sport.

2.5.1 PE groupings and curriculums

Given that PE is predominantly organised along binary gender lines, considerations around how those with gender diverse identities may navigate and engage with this setting have started to emerge in recent years. Research has begun to problematise the way in which students are grouped in PE, alongside the curriculum that is offered to these groups, with a central concern being whether, or how, those with gender diverse identities can transgress or challenge existing gender boundaries. In the Spanish PE context, Devís-Devís et al. (2018) share how transgender individuals regularly felt 'in the middle' of PE groups, activities and spaces because they were unable to participate with their desired gender group. Key to this was the refusal by PE teachers to enable such a transgression by these students, who instead "acted as a … political control of students' bodies and their socially accepted gender roles" (Devís-Devís et al., 2018, p.109) by ensuring students remained in groups that aligned with their assigned sex at birth. This is mirrored in research within the UK context, with PE teachers typically denying transgender students from opportunities to transgress gendered groups, resulting in feelings of isolation, rejection and inadequacy that stayed with some of the participants throughout their life (Ferguson & Russell, 2021; Hargie et al., 2017; Kettley-Linsell, 2022; Williamson & Sandford, 2018). Given this potential outcome, gender diverse participants in several

studies indicated how they did not feel safe or comfortable in being open about their gender identity, due to fears of bullying, peer non-acceptance, and transphobia (Ferguson & Russell, 2021; Kettley-Linsell, 2022; Williamson & Sandford, 2018). For those with non-binary or gender non-conforming identities, research is particularly limited in relation to how they might experience this grouping practice. Kettley-Linsell (2022) found that non-binary and gender non-conforming young people felt negatively about gender-segregated PE groupings due to the lack of consideration within the PE setting that "one could exist outside of the gender binary" (p.143), and feelings of invalidation were common due to them being forced to participate as a gender they did not align with. However, Kettley-Linsell's (2022) research engaged with young adults who were not 'out' during secondary school, so whilst these findings indicate the way in which this group feel about gender-segregated PE groups, there is further exploration needed to gain insight on what this experience might look like to someone who is openly non-binary or gender non-conforming during their school years. There were occasional instances where 'closeted' gender diverse students were able to transgress gendered boundaries in PE, yet these were deemed 'out-of-the-ordinary' and were far from commonplace (McBride and Neary, 2021). For example, one trans girl in Ferguson and Russell's (2021) study explained that she was able to join the girl's PE lesson once as an 'exam time treat'. In other words, at a period where regular rules and structures tend to be relaxed within the school setting. During the rest of the school year, the typical cis-heteronormative structures were upheld within PE, denying any opportunities for gender diversity to flourish.

In studies where gender diverse youth were 'out' in PE, there were mixed experiences of inclusion within gender-segregated PE groupings. Whilst some participants in Ferguson and Russell's (2021) felt unable to disclose their gender identity in school, there was one participant who was openly transgender. This boy, Connor, was supported by the PE department through his transition, and was enabled to join the boy's PE group. Likewise, in McBride and Neary's (2021) research, several of the trans participants were granted access to join the gendered PE group they aligned with. However, in both studies, it was not a simple case of re-assigning a name on a register to reflect the switch in groups, and

the participants faced a range of barriers and difficulties in their transgression. McBride and Neary (2021) explored how gender diverse students (and their parents) fought to be included within the gender binary framework of PE, with students doing "significant inclusivity labour … on an everyday basis to be included, recognised and apprehended in PE and school sport" (p.10). Inclusivity labour is a term coined by Newman et al. (2021) which refers to the constant burden and responsibility an individual endures to facilitate their inclusion in a particular context, and McBride and Neary (2021) illustrate the multiple ways in which gender diverse students had to repeatedly advocate for their comfort, validation and inclusion in PE. Furthermore, their inclusion relied on the presence of supportive teachers who were able to make adaptations within the PE setting, something which is not necessarily present in all PE contexts. For example, in McBride and Neary's (2021) work, one trans woman explained how she asked to join the Zumba lesson with the girls, and this was allowed by the Zumba instructor but under "hushed and secretive circumstances" (p.5) whereby the instructor snuck her into the lesson illicitly. In relation to Connor's experience in Ferguson and Russell's (2021) study, whilst he was able to join the boy's PE lessons, there were certain activities (those of a contact nature) which he was excluded from joining and he was unable to enter either of the gendered communal changing rooms. These examples illustrate how there are often conditions to the inclusion of gender diverse students in PE, with these students having to "constantly negotiate the terms of their acceptability" (McBride & Neary, 2021, p.7). Their acceptance within certain gendered domains is never full, but partial and under scrutiny.

Gender diverse young people have expressed preferences for mixed-gender PE classes, suggesting that this approach to student grouping would result in their increased safety, comfort and connection to others in these spaces (Drury et al., 2023; Ferguson & Russell, 2021; Kettley-Linsell, 2022). Encouragingly, there are several recent studies which indicate how these practices are beginning to be taken up in some PE contexts. In Finland, Berg and Kokkonen (2022) highlight how some PE teachers made explicit attempts to queer existing heteronormative practices by teaching PE in mixed-gender groups following the presence of openly LGBTQ+ students in their classes, and in the UK,

Wilkinson and Penney (2023) describe a shift towards mixed-gender PE lessons amongst some of the PE teachers in their study, owing to the increasing numbers of gender diverse students in their schools. Whilst the teacher uptake of this approach was considerably low in both studies (10% and 5%, respectively), it still indicates how the presence and visibility of gender diversity in schools is beginning to encourage inclusive transformations in the PE setting.

As outlined in a previous section, PE curriculums are typically informed by the gender binary, with girls and boys groups participating in different activities concurrently. Whilst we are beginning to see a shift away from such a gendered approach, with the introduction of 'gender-neutral' curriculums where all students have the same opportunities to participate in a range of activities, this is still not considered the norm in PE (Wilkinson & Penney, 2023). Research on transgender students' experiences of PE indicate how this divisive gendering of activities resulted in two key outcomes for these students, dependent on their gender identity. For those who identified as female but were not yet openly transgender and therefore participated in boy's PE lessons, participation in traditionally masculine activities resulted in feelings of discomfort and disengagement as these activities were at odds with their own sense of gender identity (Devís-Devís et al., 2018; Ferguson & Russell, 2021; Storr et al., 2022; Sykes, 2011). Transgender girls aimed to avoid 'rough', 'boyish' activities and feared participating in the "masculinist ideals of toughness, stoicism and competition" that were typical in PE, particularly in male PE groups (Storr et al., 2022, p.612). In some cases, transgender girls were picked on by peers for attempting to perform activities in 'girlish' ways (Devís-Devís et al., 2018). However, for transgender boys, PE was typically more enjoyable and validating as it provided them with an opportunity to participate in masculine behaviours (Devís-Devís et al., 2018; Ferguson & Russell, 2021), even if they were still unable to join the boy's PE group. This said, Kettley-Linsell (2022) described how transgender participants in their study felt forced to adhere to the masculine or feminine ideals of their activities, even though these behaviours felt incongruent with their gender identity, over fears of being 'outed' as transgender for not aligning with the gender expectations of their activities.

Given this concern, it is understandable that McBride and Neary (2021) describe the gendered architecture of PE curriculums as a "significant 'outing' risk … for trans young people who are stealth at school" (p.7). 'Stealth', or 'going stealth' is a slang term developed within transgender communities as a way of describing non-disclosure of one's transgender identity; "those living stealth are unknown as transgender to almost everyone in their lives" (Beauchamp, 2018, p.34). Insights into non-binary and gender non-conforming individuals' preferences regarding gender-segregated PE curriculums are less clear, though it could be suggested that they pose additional difficulties if these individuals do not seek to align with traditional ideas of masculinity or femininity inherent to many traditional PE curriculums.

There were also more informal ways in which gendered organisations of students took place within the PE setting. Kettley-Linsell (2022) explored how practices around picking teams and lining up before lessons were commonly arranged in binary gender terms, causing a "deep sense of longing, displacement, and fear" (p.142) due to being separated from the group that they relate to most. Picking teams was regarded as a particularly exclusionary practice, with gender diverse students deemed as different to their peers and consequently picked last by peers as a form of bullying and othering.

2.5.2 Safety concerns

A common justification for the division of students by gender in PE centres around the assumed physiological differences between male and female students, and the way in which this informs their strength, abilities, and capacities during physical activity. This essentialist view towards gender and bodily difference has been used to shape sporting policies and rules regarding the safety of participants, with female students considered more 'at-risk' of injury or harm if participating in certain activities with boys (Travers, 2018a). For gender diverse students, these policies can become a barrier to their participation in PE in multiple ways. Ferguson and Russell (2021) explored how PE

teachers played a role in delegitimising a trans boy's identity through their refusal to allow him to participate in contact rugby with the other boys. Whilst they allowed the student to join the boy's PE group at his request, the contact nature of rugby was considered 'too dangerous' for him to participate in and he was required to take on a coaching role from the side lines instead. This indicated to him that his PE teachers still considered him as female, and therefore weak and in need of protection from the other boys in the class. This aligns with Phipps and Blackall's (2023) work which shared insights into a trans boy's experience of PE, whereby he was considered too small-framed and fragile to participate alongside the boys. Dominant assumptions regarding male physical superiority frame these decisions (Velija & Kumar, 2009), ignoring the vast biological diversity across young peoples' bodies that already shapes sport as inherently unfair and unsafe.

Wilkinson and Penney (2023) begin to explore the issue of safety concerns in PE from the teachers' perspective, indicating how PE teachers tend to have a cisnormative framing to their decisions which favours cisgender girls' safety over gender diverse students', failing to respond to the "contemporary social and cultural complexities that are reflected in student populations and wider society" (p.13). Drury et al. (2023) also share a brief insight into PE teachers' concerns over trans safety and inclusion in PE, with one teacher sharing their dilemma over how to enable 'safe' and 'fair' competition in PE when a transgender student is present. Again, these concerns comply to a paternalistic logic which sees transgender women as an inherent threat to competition and transgender men as at-risk of injury (Lucas-Carr & Krane, 2011), buying into essentialist assumptions of bodily difference. Whilst these findings begin to shed a light on how (or whether) PE teachers are considering gender diversity in relation to safety in PE, these insights predominantly show how PE teachers' focus is on cisgender student safety. Thus far, research has not explored how PE teachers might take an affirmative approach to supporting gender diverse students in PE and how this might interconnect with dominant perspectives regarding competition and safety in PE and wider sporting cultures.

2.5.3 The built environment

Whilst the above section explored matters of safety in relation to curriculum participation, a central concern for gender diverse students in relation to their own safety pertained to their experiences within changing rooms. Sykes (2011) describes gender-segregated changing rooms as the "scene for multiple forms of gender fascism, ranging from microscopic scrutiny of the body's surface, shape and substance to brutal public acts of transphobic violence" (p.45). Likewise, research indicates that this built environment is considered by gender diverse youth to be the most traumatic, problematic, and unsafe space within the school setting due to its explicit gendering and organisation of bodies, and the consequent outcomes of this (Drury et al., 2017; Ferguson & Russell, 2021; Herrick & Duncan, 2023; Kettley-Linsell, 2022; Sørlie, 2020; Storr et al., 2022; Sykes, 2011). Sørlie (2020) discusses how school policies on changing rooms can often be insensitive to the needs of gender diverse students, with these students typically banned from using the facilities that match their gender identity, being forced to share a space with peers that they do not relate with. This is supported by research in the UK which indicates that 67% of trans students are not allowed to use the changing room they align with (Stonewall, 2017). The consequences of this are wide ranging, with gender diverse youth sharing fears and experiences of being bullied, being physically attacked, having intense gender dysphoria, being misgendered by peers, and feeling forced to 'come out' (Drury et al., 2017; Ferguson & Russell, 2021; Herrick & Duncan, 2023; Kettley-Linsell, 2022; Sørlie, 2020; Storr et al., 2022; Sykes, 2011). Research by Holland (2021) articulates additional difficulties faced by neurodiverse trans students in PE changing rooms, with these individuals finding these spaces to be a sensory overload, and some struggling to understand (or refusing to align with) the dominant gender ideals within the space. Consequently, some experienced bullying due to their 'genderless' expression and avoidance of wearing bras or shaving legs due to their overly sensory nature. This appears to be the only available research to explicitly unpack these intersecting experiences of gender diversity and neurodiversity within the PE context. In fact, there is a significant gap in the literature with regard to intersectional experiences along other social identities too.

At the time of writing, I have not found a single article which explicitly sets out to explore possible intersections of gender diversity with race, ethnicity, disability, social class or religion within the PE context. I reflect on this silence in more depth in Chapter 4.

Storr et al. (2022) found that an openly trans boy (who was denied access to an alternative space) was beaten up by female peers due to his presence in the girl's changing room at school, consequently developing strategies to avoid abuse which centred around arriving early or late to the changing room to avoid contact with other people. In Drury et al.'s (2017) study, they found that a trans student in their preferred changing room also experienced transphobic bullying from peers. This went unchallenged by PE teachers and instead, the student was required to change in a store cupboard away from her peers. In both scenarios, the lack of response from teachers in challenging their peer's behaviours resulted in the trans student being forced to remove themselves from the situation. This positions gender diverse students as the 'problem', rather than the negative behaviour of others. Phipps and Blackall (2023) explore how decisions to remove gender diverse individuals from gendered changing rooms are commonly framed by concerns over the safety and comfort of other students, rather than the gender diverse individuals. Gender diverse students are commonly seen as an intruder of gendered changing rooms, positioning them as the "location, or cause, of risk" (Ferfolja & Ullman, 2021, p.803) towards the school community due to their difference. This materialises through the lengthy, complex processes that schools often enforce on gender diverse students, with risk assessments and confirmations from senior or safeguarding teams required before allowing them into their preferred changing room or an alternative changing space (Ferfolja & Ullman, 2021). Sørlie (2020) explains that this framing of risk is not actually about the "(supposed) discomfort of other pupils … but is based on prejudice against transgender children" (p.234). In other words, they suggest that assumptions are made regarding other students' attitudes towards the presence of a gender diverse student in their changing space, when this view is instead informed by wider prejudiced attitudes within the school setting. Nonetheless, this does contradict much of the discussed literature on bullying and abuse in changing rooms, which often frames peers as the

perpetrators of transphobic behaviours, and PE teachers as bystanders. This highlights the messiness of these debates and multiple ways in which these discourses materialise within the PE context. There is also a reflection to be made regarding the commonality of framing certain bodies as 'risky' and in need of policing for the safety and benefit of others, that we not only see in the school setting but in many other domains. For example, the argument against Caster Semenya deemed that for the integrity and equality of sport to remain, she must be discriminated against. But in actuality, this emerges as the privileging of certain bodies over others. Butler (1990) might describe this as the reinforcing of intelligible bodies; those which conform and reflect a stable gender identity and performance.

Given the range of possible negative outcomes within changing rooms, Sykes (2011) discusses how gender diverse students must be 'hyper-vigilant' in these spaces, highlighting the emotional and embodied labour that these students experience in attempting to navigate this gendered space. For those who have not disclosed their gender identity, changing rooms can become a space which forces these young people to 'out' themselves due to being questioned by peers over being in the 'wrong space' (Davies et al., 2019; Phipps & Blackall, 2023). Within Phipps and Blackall's (2023) research, this was forced upon the young person due to a lack of alternative changing spaces, meaning they had to continue using facilities that did not align with their gender. To avoid this potentiality, some gender diverse youth participate in 'self-editing' (Erikainen et al., 2020), where gender diverse students may attempt to mirror their peers' behaviours or expressions to avoid harassment (Kettley-Linsell, 2022). This results in the perpetuation of narrow expectations of gendered behaviour and with this, the inability for them to express themselves in ways that make sense to them.

The lack of privacy within changing spaces can result in gender diverse students feeling exposed and under scrutiny from their peers, resulting in feelings of discomfort and gender dysphoria (Devís-Devís et al., 2018; Ferguson & Russell, 2021; Foley et al., 2016). In some settings, these students are provided with an alternative changing space as an

attempt to mitigate this discomfort, though as outlined above, there are other factors which can inform these decisions, not all of which centre the gender diverse individuals' needs. Nonetheless, research indicates that gender diverse students have mixed feelings regarding the use of alternative changing spaces. Some students felt excluded and isolated from their peers, whilst others enjoyed the privacy and safety of their own changing space (Lucas-Carr & Krane, 2012; McBride & Neary, 2021). A key issue outlined by researchers in relation to providing alternative provision for gender diverse youth is the way in which it allows a cisnormative system to continue (McBride & Neary, 2021; Omercajic & Martino 2020; Phipps & Blackall, 2023), finding ways to 'fit' the gender diverse individual into these existing systems as opposed to re-configuring them. Additionally, it relies on the gender diverse student reaching out and requesting alternative provision, something which some young people may feel unable to do. The matter of changing room provision for gender diverse students is clearly a complex one, and Drury et al. (2017) summarise this in the following statement:

> "[Teacher's accounts highlight] the difficult balance of providing 'safe' alternative places for trans* students to change without them feeling 'forced out' of changing facilities offered to other students, whilst ensuring that changing arrangements for trans* young people do not provoke negative responses from other students that may exacerbate bullying." (p.9-10)

As the visibility and presence of gender diverse students increases, schools will need to evolve beyond an individualised, reactive approach to changing room provision toward a more embedded, proactive approach if they are to address the range of issues outlined above. Encouragingly, in Wilkinson and Penney's (2023) large scale survey with English PE teachers, they describe the emergence of a shift towards this approach, with some teachers reviewing their changing room provision to ensure it encompasses the needs of gender diverse youth. Several studies have shared strategies for PE departments and senior leadership teams to consider, such as introducing gender-neutral changing spaces, or if spatially limited, adding cubicles or privacy curtains to existing changing rooms (Ferguson & Russell, 2021; Sørlie, 2020). However, thus far there does not appear

to be research that investigates these strategies in practice, or how PE teachers feel about implementing them in the school setting. Are PE teachers beginning to take a more proactive approach to changing room provision? Or is the inclusion of gender diverse students still on a case-by-case basis, hence upholding the cisnormative system?

Another built environment which emerged as a site of difficulty for gender diverse youth was the school gym or fitness space. Several studies found that this space was threatening, inaccessible and traumatic due to it being regarded as a particularly masculine domain (Ferguson & Russell, 2021; Kettley-Linsell, 2022; Storr et al., 2022). In particular, for those participating in boy's PE lessons there was a pressure in this space to fit the 'ideal' masculine body type (e.g., muscular, strong), with 'slight' body types considered non-conforming (Kettley-Linsell, 2022). Others found the space to be uncomfortable due to its rigid gender divide with unofficial 'boys' and 'girls' spaces, resulting in gender diverse individuals feeling unsure about where to go (Ferguson & Russell, 2021).

2.5.4   School uniform policies

Policies pertaining to school uniform have long presented barriers to a range of individuals in school contexts. In relation to general school uniforms worn throughout the day, research indicates that policies which propose binary gender uniforms (e.g., skirts for girls and trousers for boys) impact on gender diverse students sense of self (Bartholomaeus & Riggs, 2017), and can result in experiences of discomfort, depression and othering (Cumming-Potvin, 2023; Jones et al., 2016; McBride & Neary, 2021), particularly for non-binary students (Bower-Brown et al., 2023; Paechter et al., 2021). This can be exacerbated in single-sex schools where an individual's gender identity does not align with that of the rest of the school's (Jones et al., 2016). Within the PE context, research highlights how adolescent girls have viewed the PE kit as a barrier to their participation due to associations with body image and low self-esteem (Fisette, 2011; Standiford,

61

2013), and interventions have indicated how giving girls choice in their attire in PE works to improve these concerns considerably (McIntosh-Dalmedo et al., 2023). This has been a prominent concern for many years and yet, many schools continue to enforce gendered PE kits with wide-ranging impacts on its students. For gender diverse students, researchers have identified PE skirts or skorts as a particular issue for some gender diverse youth, in part due to their impracticality, but primarily because of their association with feminine ideals (Caudwell, 2014; Ferguson & Russell, 2021). In particular, for transgender boys who were not 'out' in PE, these uniforms posed a particular difficulty as they requested to wear clothing which was more affirming to their masculine expression, but in doing so, stood out amongst their peers for looking different (Ferguson & Russell, 2021; Neary & McBride, 2021). The specific feeling and fit of PE uniforms was also a key consideration across the literature, with some gender diverse students wishing to wear loose, comfortable clothing that did not draw attention to their figure or the fact they wore a sports bra or binder (Neary & McBride, 2021; Ferguson & Russell, 2021), others being policed by teachers for wearing clothing that was deemed 'too tight' and 'distracting to boys' (Neary & McBride, 2021), and for neurodiverse gender diverse students, sensory issues caused by tight-fitting, uncomfortable clothing were common (Holland, 2021). Neary and McBride (2021) described the school's enforcement of gendered PE kits as a way to "subtly and overtly, direct, manage and control the bodies of young people" (p.8), and for gender diverse students, this is particularly problematic as it forces them to adhere to a cisnormative system of gender. Calls for the removal of gendered PE kits within school policy are therefore typical across the literature.

2.5.5   Teacher knowledge and training regarding gender diversity

Whilst the above literature considers the perspectives and experiences of gender diverse students in PE, another key area that warrants exploration is the PE teacher perspective. Evidently, there are a range of issues that gender diverse students have highlighted regarding PE teacher practices and beliefs, but what are these shaped by? Research

exploring the PE teacher's knowledge and awareness of gender diversity is in its infancy, with a few notable exceptions. In a small-scale study, Williamson and Sandford (2018) found that 75% of PE teachers had no information or training on trans experiences in PE, which resulted in them feeling unprepared and lacking in confidence to address transphobia in school. Findings by Drury et al. (2023) supported this, with PE teachers highlighting a lack of training, experience or knowledge to inform a trans-inclusive practice. Joy et al. (2021) identified how trans-specific training for in-service PE teachers in a secondary school setting in Canada helped teachers to develop a more personal connection through the exploration of first-hand trans experiences. However, these teachers were still unable to consider the way in which bodies are socially and culturally gendered in PE, and the impact of this on trans students in their lessons, suggesting a disconnect between understanding the interconnections of individual experiences and wider, systemic issues in PE. Work by Foley et al. (2016) begins to provide some guidance and recommendations to PE educators on how best to support transgender students, sharing inclusive practices around avoiding gendered PE groupings and language, challenging transphobic comments, and providing alternative spaces for students to change in privacy. In the Spanish context, Fuentes-Miguel et al. (2023) explored the relationship between a PE teacher and a trans student, sharing how the teacher supported the student's transition through the embedding of qualities such as mutual respect, communication, trust and collaboration. The PE teacher encouraged critical performances in PE (for example through plays and drama) which disrupted heteronormativity and circulated queer and gender diverse narratives, and engaged in training with students around sexual and gender diversity and what this might look like in the PE setting. This was not only affirming for the trans student but educational and transformative for the school community in fostering "trans recognition and gender diversity education" (Fuentes-Miguel et al., 2023, p.1132). Whilst other research highlights teachers' anxieties and lack of knowledge regarding how to approach these matters, this work provides a powerful picture of the possibilities for transformative and inclusive PE for gender diverse youth and the role of the PE teacher within this. This said, it is clear from the review of literature on the youth perspective that training or guidance

regarding gender diversity is not being embedded in many PE settings. An exploration into research on initial teacher training (ITT) programmes may shed light on why this is.

Multiple scholars have identified the lack of explicit LGBTQ+ education within ITT programs (Kitchen & Bellini, 2012; Macgillivray & Jennings, 2008; Schneider & Dimito, 2008), and within the PE context, this is even more pronounced. Considering how influential ITT programmes can be to new teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education (Kim, 2009; Sosu et al., 2010), there is an absence of research exploring these programmes in relation to gender diversity specifically (Kearns et al., 2017), and a particular dearth within the UK context. A multinational study by Walton-Fisette et al. (2018) touches on issues of diversity and equality in PE ITT in the UK, but without an explicit focus on LGBTQ+ matters. In the Canadian context, a study by McCaughey and Fletcher (2020) explored this issue from pre-service PE teacher perspectives, finding that there were a "lack of opportunities to learn about gender, sexuality, and LGBTQ issues in their pre-service H&PE teacher education" (p.1), with few participants able to describe specific approaches to support LGBTQ+ youth in PE. In exploring the policy developments in this area, the Department for Education's (2019) core framework for ITT provides a brief sentence dictating that trainees should be "fully aware of their duties in respect of safeguarding and equalities legislation" (p.7), but this rather woolly statement is open to interpretation, making it difficult to imagine what this might be like within ITT programmes. The PE ITT context could provide a space for teachers to problematise issues of equity and inclusion in PE as they relate to gender and sexuality, thereby supporting pre-service PE teachers to enter the profession equipped to challenge and evaluate existing norms, practices and values in PE (Capel & Blair, 2007). And yet, research thus far suggests that these teachers are not encouraged to develop these critical skills, thereby hindering their ability to approach their practice will a killjoy perspective which exposes and seeks to address issues facing particular students.

2.6 LIMITATIONS OF CURRENT LITERATURE

This review has shared a wide range of literature pertaining to gender diversity, sport and the school context, with a particular focus on the PE context. However, there are noticeable theoretical and methodological gaps, particularly in relation to the experiences of current gender diverse students in PE and the perspectives of those who teach them, which this thesis aims to address. Firstly, much of the research tends to explore wider LGBTQ+ student experiences in PE, resulting in the potential conflation of diverse experiences (e.g., see Caudwell, 2014; Landi et al., 2020). Research that does explicitly explore gender diverse perspectives predominantly captures retrospective accounts of adults reflecting on their PE experiences, with a select few capturing the experiences of youth who were in school at the time of the research (e.g., see McBride & Neary, 2021; Ferguson & Russell, 2021). Within studies that do explore current youth perspectives, many of the accounts come from young people who were not openly gender diverse at school. Whilst this provides important insights into the climates and cultures that may prevent young people from being 'out' in school, there is a need to explore the unique experiences of those who do disclose their gender diversity to understand how these experiences may differ. Finally, there is a significant lack of insight into gender non-conforming and non-binary student perspectives, with research predominantly exploring binary trans experiences. This an issue because, whilst binary trans individuals may still encounter issues within the PE domain, it is more likely that they 'fit' into existing binary gender systems in the school setting, whereas those who do not conform to a gender binary are likely to face unique and additional challenges. Given recent political considerations within the UK around gender diversity in the school setting (as outlined in Chapter 1), and the ongoing polarised debates around transgender inclusion within competitive sport settings (as examined in section 2.2) there is a need to explore the emerging impact of this within the UK context, as current insights here are limited.

The field is also methodologically limited by its emphasis on traditional quantitative and qualitative methods, which lack the vitality to consider things beyond the human as also constitutive of reality. Findings typically explore relationships, interactions, behaviours,

feelings and thoughts of humans, they explore cultural, structural or institutional issues which can be attributed to said responses, but very rarely do they consider the relationships between and amongst humans and other matter. Matter being things, objects, bodies, spaces, places. What is it about the presence of some matter, and not of other matter, that creates a harmonious assemblage for gender diverse students? What is it about a particular entanglement of space, time, things and bodies, that enables a young trans boy to engage with and enjoy physical activity, feel affirmed and validated in his identity, able to move his body with joy and confidence? What is it about other assemblages that cause a change in this trajectory? This approach to exploring relationships between human and non- or other-than-human materiality opens us up to understand *things* in deeper and more complex ways; to consider the little things that may so often go unnoticed in research. The emerging field of post-qualitative research and associated theoretical underpinnings of new materialism and posthumanism can bring about new ways of exploring and understanding the context in question. Paechter (2021) argues that, as student demographics change, and gender evolves within the school context, it is crucial that gender and education researchers are able to adapt "underpinning theoretical frameworks and research practices in order to take these changes into account" (p.610). The subsequent theoretical chapter will articulate these ideas in much greater depth, outlining how they can be utilised to explore this topic area in new and generative ways.

3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 SHIFTING PERSPECTIVES

I approached this doctoral pursuit with a particular focus on exploring how gender diverse young people experience PE in the UK. My aim was to identify key issues, attitudes and practices that shaped and impacted on these experiences to outline where and how PE settings could look to adapt their provision to create more inclusive, affirming environments for gender diverse youth. I chose a methodology that aimed to centre young people's voices, with a key focus of this thesis being to produce insightful findings and practical recommendations from the data. Yet, on this doctoral journey, through reading around theory and methodology, on what makes empirical 'data' and how it is recorded, analysed and represented, I have begun to question what might be excluded by conventional qualitative research which views data in static and prescriptive ways. In all our efforts towards interpretation and meaning-making in research, what gets missed? If we already know what we are looking for as we approach research, are we not just reflecting existing ways of knowing? These questions, alongside conversations with colleagues, and a deep dive into new (to me) and challenging theoretical literature, encouraged me to sit back and reflect on what could be considered research and how I might look to approach things differently. This shift in my thinking was also propelled by the enduring affectivity of a range of moments that emerged during fieldwork. I felt deeply moved by the meetings with both young people and PE teachers and I think perhaps, I had not previously considered how the affective, sensory forces of these moments might compel me to engage with this field in different ways. As I returned to the recorded data to peruse these affective moments, I found that they did not always show up in ways I had expected. The transcript data only captured so much, and my understanding of each moment was much fleshier and more complex than the written words seemed to present. If I ignored this aperture, and focused solely on interpreting the words that participants had spoken to me, what would be missed?

The pulling together-apart of my own thoughts and perspectives came out of these multiple entanglements and emergences and, whilst I still grapple with how to make sense of it all, it is in equal parts, an exciting and daunting venture to see how it all unravels without the confines of such rigid methodological boundaries, drawing instead on a post-qualitative approach which centres creativity, experiment and uncertainty (MacLure, 2023a). I began to reflect more on each meeting, interaction, feeling and emotion felt, thought more deeply about the spaces we were in, the materials around us, the feelings that a particular place invoked, how bodies in different spaces materialise differently. I found I wanted to explore the material entanglements in these individuals' lives, of which I was a part. In what follows, I aim to unpack a range of key ideas and concepts central to new materialism and posthumanism, highlighting the ways in which these help to explore this research area in new and generative ways.

3.2 NEW MATERIALISM AND POSTHUMANISM

New materialism aims to challenge "longstanding assumptions about humans and the non- or other-than-human material world" (Gamble et al., 2019, p.111), and fundamental to this ontology is a move away from humanist and anthropocentric perspectives (Braidotti, 2013) to instead question what feel like artificial boundaries of the social and natural world. This perspective aligns with the wider approach of posthumanism which "critiques the limitations of humanist thinking, by unsettling binaries, de-centering the human and problematising and displacing historical notions of human exceptionalism" (Malone & Kuby, 2021, p.98). Posthumanism challenges dualistic ideas such as structure/agency, reason/emotion, human/non-human, animate/inanimate and inside/outside and looks to shift understandings of the world away from that which (solely) predicate humans and their bodies (Fox & Alldred, 2015; Leonard, 2020). Fernandez (2016) suggests that both posthumanism and new materialism share similar values, but new materialism expands on posthumanist ideas through its ontological 'turn to matter' and emphasis on the "dynamism and agency of matter" (p.275). This turn to matter

emerged, in part, from the academic discontentment regarding the limits of social constructionism to fully address the material realities of the world (Sanzo, 2018). However, this is not to say that social constructions (for example, of gender, class and race) are discounted, but rather built upon with considerations of how the material interacts with the discursive to form subjectivities (Alaimo & Hekman, 2009). This has far-reaching implications for ontological assumptions that govern empirical research.

Given its roots in a posthuman approach, some of the theories, concepts and ideas within new materialism stem from or align with the work of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. Gullion (2018) considers this approach to be a "reworking of the notion of the 'social' from a system of micro- and macro- level interactions and structural processes/constraints, to thinking in assemblages and entanglements" (p.5), two concepts which are central to DeleuzoGuattarian thought and will be expanded on in due course. Posthumanism and new materialism have become popular amongst feminist scholars, with leading theorists Donna Haraway, Sara Ahmed, Karen Barad, Rosi Braidotti, and Jane Bennett, well-known for their "insistence on emphasizing the vitalities, perversities, and vibrancies that emerge with and through human–nonhuman assemblages" (Lupton, 2019, p.1999). The addition of 'new' is thought to suggest a cut away from a theoretical focus on human subjectivity and embodiment, to instead think more widely about the vast materiality of the world (of things, objects, bodies, spaces, places) (Lupton, 2019). This said, within feminist new materialisms there is a clear interest in the "fleshy, affective, and sensory dimensions of human existence and experience" (Thorpe et al., 2020, p.7), though with greater attention to the entanglements of these existences with other human and non-human entities. Therefore, it is not necessarily a break away from exploring human experience, but a shift from hierarchical thinking which centres the human, to instead explore the intra-actions and entanglements of human entities with non- or other-than-human entities on an equal plane (Lupton, 2019). Although new materialism explores the active, vital nature of non-human matter, it does not propose a:

> "flat ontology where all humans become ontologically equivalent to nonhuman matter. Nor is it attempting to homogenize humanity … Rather, it provides a way to

think about difference and identity not as structured, fixed entities, but as emergent through relations." (Thorpe et al., 2020, p.12)

Within research, this emerges as a dissatisfaction with studies that exclusively centre the human perspective, and instead a pull towards research which considers the material and non-human as also constitutive of reality.

3.3 INTRA-ACTION, RELATIONALITY AND ENTANGLEMENTS

Karen Barad is a key figure in the development of new materialist thought, and they have coined a variety of terms to explore and make sense of the materiality of the world. Intra-action is one such term conceptualized by Barad to replace 'interaction'. Intra-action differs in meaning as interaction "assumes that there are separate individual agencies that precede their interaction, [whereas] the notion of intra-action recognizes that distinct agencies do not precede, but rather emerge through, their intra-action" (Barad, 2007, p.33). In other words, that existence is not possible prior to relations with other matter, and it is instead a co-constitutive process of matter intra-acting that causes a phenomenon to emerge.

In line with this, the notion of relationality is central to new materialist thought, with theorists acknowledging the inseparability of the human and more-than-human world. Relationality "refers to connectedness, a view of the world that underlines how no person or thing exists in isolation, because existence necessarily means being 'in relationship'" (Wijngaarden, 2022, para. 1). Nxumalo and Murris (2021) describe this interconnectedness as a "significant disruption of Eurowestern humanism's hierarchical and colonial ordering of some human above the more-than-human" (p.108). This underpinning therefore challenges philosophical perspectives which identify the human as a central and isolated object of study. A relational ontology is helpful in making sense of the idea of entanglement, another key concept within new materialist and posthumanist thought. Entanglement refers to the notion that the existence of anything occurs through

entangled intra-actions; "Individuals do not pre-exist their interactions; rather, individuals emerge through and as part of their entangled intra- relating" (Barad, 2007, p.xi).

I have found the following quotes useful in making sense of the above concepts:

> "Here is the apple, there am I. But a little later (bite, chew, swallow) I have become (made out of) apple; while the apple is (a part of) me" (Mol, 2008, p.30)

> "We know … that billions of microbes inhabit the human body. Are those microbes me? I rely on them for my immune system to function, to produce mood- regulating hormones, and to help me to digest food. But we tend to think of bacteria as bounded living beings in their own right. When I take antibiotics, am I committing mass murder? Or killing off part of myself?" (Gullion, 2018, p.112)

The above illustrate how it is not possible to create concrete boundaries regarding the meaning of things, for example what it means to be human, as entities do not exist independently but emerge based on their intra-actions with other matter; they are in a constant process of becoming. For example, bodies do not emerge in the world as already gendered, but intra-act with social, cultural, political and biological practices and discourses, which inscribe gender onto the body (Garrett, 2004). Bodies are typically read as male and female because this is the dominant system of knowledge with which they intra-act in Western cultures, but we know that there are different knowledges of the body which do not subscribe to this system. Through intra-actions with other systems of knowledge, the body can materialise in the world differently, and I argue that this provides possibilities for gender diverse bodies to emerge in ways that are more affirming and empowering. This idea of an unstable and emergent being shaped through relations invites us to consider the possibilities for more positive futures if these relations were to configure differently.

This said, a relational ontology has been critiqued by some for its inability to pinpoint culpability within particular situations due to an emphasis on entanglements, making it difficult for political action or change to occur (Giraud, 2019). In this vein, whilst MacLure

(2023b) and Colebrook (2019) work within the realms of new materialist and posthumanist thought, both have suggested the notion of unlimited relationality to be unrealistically positive and romanticised. They highlight that, though there is potential for all matter to be interconnected, knowing this and the possibilities that may come from this is not in and of itself productive, and it is sometimes necessary to "stop seeking relationality and accept incommensurable worlds" (MacLure, 2019. p.221). Afterall, the 'gender wars' and polarising perspectives toward sex, gender and the body (as outlined in Chapters 1 and 2) signal these limits to relationality, the seemingly incommensurability between these ontological perspectives. Giraud (2019) shares this critique of relationality only taking us so far and suggests that working within this ontology requires an additional responsibility; in not only drawing attention to the connections that become, but also paying "attention to the entities, practices, and ways of being that are foreclosed when other entangled realities are materialized" (p.2).

3.4 ASSEMBLAGES, TERRITORIES, AND LINES OF FLIGHT

The concept of the assemblage refers to a combination of elements that produce a particular affect in the world. Vannini and Taggart (2015) describe an assemblage as "an ensemble of objects, practices, experiences, and representations that make sense together" (p.70). The concept originates from the works of Deleuze and Guattari (1987) and shares similarities with the concept of entanglement through its attention to "relationality among 'parts', distributed agency, and decentering of the human as agent" (Truman, 2019, p.4). In the PE setting, a PE assemblage could include the PE teacher, their knowledge of a particular sport, the equipment being used, their chosen teaching style, the weather outside that day, the students in the lesson, and many more. The intra-action of these aspects will always result in something, but the outcome is open to change as the elements within this assemblage change over time, influenced by and intra-acting with material entanglements in other assemblages. For example, a PE teacher may intra-act with the assemblage of a book (made up of paper, ink, language, discourses, teaching

practices, etc.) in the staff room that day and learn about an alternative teaching style, which they then apply in their PE lesson that afternoon. The trajectory of that lesson will differ to the one before, perhaps not only because of this new knowledge of teaching styles, but because of a change to various other elements in the assemblage too (e.g., different age group, pouring rain, teacher attitudes about the gendered appropriateness of an activity). This notion of connecting with other assemblages has been referred to as 'plugging in' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) and is considered "a *process* rather than as a *concept*, something we could put to work, *the assemblage in formation"* (Mazzei, 2014, p.743). The PE teacher plugs into the book assemblage, and with this, new discourses and pedagogical understandings. They then plug back into their PE assemblage which transforms as new knowledges are applied. In this sense, assemblages are dynamic, and can "live, grow, decay, and even die as the elements and relationships that make them change over time" (Stanton, 2022, para. 6). Through exploring a particular event or moment within an assemblage, as opposed to focusing on individuals, researchers can begin to unpack the complexities and multiplicities present within assemblages, illuminating the impact of relations between things and how a process of change (or becoming) may unfold (Gullion, 2018). Kinchin and Gravett's (2020) concept map in Figure 1 provides a useful illustration of some of the concepts that are put to work in this thesis.
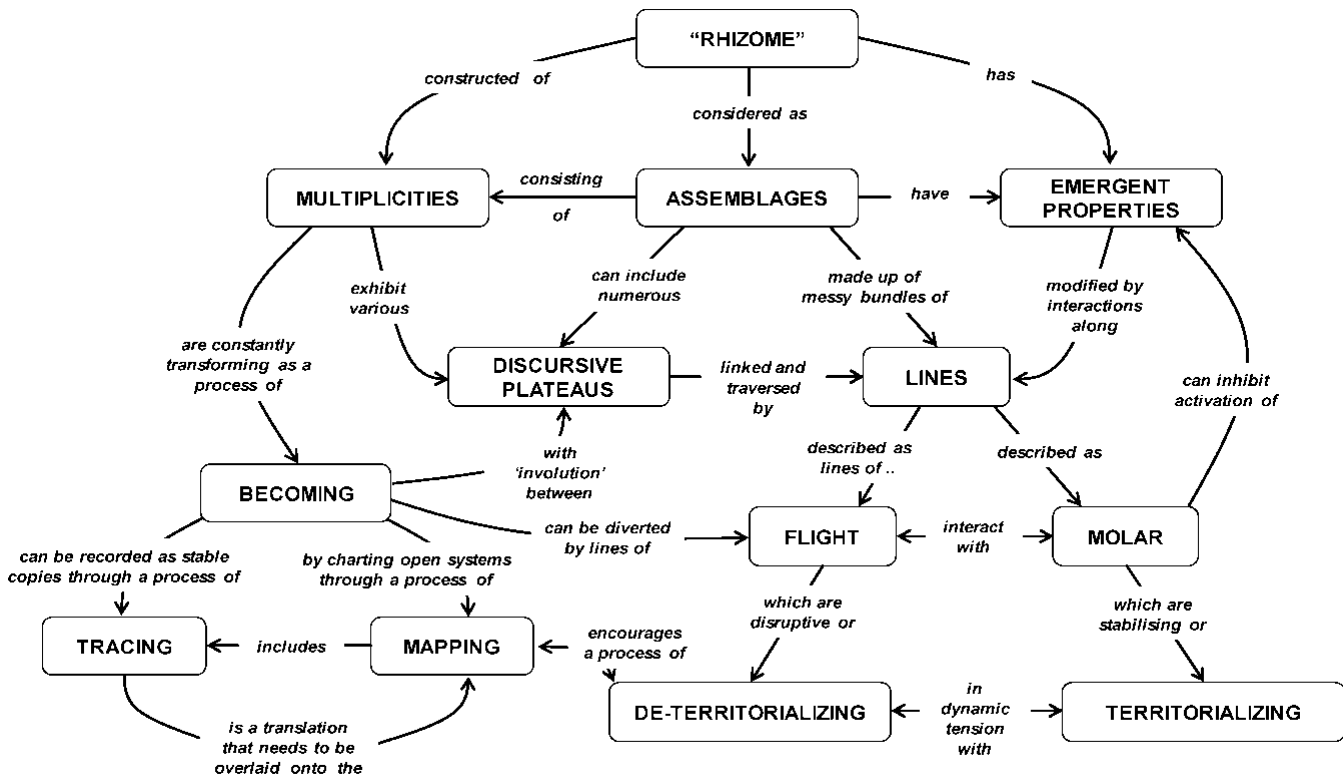
Figure 1: Kinchin & Gravett's (2020) concept map

Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) conceptualization of the rhizome is a helpful metaphor to make sense of an assemblage. A rhizome is a type of root structure that, unlike a tree which has a stem or trunk, does not have a single entry point or clear centre. Instead, it is made up of a multiplicity of roots which weave in amongst each other, supporting a wide range of possible paths and connections. Now, "imagine an assemblage as characterized by a multiplicity that allows for many points of entry, and numerous connections (which are not always obvious)" (Gullion, 2018, p.105). Within the social sciences, often there is a focus on causality and relationships between variables. However, this creates a hierarchy where certain aspects are explored, and others ignored. Through rhizomatic thinking, there is an acknowledgement that many connections are possible and we should be open to capturing and exploring how these connections unfold, as well as paying attention to the connections that are missed (Giraud, 2019). Given the ever-changing nature of assemblages, "there are possibilities for change, resistances or improvisations, or for thinking otherwise" (Lupton, 2019, p.2002) and it is this aspect which is particularly

exciting to consider. Perhaps, through exploring the nuances of an assemblage within (or relating to) PE, and through illuminating the connections that become (as well as those that do not), it will become possible to explore the ways in which PE is open to be re-configured, disrupted, contested.

This idea of disruption can be explored through Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) concepts of territorialisation, de-territorialisation and re-territorialisation. These concepts refer to the way in which power apparatus can stabilise or disrupt planes of consistency within an assemblage and are useful in making sense of how gender diversity emerges (or not) within social settings. Territorialisation occurs when things within an assemblage remain stable due to the power apparatus at play, for example, dominant assumptions regarding gender norms could be one such apparatus within a social setting which prevents new lines of flight from emerging (Jackson, 2010), hindering new stratifications of gender. Fournier (2014) describes a line of flight as "the elusive moment when change happens, as it was bound to, when a threshold between two paradigms is crossed" (p.121). When this change occurs, there is a possibility for de- and re-territorialisation to take place. However, some discourses (power apparatus) are so ingrained that this change cannot occur. Fournier (2014) illustrates this using the example of gender below:

> "In contemporary paradigms, both gender and ''gender identity'' are understood (and tested) as planes of consistencies; that is, as stable dispositives or ''plateaus.'' The maleness or femaleness of individual bodies is measured through scales and ranges: your testosterone level places you among men or women, as do the answers you provide to multiple choice tests. Gender is a question of numbers—though of course these numbers are inscribed in a discourse relying on ''nature,'' so that uncommon ranges are labeled ''unnatural.'' Wrong numbers have to be corrected so that the individual (the subject?) can reenter the ranges of normality." (p.122)

As outlined in the literature review, understandings of sex and gender are shifting as new knowledges emerge in the world, and these could be considered acts of de-

territorialisation and re-territorialisation. The plane of consistency in which gender is seen as natural and innate is disrupted, de-territorialised by a line of flight entering the assemblage (e.g., new knowledge regarding the biological diversity of the sexed body), and this enables a re-territorialisation of this plane in which gender can be understood as changeable, not tied to assumed biological categories. Of course, the extent to which this line of flight affects an assemblage will depend on its assembled parts. We have seen in the news how many politicians remain adamant of the biological essentialism of gender, lobbying for stricter regulations on single-sex spaces and reduced rights for the gender diverse community (Hughes, 2023; Syal, 2022). The power apparatuses within these assemblages appear to be too dominant to be affected by such a line of flight, preventing de-territorialisation from occurring. This leads us on to the notion of becoming, whereby assemblages bring forth or deny new ways of being in and with the world.

3.5 BECOMING

Whilst it is in each moment that there is the possibility for something new, different, re-configured, this is not to say that all matter exists in the world with the same possible trajectories and pathways. "What is left behind forms an integral part of what is becoming" (Cassar, 2017, para. 1). In other words, the entanglements that have occurred before will play a part in shaping the future trajectories of things, of what could become. For example, we could consider a trans body to be a body like any other, and therefore be able to participate in gendered activities without barriers or detriment. However, our bodies are marked by our histories, by the entanglements that came before, and these shape the configurations that could occur going forward. As Braidotti (2022) states; "the 'human' is neither universal nor neutral but shot through with power relations organizing access to privileges and entitlements" (p.4). To this end, a trans body enters an assemblage (such as a sport setting) which is immersed in power relations (such as the assumption of gender essentialism) and social forces which regulate what materialisations of the body are allowed to emerge. Whilst it is not possible to simply remove these forces from the

assemblage, we can become aware of them, look to resist or challenge them, and consider alternative ways that would encourage a more expansive becoming to the gender diverse community. As Barad (2007) puts it;

> "the world and its possibilities for becoming are remade with each moment … [and] intra-acting responsibly as part of the world means taking account of the entangled phenomena that are intrinsic to the world's vitality and being responsive to the possibilities that might help us flourish." (p.396)

This pursuit thereby requires one to embrace the killjoy, to *become* someone who pays attention to how things come to matter, exposing problematic matterings and asking for alternatives. New materialists propose that this can be realised through 'being alive' to an exploration of all things matter, and to the moments and events that enable matter to emerge (or not).

To illustrate this concept of becoming and how it could be applied alongside a focus on materiality, I share the following example. Ivinson and Renold (2013) explored the relationship between girls' bodies and agency in a locale with a masculine, working-class legacy, highlighting how many of the girls felt stuck, stagnant, unable to move forward. The girls explained how traumatic childhood events, expectations to domesticate and settle down, and sex and drink informed peer cultures, shaped their trajectories toward particular becomings. This was explored in relation to Deleuze and Guattari's concept of expansive and blocked becomings (1983, 1987), seeking to unpack how the girls attempt to "imagine themselves forward while other girls, with similar life stories and social contexts experienced so much 'stuckness' that their ability to imagine themselves forward was negligible" (Ivinson & Renold, 2013, p.717). They drew on connections with matter like bikes, mud and virtual spaces to show how these entanglements with the girls' bodies in particular spaces worked to propel them forwards or hold them back. For example, one girl spoke animatedly about having mud fights with the boys; this was seen as a positive break away from previous becomings where male figures were linked to violence in her life. Shifting assemblages of her body into new, exciting spaces that connected positively

with other matter suggested "possible future becomings that break free from past rhythms of life" (Ivinson & Renold, 2013, p.716). This illustrates how particular assemblages of the human and non-human enable different becomings to emerge, and through understanding these entanglements the authors were able to gain "some powerful insights into resources and barriers that girls encounter in their everyday lives and in fulfilling their aspirations" (Ivinson & Renold, 2013, p.718). This thesis is concerned with making sense of the assemblages within which both youth and teacher participants become, exploring instances of blocked and expansive becomings and what entanglements have occurred here to bring forth these becomings. For example, the PE assemblage is an entanglement of movement, PE kits, changing spaces, the body, competitive behaviours, gendered discourses, and much more. This combination impacts on how people in this setting can *be,* as well as what they can imagine themselves to become in the future. Typically, the PE assemblage is not conducive to a sense of becoming that is affirming for gender diverse youth but through exploring the entangled parts within the assemblage, perhaps new ideas that encourage inclusion for this group may emerge.

3.6 CHALLENGES TO CAUSALITY

Given that a new materialist perspective opposes the independent nature of entities in existence, this approach proposes a re-thinking of the traditional understanding of causality, as it is not possible to consider how one variable may affect another when variables cannot be so simply defined and isolated from reality. They are in a constant, emergent and lively process of becoming, through countless intra-actions with other matter, and therefore cannot be considered a stable entity to be measured. Even the act of measuring is not stable: to measure a property requires an apparatus of objectivity, but the apparatus itself or the person using the apparatus are entangled in the process and will affect the outcome (Stark, 2016).

Barad explores the implications of 'objective' measurement in social science research through their theory of agential realism. They drew upon physicist Niels Bohr's 'Copenhagen Interpretation' experiment which found that materials would behave in contradictory ways in different experiments, arguing that the apparatus that was used to observe the material affected how it behaved (Barad, 2014). Agential realism proposes that there is an inevitable entanglement of researched and research apparatus, challenging the notion of a positivist underpinning of reality where observer and observed can be kept separate (Barad, 1996). Instead, "every time a researcher uses a specific research design, method, or theory, or even asks a specific research question, it establishes one particular point of view upon the object of study" (Fox & Alldred, 2023, p.96). Barad calls these decisions 'agential cuts'; where the researcher makes a specific cut and decides what, how and why they explore and present something in their research. The research apparatus (whether this be the methods, research questions, design, etc.) is therefore a "boundary-making practice" (Barad, 2007, p.148), as it gives a particular meaning to the phenomena being observed, that could perhaps have been different had an alternative apparatus (philosophy, theory, concept, method) been used. New materialists argue that, regardless of a researcher's philosophical underpinning, these agential cuts are inevitable. However, it is about being accountable and response-able for these cuts and the ethical impacts they will have on our society that are viewed as important to consider. I reflect on this notion of 'cuts' more thoroughly within Chapter 4.

3.7 AGENCY

Agency, a key concept within this thesis, is a term with little consensus as to its meaning due to the multiple ways in which it is engaged with across different disciplines and philosophical perspectives. Within sociological and psychological fields, agency has typically been considered as the "feeling of control over actions and their consequences" (Moore, 2016, p.1), relating specifically to the human experience. However, within new materialist thought, many expand on this concept and "emphasize material agencies"

(Alaimo, 2017, p.415). In this vein, agency is considered to come from all matter, with any *thing (*e.g., object, body, space, place) having the capacity to affect and be affected. For example, clothing will produce particular effects on the individual who designs, wears, or views it (e.g., feelings of joy or jealousy, the physical texture intra-acting with skin), whilst also affecting the environment through its very creation (e.g., the impact of manufacturing processes on the natural world, increasing landfill). For some of the young people involved in this research, the clothing worn during PE lessons produced an agentic force which brought about different ways of becoming in the world, many of which were not affirming to their gender identity, impacting on their sense of authenticity. It also produced an effect on others in the PE space, connected to the way in which material-discursive entanglements brought about particular ways of reading an individual's gender (i.e., the taken-for-granted coding of clothing as relating to a distinct gender identity). Agency, both human and non-human, will be explored in more depth throughout Chapters 5 to 8 as a force which emerges through particular entanglements of things. It is also interesting to consider agency in relation to Ahmed's (2023) concept of the killjoy. For example, is it a lack of agency that prevents individuals from speaking up, critiquing issues, or enacting change? How does agency emerge in these spaces? This thesis will also explore these queries in greater depth later, to examine how the killjoy might emerge in PE.

3.8 IDENTITY, DIFFERENCE AND THE SEX-GENDER SYSTEM

Matters of identity and difference are often considered within a binary lens, but within new materialist and posthumanist thought, they are theorized in less polarizing, boundary-ridden ways (Barad, 2014; Braidotti, 2013). Barad (2014) uses their theory of diffraction to explore the concept of difference through this lens, encouraging readers to think of difference not as "an absolute boundary between object and subject, here and there, now and then, this and that" (p. 174) but as formed through intra-activity within a particular moment. In thinking about difference in this way, it is no longer grounded in essentialist binarism like man/woman, white/black, but instead is "a relational ontology, that is, an

effect of connections and relations within and between different bodies, affecting other bodies and being affected by them" (Bozalek & Zembylas, 2017, p.118). Through this line of thinking, new materialism is useful in explorations of sex, gender and sexuality as it "queers binaries and calls out for a rethinking of the notions of identity and difference" (Barad, 2014, p.171). I've found Preciado's (2019) questioning of sex, gender and sexuality dualisms below helpful in illuminating new ways of thinking about difference and identity:

> "How can you, how can we, organize an entire system of visibility, representation, right of self-determination and political recognition if we follow such categories? Do you really believe that you are male or female, that we are homosexual or heterosexual, intersex or trans? Do these distinctions worry you? Do you trust them? Does the very meaning of your human identity depend on them? … Let me tell you that homosexuality and heterosexuality do not exist outside of a dualistic, hierarchical epistemology that aims at preserving the domination of the paterfamilias over the reproduction of life … These categories are the map imposed by authority, not the territory of life. But if homosexuality and heterosexuality, intersexuality and transsexuality, do not exist, then who are we? How do we love? Imagine it.
>
> I am not a man and I am not a woman and I am not heterosexual I am not homosexual I am not bisexual. I am a dissident of the sex-gender system" (p.36-37)

Given Preciado's own experience of transition and identification within said sex-gender system, this statement is particularly interesting as it is, in a sense, contradictory. Yet, what Preciado proposes is a re-configuration of the world, of the dominant political and cultural understandings of sex, gender and sexuality, towards less boundary-ridden categories that would enable individuals the possibility to live without restrictions on their day-to-day lives. Afterall, it is the lack of recognition or support for gender diverse bodies (due to an insistence on binary sex and gender classifications that delegitimise their lives) that places them in vulnerable positions within society, encouraging many to conform to

these systems (through transition) in order to have a less challenging life. Rather than viewing gender diverse people as a 'problem' in need of fixing, Preciado (2019) suggests that:

> "what *is* in crisis are the systems of production of truth, of political citizenship, and the technologies of the nation-state, as well as the epistemology of binary sex-gender. Consequently, it is the entire political space that must begin to transition" (p.174)

Schools are one such space that are limited by particular political imaginings which dictate how students can exist and behave, but framed differently, schools are assemblages of things and therefore dynamic and constantly changing. In this vein, schools have the capacity to transition away from such narrow epistemologies of the sex-gender system, to emanate the killjoy by resisting traditional modes of working and opening up more expansive understandings of students' bodies, abilities and behaviours. One might view this perspective as idealistic or utopian, but to me it resonates with new materialist ideas regarding a world in flux, constantly re-configuring (Barad, 2007) and therefore open to epistemological shifts.

Reading through Butler and Foucault's work on the sexed body, Barad (2007) teases out the problematic nature of this system of production of truth which proposes a binary sex-gender epistemology, highlighting the way in which a particular production of 'truth' proposes the body as naturally sexed, and culturally gendered (i.e., the nature-culture dualism). Butler (1990) critiques the process by which the category of sex came to be (through scientific means), questioning the way in which certain bodily attributes (e.g., penis, vagina, breasts, etc.) were gathered, named 'sexual parts' and there fragmented from the body as a whole. In the process, sex was imposed on the body, but under the guise of having always-already been so. Butler (1993) expands on the impact of this essentialisation of sex below:

"'Sex' is, thus, not simply what one has, or a static description of what one is: it will be one of the norms by which the "one" becomes viable at all, that which qualifies a body for life within the domain of cultural intelligibility." (p.2)

Barad (2007) draws on the example of the brittlestar (a being closely related to a starfish) to exemplify the multifaceted way in which sex, gender and sexuality emerges in the natural world, with the species demonstrating vast diversity in its reproductive and sexual behaviours. Some brittlestar use broadcast spawning (releasing eggs into open water), others self-fertilise, and some "reproduce asexually by regenerating or cloning themselves out of the fragmented body parts" (Barad, 2007, p.377). Barad (2007) asks: "is the connection between an 'offspring' regenerated from a fragmented body part and the parent brittle star the same as its connection to a dead limb or the rest of the environment?" (p.377), indicating the multiple ways in which things can relate to one another and the unintelligibility of the sexed body. Barad uses this example to question whether we should, therefore, trust 'visual delineations' to define bodily limits, aligning with Butler and Foucault's questioning of the sexed body as arbitrarily constructed and imposed based on the absence/presence of bodily parts.

The new materialist focus of questioning relationships between imposed binaries also enables a re-thinking of "the relationship between epistemology and ontology" (Jagger, 2015, p.323). Therefore, if we understand the sex-gender system to be a construction within a particular system of knowledge (biology), then it is possible to re-think this system in other, less boundary-ridden ways. Braidotti (2022) suggests that "the strength and relevance of new-materialist feminist thought is to defy binary oppositions by thinking through embodiment, multiplicity and differences" (p.11), and it is this epistemological focus that enables explorations of sex, gender and gender diversity within different contexts that does not rely upon nor reinforce such binaries, whilst still acknowledging the way in which social constructions of sex and gender impact on society. van Midde et al. (2018) identify gender diversity as a "movement of opening possibilities away from an imposed dichotomy of the Western sex/gender system" (p.6), and it is this line of thinking

that resides within new materialism. Gender diverse individuals challenge this dichotomy, so an exploration of their experiences in the PE context through this critical and disruptive framing supports their authenticity and affirms their way of being in the world.

3.9 THE SCHOOL CONTEXT

Schools are dynamic, lively spaces full of change. Young people enter these spaces and can evolve, re-configure and grow. And yet, there are power apparatuses within the school assemblage that dictate the pathways and speeds in which these becomings occur; some flourish in these spaces whilst for others, thriving does not come easy. Utilising a Baradian approach to explore schooling practices, Wolfe (2021) illuminates how particular apparatuses of measurement are applied within schools, naturalising certain behaviours or categories as common-sense within the school context. In actuality, the apparatus of measurement is entangled in the process, resulting in the materialisation of the very 'bounded thing' they measure. Wolfe (2021) illustrates this in relation to gender measurement below and the consequent visibility/erasure of certain bodies:

> "Cisgender schoolgirls and schoolboys materialize through the phenomena of gender measurement that remains forever entangled in their constructed and essentialized difference. Trans, non-cis, sexual and gender diverse bodies are excluded from this binary as they cannot exist within the dominant heteronormative conception. However, as Barad attests the excluded do exist—educationalists just need to adopt other apparatuses of measurement in order to make sure all student bodies matter equally and feel a sense of belonging that they are entitled to. The task here is to feel, listen, take notice and take account (think)." (p.23-24)

The apparatus of measurement in this case comes from biological underpinnings and the two-sex classification – children materialise as one of two sexes because this is the apparatus chosen for measurement; the agential cut made by schools. Though the terminology differs, the above quote aligns with earlier discussions regarding the need to re-think the sex-gender system if we are to empower gender diverse bodies in the school context and beyond. Within this thesis, I aim to draw attention to instances and possibilities

of such a re-thinking. For example, where PE teachers have approached their practice with a different apparatus, one which does 'feel, listen, take notice and take account' of the diversity of students.

3.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter has unpacked a range of ideas and concepts within new materialist and posthumanist thinking, with the aim of illuminating the ways in which these perspectives have potential to draw out new insights on gender diversity and the PE context. Key to this thesis is a focus on imagining the PE setting away from such entrenched, boundary-ridden practices which centres gender as a binary, immoveable construct. As Wolfe (2021) identifies above, it is the chosen apparatus which brings forth particular materialisations, so what could the PE setting look like if it was framed differently? What might the experiences of those least engaged become? In Rachev's (2016) explanation of the assemblage, they state how "the more it seems it does not fit, the more it fits in the assemblage" (p.1). This notion seems apt in considering the possibilities of the PE setting. Through exploring the literature in this area, what doesn't appear to 'fit' in the PE space is a gender diverse body, but assemblages are dynamic and constantly changing, so there is always potential for new configurations. As Taylor (2013) explains, utilising this approach of exploring materiality "opens up new ways of seeing and thinking about how classroom space is made, transformed and continually re-made through the concerted co-constitutive acts of objects–bodies–spaces" (p.690), thus becoming a useful approach to gain new insights into the PE setting. In exploring materiality, agency, entanglements and becoming within the assembled lives and experiences of both gender diverse youth and PE teachers, this thesis looks to explore the possibilities for change and transformation in the PE setting, where gender diversity could be embraced, not simply tolerated. With these goals in mind, the research questions which guide this thesis can be found below.

3.11 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

These research questions were not, in fact, where this research began. As I have explained in previous sections, this research assemblage has shifted and re-configured over time. I did not set out to explore assemblages, joyful trajectories and apparatuses, but these research questions emerged as I began to engage with the data in different ways. Initially, joy was not a focus of this work. And yet joy struck me and stuck with me as I engaged with the young people and PE teachers and saw a multitude of joyful and joyless moments. My understanding of the apparatus emerged through my theoretical engagements with Karen Barad, perhaps halfway through the four-year doctoral journey. I was drawn to this concept and began to explore how it might help me to think about what the PE teachers had shared with me in different ways. The idea of the assemblage emerged as I began to consider the interconnectedness of certain moments, how many things or possibilities come together to create something new or unexpected (Chapter 6 exemplifies this nicely). Therefore, you might consider these research questions more so as an intervention; new questions which emerged through the *doing* of this research.

- o How do gender diverse young people materialise within the PE assemblage?
    - a. How could the PE assemblage re-configure to support more joyful trajectories for these young people?
- o What apparatuses shape PE teachers' knowledges and practices as they relate to gender diversity and inclusion in PE?
    - b. How could more expansive ways of thinking about gender be introduced to the PE assemblage?

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 THE UNEXPECTED CHALLENGE

I had always considered the methodology chapter to be straightforward, a section which neatly outlined and justified the design, participants, and practicalities of the research, alongside considerations of ethics and positionality. And yet, this chapter is possibly one that I have found hardest to write. My understanding of data, methods, methodologies, paradigms, and the research process have evolved over time, yet when I began this doctoral pursuit, I had to make choices about the way in which to conduct this project which ultimately resulted in specific 'cuts'; a particular reading of the thing being explored. The incongruence felt between my thinking then, and my thinking about things now, has meant that I have avoided this chapter for some time as I simply couldn't imagine it into being. How do I connect the dots? The dots being the shifts in my own ontological and epistemological perspective. I understand the reality that a PhD is rarely a linear process, and those who undertake it will often experience a philosophical unfolding as they encounter new ways of thinking with theories, ideas, and concepts within and beyond their field. This has certainly been the case for my own doctoral journey, and whilst this development is an exciting one, I feel uneasy about how best to articulate these changes within a field whose academic conventions are still deeply entrenched in positivist attributes such as methodological rigour, consistency, and structure (Hennink et al., 2011; Richards & Morse, 2013).

My increasing desire in research to be messy, flexible, curious, and creative, to follow unexpected threads and be open to new pathways, feels somewhat hampered by a pressure to conform to, what St. Pierre (2019) calls a 'conventional humanistic qualitative methodology'. This approach, she writes, is an "established, institutionally approved methodological structure invented to respond to the paradigm wars of its time" (p.3). Debates between quantitative and qualitative researchers on the credibility and

applicability of qualitative research have encouraged many qualitative researchers to adopt scientific traditions in their work (Hennink et al., 2011), though I have often wondered what gets missed through a commitment to these traditions. In fact, it was this line of thinking that occurred when I approached the data analysis stage of this project that caused me to look beyond such conventions. Certain moments that occurred during conversations with participants had not shown up in the written words of the transcripts, and yet they stood out so clearly in my mind as important threads to explore. These were feelings, senses, utterances, looks and glances which "escape capture by propositional language" (Deleuze, 2004, as cited in MacLure, 2023a, p.247). If I looked solely at the transcript data, what powerful and insightful elements would I have missed? This is what drew me towards new materialist and posthumanist thinking. The onto-epistemological turn toward matter, affect, relationality and entanglement that is central to these perspectives provides a way of viewing the world as not simply a "stage or background for the Big Human Adventure" (MacLure, 2017, p.3). Instead, it invites an exploration of all things as inherently connected, of having agentic capacity to affect and be affected. A body does not exist in isolation to the world and its becoming, but intra-acts with its surrounding, continuously shaped, and re-shaped by these intra-actions. To simply investigate the linguistic aspects of human voice/thought, without paying attention to the assembled parts and entanglements which may bring about phenomena, invites an anthropocentric viewpoint which does not capture the interconnectedness of things (MacLure, 2017). I wanted to highlight the messiness and incompleteness of events, and this warrants a more flexible, curious approach to research. It also warrants an expansion of the empirical to a deep empiricism which includes the affective, sensory, linguistic, cognitive, and other elements of reality that may not typically be acknowledged in traditional qualitative data or methods. Given these reflections, I have found myself being drawn toward post-qualitative research, an inquiry shaped by new-materialist, posthuman and indigenous ideas "that comes from being-with others (e.g., people, place, objects, etc.), rather than researching 'about' or 'on' something" (Renold et al., 2021, p.540). This chapter continues to explore this and the way in which it unfolds in this thesis. I share these reflections as a starting point to this chapter; to set out my 'dilemma' and to explain

and be accountable for my actions. Whilst this chapter will detail the reasoning behind the choices I have made, it will also reflect on what gets missed through these decisions.

4.2 UNPACKING POSITIONALITY, REFLEXIVITY, AND DIFFRACTION

"We do not obtain knowledge by standing outside of the world; we know because "we" are of the world." (Barad, 2003, p.829)

It is a common qualitative research practice within the social sciences to state one's positionality, with the aim being to reflect on the "position that the researcher has chosen to adopt within a given research study" (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p.71). Traditionally, this practice is encouraged amongst social scientists to address concerns regarding the researchers' subjectivity 'clouding' the interpretation of data, therefore reducing the validity and reliability of the research (Brink, 1993). I began my journey as an undergraduate researcher with a similar outlook and fears over how to ensure my research was not influenced or biased by my own perspective, as I am sure many novice researchers still do. And yet, it has been well argued as to the impossibility of eliminating subjectivity from research (Haraway, 1988).

As outlined in the previous chapter, Barad's (1996) concept of agential realism demonstrates the impossibility for the observer and the observed to remain separate; they are inevitably entangled through their very intra-action. As the researcher chooses the apparatus with which to measure something (e.g., the methods or research questions), they are always-already imposing a particular way of understanding the thing being measured (Fox & Alldred, 2023). Their positionality has already shaped the research before it has truly begun. In conventional humanist qualitative research, researcher and researched are positioned in binary opposition, and the insider-outsider dichotomy is often used to describe such a positioning, with various debates as to the benefits of each (Darwin Holmes, 2020). These positions are thought to have an impact on the ontology of the researcher, whereby they are likely to view reality differently depending on their

relationship with the context (Fetterman, 2008), which in turn would shape the research in different ways. Others have discussed the space in between, where researchers have felt both a part of, and at the same time separate from, the context they are exploring (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). However, in line with Barad's (2007) ethico-onto-epistemological framework, I take the view that ethics, ontology, and epistemology are inseparable, and therefore it is impossible to have a fixed position outside of a research assemblage with which to examine someone's reality. Instead, it is about acknowledging "our messy involvement with knowledge production" (Thorpe et al., 2020, p.52), and being accountable for the entanglements we are a part of. Each decision made in the research process is an ethical one, resulting in the emergence and exclusion of different ways of knowing (Barad, 2007), and it is crucial to identify how I am deeply implicated in these cuts and their consequences (Thorpe et al., 2020). One way that I have attempted to do this is through the creation of vignettes to illustrate entanglements that brought forth certain moments in the research. This will be unpacked in more detail in section 4.10.

Whilst reflexivity is about reflecting upon one's position in the world, and the way in which this may influence research processes, new materialists have argued that these practices are grounded in representationalism, and in this sense "displaces the same elsewhere" (Haraway, 1997, p.16) rather than seeking out something new and authentic. In this sense, copies of the researcher's own perspective are imposed on the world, reinforcing the assumption of fixed positions (Bozalek & Zembylas, 2017). Reflection involves stepping back from the research and acknowledging differences in identity, positionality, experience, but it also relies on the notion of an independent subject, an 'I' that is separate from the world (Lenz Taguchi, 2013). Diffraction, on the other hand, acknowledges the inseparability of entities and is instead about becoming attuned to differences, how they're being created and how they impact on subjects and their bodies (Geerts & van der Tuin, 2016). In this chapter, I reflect on my own identity and experiences, as a way of being accountable for the ways in which my own history has and continues to shape the research assemblage. However, I also approach this research diffractively, reading with and through multiple theories, perspectives, and knowledges, rather than understanding

them in opposition (Thorpe et al., 2020). In doing this, I attempt to offer many possible explanations regarding phenomena, as opposed to imposing a particular cut or single solution.

As Barad states above, we as researchers are *of* the world, not outside of it, so my experiences make up a part of the very world I am exploring. Therefore, an exploration of how 'I' am entangled in the research seems critical in helping to explain the specific 'cuts' that have been made.

4.3 WHO AM I? HOW AM I ENTANGLED?

I often think about who I am becoming. We all have a history, and it is these histories that shape us, propelling us forward toward new becomings. I knew from a young age that I wanted to work within the realms of sport. I grew up in a family of sport enthusiasts and developed a passion for movement from a young age. I played competitively in a range of sports teams, performed well within PE lessons, and acquired a range of sport leadership roles. I have continued playing competitive and recreational sport well into my adult life and feel confident in trying out new activities. I wish to share this with the reader because I want to demonstrate how important our histories are in shaping our future trajectories. I am in the fortunate position whereby the assemblages I found myself in from a young age were facilitative to these connections to sport, physical activity, my body, movement, wellbeing. My parents were encouraging and had the financial means to support my participation. Physically, my body allowed me to meet the requirements of many 'mainstream' sports with relative ease. During school, I fit the 'sporty girl' stereotype which PE teachers gave their attention to. My cisgender and (at the time, undisclosed) bisexual identity enabled me to access the sporting world without difficulty or scrutiny. All these aspects of my life have led me to *become* a person who has a positive connection to sport and physical activity.

During my undergraduate PE programme, I became aware of various barriers and inequalities that individuals can face in accessing sport and physical activity, particularly for those of certain backgrounds or identities. I developed a strong desire to pursue work which focused on youth inclusion in sport and physical activity, as I wanted young people to feel able to experience the joy, positivity, and benefits of physical activity as I did. This has evolved into a desire to disrupt normative categories and develop more equitable sport and PE experiences for those most marginalised in these settings.

My involvement with a local LGBTQ+ youth charity as a youth support worker was also integral to this broadening of my world view. Here I worked with a diverse group of LGBTQ+ youth, and following values of empathy, attentiveness, and respect, I listened, acknowledged, and supported them within weekly sessions. I became acutely aware of the range of challenges these young people faced in day-to-day life, and this galvanised my intentions to utilise my passion and privilege within both the sporting world and academia to push for change for those who, through deep-rooted societal barriers, have not had the opportunity to flow towards such expansive becomings.

There are ways in which I can relate to the young people involved in this research, but also ways in which I cannot. Our shared membership within the LGBTQ+ community may bring with it some common understandings and experiences, as well as feelings of trust and rapport (Hayfield & Huxley, 2015), and yet my cisgender identity means that I do not share the embodied experience of a gender diverse identity. Cisgender researchers of transgender lives have been criticized for this in the past (Stone, 2006), yet there are also examples of cisgender researchers who have conducted research with highly emancipatory outcomes for the trans community (e.g., Hines, 2007; Sanger, 2010). There is much debate regarding the perceived benefits to participant and researcher of 'matching' social identities through research (McDonald, 2013). Stemming from feminist studies, some suggest that it is only possible to make knowledge claims about a group you are a part of, as differences in social identity (e.g., a man researching a woman) may result in a misunderstood view of the participant's world (hooks, 1989; Smith, 1974). Yet,

within LGBTQ+ studies, researchers have indicated how 'matching' in LGBTQ+ status alone is not necessarily conducive to understanding a participant's reality, as participant and researcher may differ along other social stratifications (e.g., class or race) and therefore be unable to build trust and rapport, or relate in many ways (Kennedy & Davis, 1996; Rasmussen, 2006). Additionally, an insistence on 'matching' can be highly essentialising, restricting the scope of what researchers can study to solely themes or topics that align with what they look like or have experience of personally. Some researchers suggest that what is key to research pursuits where social identities differ between researcher and participant is a central focus on the well-being of and accountability to participants (Sherman, 2002), and of transparency regarding the choices made throughout the research process (Namaste, 2000; Vincent, 2018). The gender diverse young people involved in this research were aware of my cisgender identity from the beginning and were involved in the designing of the research (outlined later) as well as the continual re-shaping of the project. This approach helped to ensure that these young people's own experiences, needs and agendas continued to direct the project in ways that were going to be liberating and meaningful for them.

Much like with the youth participants, for the PE teachers involved in this project I felt somewhat in the 'space between' (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). Having focused my studies on the PE context throughout undergraduate, masters and doctoral level, I have a rich theoretical understanding of how this environment operates and understand a variety of challenges that PE teachers face. In some ways, the PE teachers and I shared similar trajectories in life; a positive PE experience, keen sport enthusiasts, a passion to teach. And yet, I have not been a PE teacher myself, therefore lacking the practitioner experience with which to draw upon. Upon meeting these teachers, I felt a strong sense that many of them sought guidance and reassurance regarding their developing inclusive practice, viewing me as something of an expert in this regard. This dynamic, and the way in which I responded to it, has played on my mind for some time. Early conversations with my research ethics committee (REC) indicated that I should remain impartial and avoid providing guidance on their practice, and yet I felt compelled to respond to their worries

and concerns. This ethical quandary regarding researcher impartiality is unpacked in more depth below, but I introduce it here to indicate the way in which I am always-already entangled in these PE teachers lives. Some of them came to the research with the hope of gaining new ways of knowing, and it is possible that their teaching practices have changed following our conversations, but what would have happened had I not responded to their concerns? My decision to provide guidance and reassurance during our conversations was an ethical one, acknowledging my response-ability (Barad, 2007) within the research assemblage. Beausoleil (2015) describes this as a *responsiveness*, an "ethics borne of situated response, ethics enacted in the pulse and pause of attentiveness" (p.2). This was not a pre-determined action that I chose to take, but one that emerged through paying attention to the affective forces in that space and reacting in response-able ways.

4.4 ETHICS AS RIGOUR

Braidotti (2013, 2019) identifies ethics within a relational ontology, whereby ethical practice does not exist prior to interactions with other entities. Therefore, ethical practice cannot be predetermined or designed, but emerges through the *doing* of relationships. I agree with this point but am also mindful of the way in which our histories shape us in unique ways. Whilst ethical practices may emerge through a process of doing, my own entanglement with the research, and the prior experiences of youth work that I bring into this entanglement, would result in a responsiveness that may differ to others. Whilst it is not possible to predict and pre-determine all ethical practices in research (as RECs often desire), through understanding my own history I am aware of certain qualities (aligning with an ethics of care) that would likely emerge through the research. Davies and Dodd (2002) explore the concept of rigour in qualitative research as a matter of ethics over methods, and this rings true with my own perspective. In this vein, rigour is not demonstrated in the meticulous, systematic application of methods, but in the consistent embedding of an ethics of care. Through being flexible and creative in this research, I

have been able to respond to participants in empathetic, attentive, and respectful ways throughout the process (which I now comprehend is a part of my ethical becoming that has evolved from my history within the LGBTQ+ youth group assemblage). My overriding approach to research therefore rejects the conventional concepts of impartiality, rigour and structure, in favour of alternative, more ethical approach which centre accountability, response-ability and intra-action. Examples of this will be shared in due course.

Typically, ethical principles within the social sciences propose that researchers should remain impartial, avoiding the sharing of personal or political views (Bos, 2020), and this is commonly reflected in the feedback that REC give when reviewing applications. However, Butler (1990) suggests that, to examine and address issues relating to gender, we must trouble the boundaries that appear during research. This might require a political stance to emerge within the research, for example in troubling the system of gender that governs society. After all, research is not politically neutral (Flexner et al., 2021), and work which is disruptive and transformative in nature should be "challenging the façade of neutrality" (Gatenby & Humphries, 2000, p.90). However, this can result in a discordance between the positivist requirements of RECs, and the researcher's own values and commitments to the participants and communities enmeshed in research (Slovin & Semenec, 2019).

In preparing for this research, I considered the possibility that some PE teachers who chose to participate may have less than favourable views regarding gender diversity. I felt uneasy about this potentiality, simply because I did not feel I could remain quiet if it arose. What if a teacher had (un)intentionally expressed transphobic views or discriminatory teaching practices? In communicating this with my institute's REC, I received the following response:

> "Is addressing these during your research part of your role as a researcher and appropriate during the research process? What experience do you have to explain to a teacher about inclusive practice - consider boundaries of your role as a researcher."

But as illuminated previously, I am not *just* a researcher, but a combination of many things (e.g., woman, activist, friend, youth support worker, ally) due to my continual becoming with the world, and I feel compelled to express my solidarity with the gender diverse community and encourage inclusive practices at every opportunity. To embed this responsive approach throughout the research process is to have rigour.

This responsiveness emerged in a range of ways during conversations with both young people and teachers. For example, through acknowledgement of the systemic marginalisation of the gender diverse community, empathising with the lived experiences of participants, offering guidance to those with uncertainties around developing inclusive practices, and adapting research plans to suit the specific needs of some of those involved (more on this later). Barad (2003) states how "possibilities for acting exist at every moment, and these … entail a responsibility to intervene in the world's becoming, to contest and rework what matters and what is excluded from mattering" (p.827). Through acting upon certain events, such as those detailed above, it has been possible to question dominant ways of knowing (e.g., biological essentialism), and disrupt normative categories (e.g., male/female), with the knowledge that what matters in the PE setting may transform for the better. As the empirical chapters will demonstrate, this responsiveness and attentiveness to the participants enabled validating and emotionally cathartic conversations to occur, provided reassurance to worry-stricken teachers, facilitating a space which truly seemed to benefit all involved.

4.5 WORKING WITH 'VULNERABLE' YOUTH

Historically, institutional approaches to research with young people, particularly those considered vulnerable, have focused on risk aversion over their rights to participation (Whittington, 2019). Vulnerable populations are those who are considered to have a "diminished capacity to make decisions in their own interest, such as … children… as well as groups that may experience a power differential that could make them susceptible to coercion" (Blair, 2016, p.376). Researchers have indicated how LGBTQ+ youth are

considered particularly vulnerable populations by REC due to these intersecting identities (Blair, 2016; Mustanski, 2011; Pickles, 2019). This is because conversations with young people regarding LGBTQ+ identity are commonly considered 'risky' (Taylor & Dwyer, 2015), guided by a paternalistic framing of young people as incompetent, inarticulate, and immature, unable to discuss matters of sexuality or gender identity (Roffee & Waling, 2017). For RECs, this framing of young people as vulnerable raises particular safeguarding concerns with regards to the possibilities of coercion, perceived obligation, and emotional distress (Schelbe et al., 2015). Consequently, youth research on 'risky' topics which focuses on harms and risks to young people is often favoured over in-depth, diverse explorations of young people's actual lived experiences, because it allows the continuation of a particular framing of childhood innocence (Renold et al., 2015, Renold et al., 2024; Robinson & Davies, 2014). Yet, research which "questions young people's agency and ignores their experiences does not represent sound research and is rooted in phobia and bias" (Toft & Franklin, 2020, p.3), and to exclude gender diverse youth from conversations about their own experiences denies them the possibility to share their voice and set the agenda for matters that affect their life (Daley, 2015).

In considering the application for ethical approval at my own institute, I was aware of these concerns and the typical requirement for compulsory adult guardian consent given the potentially sensitive nature of the project and its focus on gender diverse youth. However, I was also mindful that this approach would result in the exclusion of some of the most marginalised gender diverse youth – those without supportive guardians (Andrzejewski et al., 2021; McConnell et al., 2015; Roe, 2017). Through working with LGBTQ+ youth in other capacities, I strongly disagree with the paternalistic framing of this group as inarticulate in relation to gender identity and sexuality; their understanding regarding their feelings and desires are clear, and they want to be listened to, understood and central to decisions that impact them. With all this in mind, I implemented an alternative approach to guardian consent which could facilitate the inclusion of a wider range of gender diverse youth.

4.6 THE JOURNEY TO NON-COMPULSORY GUARDIAN CONSENT

For this research, I gained ethical approval to work with gender diverse youth without the compulsory requirement to gain guardian consent, achieved (with some difficulty) through a range of steps which have also been published elsewhere (Ferguson & Russell, in press). The British Educational Research Association (2024) states that, in educational research:

> "the best interests of the child are the primary consideration, and children who are capable of forming their own views should be granted the right to express those views freely, and have them taken into consideration, in all matters affecting them." (p.18)

Therefore, using a range of literature alongside anecdotes from my youth work involvement, I demonstrated to the REC that young people's maturity and competency levels are diverse, and many can make informed decisions about their involvement in research and understand the possible risks of their participation (Coyne, 2010; Whittington, 2019). I shared the reality that young people at the LGBTQ+ youth groups I worked at are already consistently and comfortably articulating their experiences as an LGBTQ+ person during these sessions. We would regularly have difficult conversations about a range of tensions they faced as an LGBTQ+ young person and we fostered a safe and supportive environment for these to take place in. I stressed to the REC that the young people's involvement in the research would reflect this safe, respectful and supportive environment that many were already familiar with. Additionally, I indicated the relevant certification I had in relation to child safeguarding and DBS checks to help reassure the REC that my skills gained as a youth worker were supported by professional development and accreditation.

I then highlighted the possible risks of harm that could occur if guardian consent was required as a blanket approach. There was a possibility that young people may 'out' themselves to guardians to participate and given that some gender diverse youth face hostile home environments in relation to their gender identity (Bower-Brown et al., 2021;

Grossman et al., 2005; Mustanksi, 2011; Pickles, 2019), this had the potential to put them at risk of harm. Additionally, I highlighted how the impact of being excluded from research could be more harmful to a young person than the possibility of having difficult, emotional conversations (Daley, 2015), and would continue to result in only *certain* voices being heard. Given these justifications, I was required to submit a supporting document to the REC which provided the above detail (see Appendix H).

Due to the above rationale, the REC agreed that it would be more ethically sound to provide an option for gender diverse youth to participate without guardian consent. However, in place of a guardian, they required an alternative adult to assess the young person's ability to provide informed consent (through a Gillick competence assessment) and provide adult consent. This was particularly frustrating to me for several reasons. Firstly, it continues to frame the young person as immature and vulnerable, in need of a protective adult figure to make decisions for them (Pickles, 2019; Roffee & Waling, 2017). Secondly, it meant that some young people were still excluded from the research, as not all LGBTQ+ youth organisations had the time or resources to facilitate this approach (many of these organisations are understaffed or run predominantly by volunteers). Finally, the need for guidance documents to be drawn up to support staff in this process (see Appendix G), and the effort spent on communications with the various organisations, made the whole process very time-consuming. This final point would not have been an issue had there been more buy-in from organisations, but as explained, most did not have the capacity to facilitate this approach. Consequently, recruitment was slow-going and did not result in the inclusion of any gender diverse youth without guardian consent.

On reflection of this journey, it was apparent that this was a difficult application for the REC to review due to their lack of prior experience of alternative consent approaches to youth inclusion in research. It required many iterations and liaison with the REC to reassure them of its need, and even then, in my opinion, they took an overly protective approach. Additionally, and referring to an earlier point regarding my own multiplicity (as a researcher, youth worker, student, woman, etc.), there was an interesting tension that

emerged regarding the positivist expectations of RECs to isolate these roles. Their expectation for impartiality and neutrality as a researcher, but to also have the emotional intelligence of a youth worker to work intuitively with young people during projects, feels misaligned. The REC were reassured by my experiences as a youth worker yet did not wish me to engage with the young people with this hat on during the research. Slovin and Semenec (2019) discuss a similar difficulty within their own research on working with gender non-conforming youth, with their desire to blur the lines between researcher and youth worker flagged up as a liability issue to their REC. As I have reflected on in a previous section, I maintain that my ability to apply a particular ethics of care (stemming from my experiences as a youth worker) to the participants enabled a more ethical and accountable approach than had I held a rigid researcher role. Slovin and Semenec (2019) propose that this blurring of the lines, aligning with a post-qualitative inquiry, offers "alternative ways of (un)knowing static approaches to an ethical role in the field [which] provokes exciting possibilities for thinking and researching differently" (p.18).

Finally, it is important to highlight the precedent that this process set within my institution. This was the first instance within my department of an ethics application gaining approval without the requirement for compulsory guardian consent. This indicates that RECs are beginning to problematise the wide-held assumptions that guardians are inherently a site of safety, integral to the inclusion of young people in research. Whilst further education is required by RECs to develop more feasible protocols for researchers to facilitate more inclusive approaches to youth research (Ferguson & Russell, in press), for example, by working with researchers to develop projects which truly centre the young person and do not require other adult involvement, this ethical approach provides an important contribution to the advancement of inclusive educational research with young people.

There were also a range of other processes that took place to ensure the research aligned with the university's ethics guidelines and British Educational Research Association ethical guidelines (2024). These centred around ensuring anonymity and confidentiality of all participants, storing data safely, and ensuring transparency to the participants

throughout. These requirements were all adhered to. Please see Appendices B, C and D to illustrate these within the participant information sheets and consent forms.

4.7 RECRUITING PARTICIPANTS

Multiple methods were used to recruit participants for this research. To reach out to gender diverse youth, I shared a recruitment poster (see Appendix F) to a range of LGBTQ+ youth groups across the UK via email, requesting that they share the information at their youth groups. I shared the poster on social media (Twitter and Instagram) and encouraged LGBTQ+ organisations to re-share the post to increase its reach. I also verbally communicated the research at the LGBTQ+ youth groups I facilitated locally. This resulted in the recruitment of 9 gender diverse youth, aged 11-18 years old. Please see Table 1 below for further details regarding their self-defined identities.

Pseudonym	Gender identity	Pronouns	Age	Location
Jordan	Transgender male	He/him	15	Norfolk
Ali	Non-binary	They/them	18	Norfolk
Thomas	Transgender and non-binary	He/him/they/them	12	Norfolk
Ben	Trans boy	He/him	14	Norfolk
Morgan	Non-binary	They/them	17	Norfolk
Max	Trans boy	He/him	14	Norfolk
Dylan	Non-binary	They/them	11	Norfolk
Ezra	Trans boy	He/him	12	Norfolk
Stevie	Non-binary	They/them	12	Somerset

Table 1: Youth participant demographic information

As I alluded to earlier, the recruitment process for this was lengthy, with many LGBTQ+ organisations sharing that they lacked the capacity to support the research, and some

had concerns over the possibility of research fatigue. This is a considerable issue within research on gender diversity, with the community typically "over-researched and underserved by the research conducted" (Hafford-Letchfield et al., 2019, p.1124). This can result in feelings of distrust and hostility toward researchers due to concerns over whether the participants will receive any tangible benefits to their involvement, or if research outcomes predominantly benefit others (Evans & Rawlings, 2021; Tebbe & Budge, 2016). Although I was transparent about the immediate benefits of the research to participants (e.g., a cathartic experience to share their feelings and needs) and how the research findings would be used (e.g., to give voice to their experiences and facilitate inclusive changes to PE practice and policy), it's possible that these concerns still impacted on the recruitment.

Recruiting PE teachers was more straightforward, with a recruitment poster shared on social media inviting them to participate. Again, I encouraged certain social media accounts to re-share the post (e.g., those sharing PE best practices and policy updates) to increase its reach. This resulted in the recruitment of 10 PE teachers from across England whose demographics are detailed in Table 2 below.

Pseudonym	Gender identity	Sexuality	Age	Location
Alison	Cisgender woman	Heterosexual	51	Norfolk
Freya	Cisgender woman	Lesbian	31	Norfolk
Callum	Cisgender man	Heterosexual	34	Manchester
Rosie	Cisgender woman	Heterosexual	28	Manchester
Natasha	Cisgender woman	Bisexual	39	Nottinghamshire
Jade	Cisgender woman	Heterosexual	28	Norfolk
Mikey	Cisgender man	Heterosexual	43	Somerset
Lily	Cisgender woman	Bisexual	39	Surrey
Otis	Cisgender man	Heterosexual	26	Brighton
Liam	Cisgender man	Heterosexual	36	Norfolk

Table 2: PE teacher demographic information

Face-to-face and online approaches to meeting were offered to teachers, with the majority taking place online. Whilst this research does not aim to provide generalisations or be representative of a wider demographic, I was aware that those who agreed to participate in the research were likely to have a particular interest in gender diversity and inclusion in PE. In this sense, the views and experiences captured would not necessarily represent the wider PE profession, but perhaps only those with more progressive intentions.

Regrettably, when planning the recruitment process for both young people and teachers, I did not make a concerted effort to access participants with a range of social identities and am cognisant that the participants did not reflect diverse backgrounds. I was able to identify several organisations who worked with LGBTQ+ youth from minority ethnic or religious backgrounds, but following no initial email response, I did not reflect upon how I could more effectively engage with these groups and attempt other recruitment processes. Likewise, when collecting demographic data of the participants, I focused solely on their sexual or gender identity and did not consider other demographic details

such as race, disability, ethnicity, or faith. At the time, this felt appropriate given the focus of the research on gender diversity specifically, however I now recognise that this lack of diversity demonstrates my naivety as a white, middle-class, able-bodied researcher to not consider how this form of recruitment continues to produce knowledge that only represents certain realities. The absence of people of colour, of people with disabilities, of people from a range of social classes is apparent, and denies the possibilities of more diverse, intersectional understandings of young people's and PE teacher's lives. As the literature review indicated, this is the depressing reality across much of the research on gender diversity in PE. Whilst we are beginning to see research exploring the intersections of gender diversity and ethnicity, race or socio-economic status within school (Craig et al., 2018; Hatchel & Marx, 2018; Hatchel et al., 2019) and higher education contexts (Nicolazzo, 2016), there are significant gaps in the PE context. Given the range of tensions that can be present for ethnic minorities within the PE setting for both teachers (Flintoff, 2015) and students (Thorjussen & Sisjord, 2020), and barriers in relation to faith (Elliot & Hoyle, 2014) social class (Johnston et al., 2007; Whigham et al., 2020) and disability (Pocock & Miyahara, 2018), it is highly possible that these are intensified for those who are also gender diverse. Therefore, future research should consider applying an intersectional framework to consider the possible complexities of these experiences and ensure any research insights and recommendations acknowledge them authentically.

4.8 CAPTURING VOICE

As the introduction to this chapter explained, the initial planning of this research involved the selection of certain methods to capture the voice of both young people and teachers. I am aware that some of these methods (i.e., interviews) are deemed humanist-oriented by some due to their linguistic focus and representational logic (St. Pierre, 2018), and could therefore be misaligned with the posthumanist ontology with which I have drawn on. This incompatibility is one which is often felt by qualitative researchers who are turning to post-qualitative thinking (Monforte & Smith, 2020). And yet, I also recognise that to

encourage new ways of thinking and knowing we must welcome the unknown, be curious and creative, and allow things to flux and flow. In this sense, whilst these methods may traditionally capture the spoken word/voice/thought, freezing it in time, the subsequent analysis emerged through an unfolding of the "entangled relations of data-and-researcher" (MacLure, 2013, p.228). The 'data' presented in the empirical chapters was not solely the written words, but feelings, senses, body language, memories, movements and more, all of which were deeply entangled in my own becoming with the world. What follows is an explanation and reflection of these methods.

At the time of planning the research, semi-structured interviews were considered a suitable approach to use with PE teachers. There were some key areas of interest that arose from the literature review, so being able to facilitate a conversation where these areas could be unpacked was important, and interviews provided this opportunity. The semi-structured aspect enables the sequencing of questions to differ and encourages a more participant-led conversation (Roulston & Choi, 2018), meaning that rapport can be built through a conversational approach, and the participants have more agency to direct the conversation in ways that are significant to them. This flexibility resulted in the emergence of many new areas which had not been previously considered and enabled me to better understand the wider professional, political and cultural contexts within which these PE teachers were situated. Whilst this was beneficial to me, upon reflection I now feel that this approach was somewhat extractive and did not necessarily centre the needs of the teachers as I did with the youth participants. Much more time was given to consider how best to support and include the youth participants. Perhaps, this was influenced by the RECs concern over the possible vulnerabilities of the youth participants, and thereby further attention and protocols were required to facilitate their inclusion when compared to the teachers. Based on previous research, news articles, social media posts and conversations with PE teaching friends of mine, I felt I was aware of what PE teachers were hoping to gain from research such as this - knowledge and awareness around gender diversity and developing inclusive practices. I felt that this could be achieved through semi-structured interviews but did not consider how the PE teachers might have

preferred to engage through other means. Whilst many of the PE teachers did follow up their interview with positive feedback about our conversations, I feel I should have done more to consider their needs within the research and whether other approaches would have been more empowering for them. I wonder what could have arose had I observed their movements and various intra-actions within the PE assemblage, for example through an ethnographic approach; knowledge most certainly would have emerged differently.

With gender diverse youth, two key approaches were used to learn about their lives: semi-structured interviews and arts-based activities. Youth participants decided how they wanted to have these conversations – online, in-person, one-on-one or in a small group setting. The decision to provide this range of approaches to participation was shaped by discussions with gender diverse youth at the LGBTQ+ youth group I work at. I had initially sought to form an advisory group of gender diverse youth to co-design the research, following the work of Rawlings and McDermott (2021) in co-designing research on sensitive topics with queer youth. However, difficulties occurred in recruiting for this advisory group due to the Covid-19 pandemic, so instead of a formal advisory group, I spoke informally with youth groups attendees about how they thought young people like themselves might like to participate. Due to my own interest in participatory methods and the possibilities they have in enabling marginalised youth to have more agency through research (Aldridge, 2017), I had aired the idea of using participatory activities as a means of capturing voice. For example, facilitating group workshops which involved creative elements such as collaging, drawing or photography, combined with group discussions, to explore their experiences of PE. However, these informal conversations at the youth group highlighted their preferences for one-to-one or small group interviews due to the personal nature of the topic area, and the importance of having comfort and privacy to talk candidly with me were considered an essential element to their involvement. Therefore, interviews with young people for this research took place in settings that were familiar to them, such as the space of our weekly youth groups, a private room at a local library, or in the comfort of their living room. There was also considerable interest in the inclusion of a creative element which will be explored in more depth below.

These informal conversations at the youth group were integral to the re-shaping of research plans, to ensure that approaches were chosen which would be comfortable and meaningful to those involved. In this sense, these young people had a sense of agency through their ability to decide how they chose to participate (Kirby, 2004; Whittington, 2019). Of course, whilst this enabled young people to impose their own 'cuts' on how their voices would be recorded through the research, the interviews were still largely structured by my own decision-making in relation to the topic areas we explored (see interview schedules in Appendix A), and in this sense my role as a researcher continues to impact on the emergence of new knowledge. What other insights may have emerged if things had been done differently?

4.9 ARTS-BASED ACTIVITIES

The arts-based activities used in this research were inspired by multiple encounters; conversations with LGBTQ+ youth groups, emerging research with gender diverse and youth communities, conversations with colleagues. From the beginning of this doctoral pursuit, creative methodologies piqued my interest, and knowledge gained from academic events regarding their broad and varied use in research inspired me to explore further. Through my work with LGBTQ+ youth groups I learnt how beneficial creativity was for young people in being able to express and articulate themselves. Young people in these groups regularly requested to take part in arts and crafts and found much joy in these activities, from creating zines and posters, to flags, to Pride outfit ideas and imaginative monsters and creatures. These activities offered them a chance to express who they were, how they felt, who they wanted to be, that went beyond any verbal interactions (material, as opposed to discursive, imaginings of the body). There is also something about the physicality of art materials, the way they make people feel when they touch and play around with them. They generate a thrill of creative possibilities, of manipulating or combining objects to create something tangible and new. It felt crucial to offer the young people in this research the opportunity to use this mode of expression

and creativity to articulate aspects of themselves and their experiences that they might struggle to put into words, but also to help me make sense of their experiences in more nuanced ways.

In recent years, the use of participatory, arts-based methods in research with gender, sexuality and youth-based research has seen a rise in popularity. Literat (2013) highlights the potential of incorporating drawing with youth research in "revealing a more nuanced depiction of concepts, emotions, and information in an expressive, empowering, and personally relevant manner" (p.84). Renold (2019) used arts-based methods in their work with adolescent girls, creating 'd/artaphacts' (arts-based research objects) in the form of ruler-skirts - a youth-led creation of graffitied rulers formed into a wearable skirt - which raised awareness of everyday sexual violence and harassment in schools. Arts-based methods with gender diverse youth have been found to have the potential to challenge dominant framings of vulnerability and resilience through their ability to disrupt "normative discourses of what it means to be trans*" (Asakura et al., 2019, p.1061). Perhaps most pertinent to this research, a project by Caudwell (2020, 2022) utilised creative methods in working with trans and non-binary participants as a way of exploring their feelings toward swimming sessions with others in their community. Their creations, which ranged from single words on a page, to simple drawings, to detailed and artistic depictions, "enabled creative responses that tell of the self in very different ways to the confines of words and speech" (Caudwell, 2022, p.356). In offering this approach to expressing oneself, participants were able to tap into feelings, emotions, and imaginings of themselves that go beyond the non-normative ideals that are perpetuated within our society. For example, some of Caudwell's participants drew themselves as fish, mermaids, and dolphins as alternative ways of expressing themselves. This approach moves away from the humanistic tendency to centre the textual or linguistic (Shomura, 2017; Tompkins, 2016), inviting participants instead to create and invent new knowledges and imaginings of the body.

I wanted participants to have the transformative and disruptive opportunity to express themselves through similarly creative means. Therefore, youth participants were invited to 'draw/sketch/paint/collage/create something that expresses your feelings about PE. It can be as simple or as detailed as you like'. It was important that young people felt able to participate in ways that were comfortable to them. As such this was offered as an optional activity for those that felt compelled to express themselves visually and the instructions were purposefully open and flexible. In Chapter 5 I unpack the benefits of utilising this approach alongside other forms of communication.

4.10 THE DATA GLOW

Whilst reflecting on the data collection process, there were certain moments that occurred which stuck with me. When I began to explore the data again, I wanted to take everything in, to become 'closer' to the data; a common and typically encouraged practice amongst qualitative researchers (Aspers & Corte, 2019). Yet, when I returned to the points in the transcripts where these moments had occurred, I found that very little was there in the form of written words. The transcript data did not fully illustrate how I had experienced that moment, or how I believed others in that space felt at that time. The written words detailing what was said between myself and the participants did not explain the atmosphere of the space, the expressions of the individuals, the emotions and affective forces that emerged. Yet there was something about those moments that lingered with me, compelling me to explore further. MacLure (2013) describes this as the wonder or glow of data and suggests it to be "an untapped potential in qualitative research" (p.228). She writes how, so often in qualitative research, we focus on interpretation, classification, and representation of data, causing it to freeze in time and be considered as a sameness rather than something new or unanticipated. This approach forces researchers into typological thinking (DeLanda, 2002) where data is seen as inert matter within a stable hierarchy of entities. Conversely, new materialism invites us to view data as lively, active, and emergent matter that can both affect and be affected. In these moments, I felt affected

by something in a way that, whilst showing some signs of understanding through the data collected, could not be explained through the data alone. These are moments of wonder, where the data 'glows', exerting "a kind of fascination, and [having] a capacity to animate further thought" (MacLure, 2013, p.228). Rather than embarking on the conventional approach to qualitative data analysis that I had initially planned (conducting a thematic analysis), I decided to follow the 'glow' of data and events to see where it led me. These wanderings have been captured in the form of vignettes at the beginning of each empirical chapter.

I decided to use vignettes as a way of telling the story by which each chapter seemed to emerge from. For example, in Chapter 5 I set the scene leading up to a particularly intense and emotional moment of sadness that occurred during a conversation with a youth participant. This then led the chapter on to other explorations of intense emotion, the idea of affective intensities (Ringrose & Renold, 2014), and a wider discussion around how positive change in the PE setting could be propelled by these affective moments. To provide another example, given the focus of this research on the school context, I did not envision that I would explore other youth contexts. Yet, in following the glow of a certain moment that occurred with myself and two young people (in Chapter 6), it became clear that a deep dive into their youth group assemblage was necessary to generate new ways of looking at the PE context. By becoming quite transfixed on these moments, thinking deeply about what they could mean or bring to this work, this thesis has evolved to explore ideas way beyond its original scope.

These vignettes also provide an opportunity to demonstrate my entanglements with the research context. Given that there is not always a wealth of transcript data illustrating these 'glowing' moments in full, the vignettes allow me to draw on my own memory of the events and the situated and contextual knowledge I have gained through my exposure to the context the conversation took place in. Brown-Saracino (2021) talks of a moment following the end of a research interview where she is invited to stay for lunch, and it is during these unrecorded and informal conversations where she learns how her participant had

rehearsed specific stories to share during the interview. Through learning this, she became aware of the participant's central role in the community in sharing collective stories about the gentrification of their village. She explains how this "knowledge changed how I understood the meaning behind her words, in ways both subtle and significant" (Brown-Saracino, 2021, p.592). This embeddedness within the context being researched ultimately shapes the sense-making of data in particular ways, and it is through my own embeddedness that I can begin to make sense of these moments.

MacLure (2023a) refers to post-qualitative analysis as an explication as opposed to explanation, "an unfolding of the affective forces that are implicated in events, in order to think or do something new" (p.251), and this was certainly how much of the empirical chapters came together. It was a messy and iterative process which followed no predictable structure. As I began to write a vignette based on an initial 'glow', ideas about what the chapter might look like began to form, and with this, connections to other bits of data, memories, concepts, feelings and literature. Adams St. Pierre (1997) defines this as 'writing as inquiry', whereby there are no prior intentions or pre-determined direction for the writing to go, but in the process of writing, an inquiry unfolds. In many cases, things did seem to fall together quite organically. But sometimes "the unknown [was] unsettling … at times too much to work with" (Hancock & Fontanella-Nothom, 2020, p.81). In these circumstances I became stuck, reverting to more conventional approaches. For example, I was struggling to know how best to present some ideas in a particular chapter, so my supervisor and I spent an afternoon looking at participant quotes, discussing and arranging them into different themes. These shifting approaches to the 'sense-making' and writing process seem to stand out quite clearly within the empirical chapters, with some sections feeling rigid and others more fluid. By this, I mean that my framing of the various elements in these chapters repeatedly shifted, sometimes articulated within a materialist lens which saw the data as emergent and alive, whilst with other aspects, my familiarity with interpretation (aligning with conventional qualitative inquiry) took over and reduced the data to more unyielding connotations. Again, I am reminded of the challenges of oscillating between conventional and post qualitative inquiry, of the

"incommensurability and onto-epistemological incoherence … always there…, pinching me" (Monforte & Smith, 2020, p.650). Koro-Ljungberg (2016) refers to this as a sense of loss or uncertainty, a mourning of stable, fixed historical knowledge. And yet, the thrill of post-qualitative inquiry is that it is experimental and immanent, with no set rules or methods to guide the researcher (MacLure, 2021; St. Pierre, 2021), so in this sense this uncertainty and change is anticipated as things unfold in unexpected ways.

Whilst this approach to research inquiry is transformative in its ability to encourage new ways of thinking about the PE assemblage, I am mindful that what is presented in this thesis is still a particular cut of the thing being explored, consequently excluding different ways of knowing (Barad, 2007). Through following the 'glow' of moments, events, or bits of data, what might have been ignored? I have attempted to centre and build upon the issues, experiences, and events that seemed most pertinent to the settings explored, to find out what might propel these assemblages toward greater action and change. Nonetheless, what follows are four chapters which begin with a vignette detailing a feeling, a moment, an event that *glowed,* setting the scene for the exploration and discussion of ideas, data, feelings, reflections and literature that follow on. Chapter 5 explores a moment of great sadness between a young person and me and speaks to the range of intense emotion that a PE assemblage can bring forth. It explores how different entanglements within the PE space might shape these emotive experiences in different ways. Chapter 6 unpacks an explosion of joyful movement that occurred during a meeting with two young people. It goes on to consider the multiplicity of things that may have shaped that moment, exploring how these elements might be taken up in other spaces such as the PE setting. Chapter 7 focuses on the way in which PE teachers come to know and understand gender diversity, exploring the apparatuses that shape their perspectives, policies and practices in PE and beyond. It considers how teachers might begin to understand gender in more expansive ways. Finally, Chapter 8 looks at the timetable as a *thing* with a particular affective capacity in the PE assemblage, with the ability to control and be controlled. It explores the various ways in which the timetable enacts particular ways of being and

knowing in the PE setting and suggests how it might be re-configured to welcome greater inclusion.

5 "AND IT ALL JUST WENT BACK TO HOW IT WAS BEFORE…"

Morgan and I meet on a warm, sunny afternoon in July. We decide to meet in a space at the local library, given its central location to us both.

The usual gatherings of young people are scattered across the steps outside, enjoying their lunch breaks in the sunshine. There are an array of loud and expressive outfits, hairstyles and make-up adorned by these groups, and many a rainbow flag lanyard and badge. This area is well-known for being quite the LGBTQ+ hub, with community fairs, protests and Pride events taking place here regularly. As I think about these steps now, I'm reminded of a series of drag performances I watched there just weeks after this moment took place. I saw Morgan there too.

Morgan is one of the longest-attending young people at the LGBTQ+ youth group where we met. It's been wonderful to see them develop and grow through the years, from a shy, reserved teen to a confident and self-assured individual.

We meet in the foyer and enjoy small talk, chatting about the warm weather and our love of the library. A few months prior, the youth group took a trip to the library where we explored the queer book selection and saw the young peoples' handmade zines on display in the zine section. The library feels a very welcoming and inclusive place[1], and I feel pleased to have suggested this spot as a meeting place, given our shared fondness and familiarity of it.

We ascend several flights of stairs and walk until we reach a door at the end of a long room, chatting all the way. I tap a key card on the sensor *beep* and we enter the room.

---

[1] As of April 2024, this space has experienced significant political turbulence. I expand on this event in the final chapter, but in short, the library faced complaints from those with gender-critical views and a 'trans-friendly' poster was removed from the public space. This invoked significant media scrutiny and a protest against the actions of senior leadership at the library ensued. This event feels like a powerful example of the real-world impact of the platforming and legitimising of gender critical perspectives in the media.

The space had a sense of stillness and privacy whilst still being just a few minutes away from the busy, buzzing life of the library. We sat down and began the interview, discussing Morgan's school life, their shifting sexual and gender identities, their views on PE, the unfairness of 'boys' and 'girls' activities. They began to share some difficult experiences of being bullied by other students in the boy's PE lesson. The conversation below brings us up to the moment that lingers in my mind…

Lois: Yeah, and what if there was an option to move with the girls then? Is that something you might have liked?

Morgan: I actually did, … that did happen at one point because around the time that I did think I was transgender, I wanted to transition into a girl, I was talking to a few of my friends about … how uncomfortable I felt in the boys group, one because they bullied me all the time and two because I just weren't really comfortable in myself, I would have felt better being with who I felt like I was. And they were like 'let's all go to the teacher and ask about it'. And I was like … in my head, like … 'they're gonna say no, they're gonna say no'. But I was just like I won't know until I try, so we all went to the teacher and they actually arranged something and they let me be in the girls group for a bit. Obviously I still got changed with the boys. But I did PE, I went off with the girls group and I felt so much more comfortable, I engaged so much more. The teacher who taught that class was really nice, she was one of my favourite teachers. … I used to enjoy PE, I used to be excited to go to PE. And then, … one day I started hearing like about these two or three girls who were saying how they didn't want me there. And that I should be with the boys and this kept going and going. Until one lesson I saw them talking to the teacher about it and I just got really upset and angry so I ran off to like an empty changing room. … we all talked and the girls were like 'it's not that we don't feel comfortable that you're here, we just think it's unfair that you get to be in the girls group but we don't get to be in the boys group'. But I wanted to be in the girls group for a

115

completely different reason. They wanted to be in the boys group because obviously they wanted to be with the boys, they liked the boys. But in the end, the girls ended up getting their way and I had to go back to the boys and it all just went back to how it was before.

Morgan takes a deep breath and I find myself to be choked up. Our eyes are glistening, having both progressively filled with tears as Morgan shares this story. I manage to take a breath and we continue our conversation.

This moment was full of emotion, of affective intensity (Ringrose & Renold, 2014). As I think back to this moment even now as I write, I continue to be moved by it. There is an energy in that moment that flows through space and time, continuing to affect and propelling me forwards. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, I decided to write a series of vignettes to capture aspects of the data collection process that did not necessarily 'show up' in the data. The emotion in Morgan's story above is likely to bring forth an array of feelings in the reader, and yet, there was something more in that moment that could not be captured by the audio recorder on my mobile phone. I wrote this vignette to try and capture the history of mine and Morgan's entanglements in the world. The situated and contextual details that paint a more complex picture of our relationship and of the particular configuration of entities that day that cultivated such an honest and raw intra-action. Would such a moment have emerged in another configuration?

This event galvanised my (already strong) intentions to do good by the participants. Deleuze and Guattari (1993) might identify this as a particularly intense flow of energy that seeps into other assemblages, enabling de-territorialisation to occur. I came away from this moment marked by the intra-actions that occurred here, and these would be brought forward into other social configurations and continue to create ripples (disruptions). It dawns on me that what appears to be missing within the PE space is this sort of intense affective force that propels people to feel things, respond to things, to act in response-able and ethical ways (Barad, 2007). Whilst the PE teachers in this research demonstrated good intentions towards the creation of inclusive PE environments for gender diverse

116

youth, what appeared to be lacking was a sustained understanding and empathy regarding the lived experience of these young people. This line of thinking will be unpacked in Chapter 7 which untangles the PE teacher perspective. In what follows, this chapter will explore Morgan's story, opening into a wider discussion about some of the human entanglements these young people find themselves in in the PE space, and how these contribute to different trajectories and affective forces amongst gender diverse youth.

5.1 MAPPING THE MOMENT

Morgan's story above illustrates a range of ways in which a joyful becoming in the PE setting was both enabled and blocked. It highlights just how easily relations in an assemblage can shift and change an individuals' trajectory in the world. Morgan's experience of PE appeared to shift and re-configure, much like their own sense of sexual and gender identity. They began to question their sexuality in year 8, identifying as bisexual first, and then gay. Morgan alludes to feeling a pressure to assimilate with the sexual norms (and heteronormativity) of that space, stating:

> "I started having feelings that I liked the same gender as me but at the same time I was kind of … trying to deny that I was fully like attracted to the same gender as me, so I came out as bisexual."

Following this, they identified as genderfluid, and then transgender, until sensing that a non-binary identity aligned most with how they felt. This journey of exploration is one that many people go through, and this sense of fluidity in sexuality and gender identity reflects the experiences of many young people today (Parker, 2016). Yet, schools in the UK are a setting still built around heteronormative and cisnormative ideologies (Horton, 2022), inhibiting the fluidity of sexual and gender expressions that many young people wish to explore.

Whilst binary constructions of gender can be seen across the school system, PE is unique in its reliance on a gender binary to inform the way in which students are formally organised into groups. As discussed in previous chapters, this organisation of individuals based on assumed biological differences is ubiquitous within the sporting sector, presenting barriers to a broad range of people. But what do these groupings mean to young people who challenge these dominant assumptions regarding the gender binary? And (in what ways) have they been able to overcome these barriers to experience more expansive becomings?

Morgan talked freely about the distinction they felt regarding physical activity, sport and PE; "Like I said, it's not like the moving about and doing activities that I disliked … it's not like I have a hatred towards the sport. It's more hatred towards the subject". This hatred was attributed largely to the ways in which the very nature of PE encouraged organisations of its students and activities by a gender binary. In the opening quote from Morgan, it is clear that their presence in male spaces brought about a range of negative experiences, from being bullied, to feeling discomfort due to a sense of not belonging in that group ("I would have felt better being with who I felt like I was"). These experiences are reflective of a range of other research findings with gender diverse individuals (Drury et al., 2017; Ferguson & Russell, 2021; Kettley-Linsell, 2022; Storr et al., 2022). This feeling of stuckness, of being assigned to a group that did not align with their sense of self, resulted in a blocked becoming where Morgan was unable to enjoy and engage in PE. But as Morgan's own friendship assemblage shifted (when they told their peers about their transgender identity), we see a line of flight opening up and disrupting the status quo. Suddenly, the possibilities that Morgan has in PE have become exposed. New connections are made as their friends approach the teacher and ask if Morgan can join the girl's group. Following the teacher's agreement, Morgan begins to attend the girl's PE lessons and experiences PE in a fulfilling and life affirming way. But within a few weeks, things revert to how they were, generating a sadness that has lingered long after the event took place. It seems evident that the decision was made to privilege and protect the feelings of 'unfairness' of (assumingly) cisgender girls in that class, as opposed to the

positive experiences that an individual (who previously hated PE) now had in that space. Whilst I talk often in this work of trajectories, of individuals moving towards new becomings, this event illustrates that outcomes of these intra-actions are not always continuous and can be halted or reversed. Barad (2007) explains how changes "do not follow a continuous fashion" (p.181), and discontinuity is also central to intra-actions. Paying attention to and acting upon these discontinuities in the PE setting could help to encourage more expansive and inclusive experiences for these young people.

Much like the rhizome, the pathways that were exposed through this line of flight were always possibilities, simply hidden from view as a particular path took precedence in the PE space. Ingrained beliefs regarding sport, gender and the sexed body have informed the gendered organisation of students in PE for many years (Hargreaves, 1994; Kirk, 2002; Penney, 2002; Sykes, 2011; Wilkinson & Penney, 2022), but there have always been other roots/routes to act differently. Those pathways, however, are immersed in power relations, under the guise of impossibility. Morgan felt that it would be impossible to move groups because the dominant beliefs of this context dictate that an assigned sex given at birth means something inherent about an individual's body and its abilities. And yet, it was possible for Morgan and their friends to disrupt these beliefs and highlight other available pathways.

By mapping this line of flight, it is possible to see more clearly the processes of de-territorialisation and re-territorialisation occurring. A line of flight occurs when Morgan's friends approach the teacher and suggest something 'against the norm'. Morgan themself feels strongly that the disruption of this plane of consistency will not be possible, and yet, what happens is a questioning of the current boundaries and organisation of territories within that assemblage, moving towards a process of de-territorialisation, the "disruption and transcoding of these planes of consistencies" (Fournier, 2014, p.121). New boundaries are created by the PE teacher by responding to the line of flight, allowing a form of re-territorialisation to occur through their allowance of Morgan in the girls' PE lesson. A disruption of the gender binary construction occurs. Yet eventually, the power

apparatus (of cisgender privilege) re-emerges from a related assemblage (other girls in the lesson and their desires), re-territorialising the space to its former organisation. Morgan's initial action may have been a 'killjoy moment' where disruption and change could occur, thereby opening up possibilities for more joy in PE, but their pathway was ultimately blocked by the girls' own desires for joy, and the teacher's privileging of these desires. How might PE teachers see the benefit to all in supporting and participating in killjoy moments in PE? I unpack this in greater depth in Chapter 9.

Morgan's story shares similarities with that of Amber, a trans girl in Drury et al.'s (2017) paper. She was granted permission to join the girls' PE lessons and changing rooms, but when severe bullying from cisgender girls in the changing rooms occurred, the following happened: "Then, ultimate humiliation, she [the teacher] asked me to change in the store cupboard like some circus freak. Didn't say a thing to the PPP lot [the self-proclaimed Posh, Pretty and Perfect girl group doing the bullying], like it was all my fault" (p.89). Whilst it may seem as though this move was done for the safety of Amber, it is also condoning the other girls' transphobic behaviours. Both stories indicate how the PE teachers avoid an opportunity to disrupt existing boundaries through acting differently (by challenging the cisgender girls' comments), and instead enable the continuation of cisnormative beliefs within the setting. These are acts of re-territorialisation, and they share resemblances with one such moment from Ringrose and Renold's (2014) research on schoolgirls and feminism. They explored how new pathways began to open up during conversations with schoolgirls when they begin discussing 'taboo' words such as 'slut'. However, the teachers shut down these conversations, invoking a "territory of protection and regulation around the school girls, creating a blockage that could potentially stop the girls from connecting or plugging into a wider feminist political assemblage" (Ringrose & Renold, 2014, p.775). In all three events, teachers are a part of the assemblage with distinct power over the way in which the assemblage develops, and therefore, they are facilitative of the sense of becoming that young people can experience.

Key to this mapping is the realisation that other bodies within these PE assemblages must become more open to the liveliness of possibilities, of alternative ways of *doing* and *being*. As Barad (2007) puts it:

> "the world and its possibilities for becoming are remade with each moment … [and] intra-acting responsibly as part of the world means taking account of the entangled phenomena that are intrinsic to the world's vitality and being responsive to the possibilities that might help us flourish." (p.396)

Instead of a reliance on the gender diverse individual advocating for their own inclusion, an incumbrance (sometimes called inclusivity labour) which has been explored in PE (Neary & McBride, 2021) and health contexts (Newman et al., 2021), other actors in the assemblage must become response-able for their actions and the consequences of following a particular pathway. As suggested earlier, perhaps what is missing from this assemblage is an affective intensity that propels people to pay attention and act. Had the girls who complained about Morgan's presence in the group understood the turmoil they were going through, or the teacher been more cognisant of the lived experience of gender diverse youth, perhaps this assemblage could have been a more harmonious one.

5.2 A MULTIPLICITY OF EMOTIONS

Morgan's sense of becoming in PE was not the only one fraught with such varied emotion. Becoming is a process of change, flight, or movement within an assemblage, and for many of the young people, their desired becomings (towards inclusion and enjoyment in PE) were predominantly blocked, causing sadness and frustration. Yet, as Morgan's story demonstrated, there were also instances of joy and affirmation.

Thomas used art to depict their feelings towards PE, creating an animation on their iPad. You can view this animation by opening the following link: https://youtu.be/kg6s__9tiPw

Thomas and I watched their animation together and the following conversation ensued:

Thomas: So some of the colours, like meant different emotions, but the shapes were just kind of things, so I'm not sure how they felt or something … I don't know how to explain it. They just kind of appeared on there. It was just like that's how your emotions build throughout them.

Lois: … So what about the kind of different colours that you use then … ? What do they mean?

Thomas: Well, there was like the blue ones were from like kind of sadness. When you're like 'I have to be put into different groups. I don't understand why'. And, uhm, you had the red one, which was more of like an anger, because I couldn't understand that there was no reason to separate them. Why have they done this? … The yellow was also put on there because even though it is still separated into genders, it's still fun to like do PE and all that.

Lois: … And I saw the kind of question mark and exclamation mark there.

Thomas: They were just kind of like there for 'I don't understand like can you not do something different'

Thomas, like all the participants, was given a purposefully broad instruction regarding the arts-based activity. This gave him the creative freedom to express himself in whichever way compelled him. Thomas' animation stood out to me for several reasons. Firstly, the sheer range of emotions that emerged from this simple activity indicated that Thomas had strong and varied feelings about their PE experience. This, alongside Morgan's story above, demonstrates the complexity and multiplicity of these experiences, that it is never simply good or bad, positive or negative, but an everchanging combination of affective forces that occur due to emerging relations and intra-actions. Whilst Thomas felt sadness, anger, and confusion over their place within the PE setting and the rules enforced on them, there was also yellow to indicate fun or happiness. Research commonly frames gender diverse school experiences by negative tropes or victim narratives (Horton, 2022; McBride & Neary, 2021), centring around the risks and vulnerabilities of this group

(Asakura et al., 2020), but rarely are there instances of positivity acknowledged (Evans & Rawlings, 2021). Understandably, insights on the key issues and barriers that impact on gender diverse youth are important to explore to enact positive change, but it is also important to celebrate the joy and to pay attention to what causes these fluctuations.

Thomas spoke about their love of hockey, and a handful of activities that they had enjoyed in PE. Their views more broadly regarding sport and physical activity were positive too, but their feelings about PE were largely framed by confusion and anger over the gendered organisation of students. By contrast, Thomas' most enjoyable physical activity was hockey, which took place outside of school in a mixed gender setting. Thomas' confusion illustrated in the animation and accompanying conversation seemed to indicate how they felt unheard and misunderstood in the PE space. This was a commonality across conversations with the young people; that their PE teachers' understandings of gender differed from their own, resulting in PE teachers making decisions (or through a process of inaction) that did not appear to consider those who identified in ways that challenged traditional understandings of sex and gender. Other research has highlighted this as a particular issue for non-binary students, who feel more widely misunderstood in the school context due to a binary school system which they are unable to 'fit' into (Paechter et al., 2021; Travers et al., 2022). As outlined at the beginning of this chapter, without a shared understanding around gender diversity and of the different ways in which gender diverse youth may identify and express themselves, it seems inconceivable that teachers could practice consistent empathy and understanding towards gender diverse youth because the affective intensity that drives them to act is missing. This is also the case with other individuals in the PE space, such as the young person's peers. The following section will address this in more depth, whilst Chapter 7 unpacks this from the teacher perspective.

It also feels important to touch on the methodological benefits of the arts-based activity. Throughout our conversation, it was apparent that Thomas struggled to articulate their feelings at times, and yet, when we spoke about his animation, it was clear that he had

significant and emotive views that he wanted to share. The opportunity to express these through creative means seemed to enable Thomas to explore and make sense of their emotions, subsequently enabling them to identify and articulate these more clearly in conversation (Literat, 2013). Additionally, it challenged normative discourses of a solely negative lived reality as a gender diverse individual (Asakura et al., 2020) through also highlighting the happiness and joy experienced
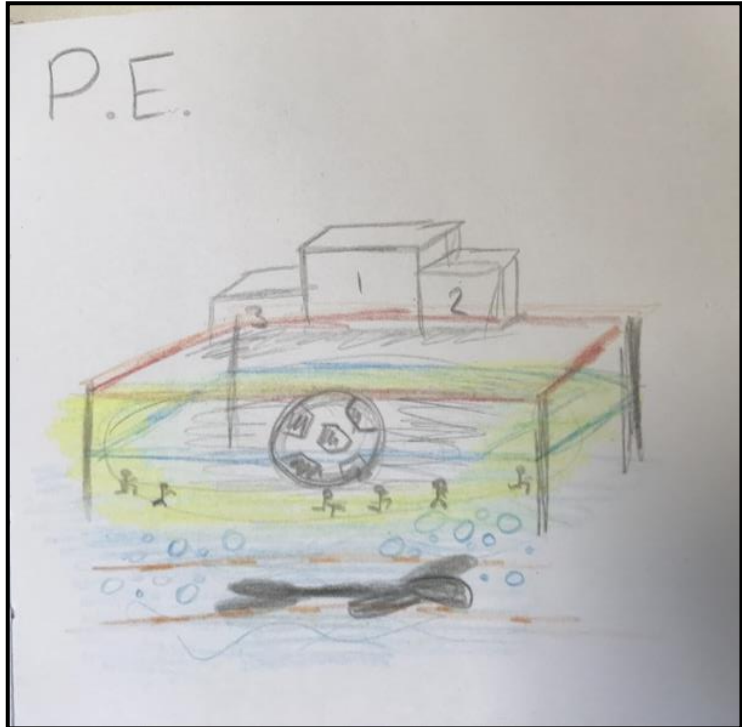
Figure 2: Ben's drawing

(through colour). This was also the case for another young person, Ben, whose artwork is displayed in Figure 2.

Ben and I had not met before, and from his body language I could sense that he felt a little uncomfortable and reserved. At first, he did not seem able to expand on how he felt about PE, and yet when we explored the art he had created, he seemed excited to share more and opened up about the different activities he enjoyed; "that's swimming, that's the wrestling ring and then that's like the running thing with the football part in the middle. … Because those are the ones that I like the most". Ben's art differed to the other young people's submissions in that it depicted wholly joyful experiences in PE. Unlike some of the other young people's accounts, Ben did not appear to encounter difficulties from teachers or peers, and his joyful PE experience indicated how the PE assemblage that he was a part of was able to re-configure away from previous constructions which were not conducive to the inclusion of gender diverse individuals. From Ben's perspective, it appeared that the typical 'difficulty' of trans inclusion in PE was a complete non-issue to

his school, teachers and peers, who all appeared to make adaptations (i.e., changing name on school register, moving Ben to boy's PE group, providing separate changing space) without detriment to his experience or others. Unlike Thomas and Morgan's experiences above, it appears that Ben's school and PE teachers held a more progressive understanding of gender diversity and this enabled intra-actions within this space that help him to thrive in PE, and hopefully move toward future imaginings which centres movement and physical activity as facilitative of joy.

As will become clear, the young peoples' artistic creations were diverse, expressive, and integral in directing our conversations towards matters that were significant to them. In doing so, they reconnect us to the voices of young people. Whilst there were areas that I sought to explore (as detailed in the interview schedules in Appendix A), this approach re-centred the young people's voices, needs and agendas by enabling them to express the things that mattered most to them. The benefits of creative, arts-based activities should not be downplayed within youth research, particularly with regard to emotive, 'risky' or potentially distressing topics. There is also something interesting to note regarding the agency of these pieces - they are objects, non-human entities, or as MacLure (2013) writes, "seemingly inert" (p.230), and yet they are lively, expressive, and incredibly moving, entangled with these young people and those who view them, adding depth to our understanding of their lives. Might they be an effective way to galvanise empathy and inclusive actions in the PE assemblage?

5.3 PEER ENTANGLEMENTS

Alongside Morgan, several other young people highlighted difficulties in their PE lessons due to the reactions that other students had upon seeing a gender diverse body in that space. This next section will explore the assemblage of the PE space with a particular focus on the relations between the youth participants, their peers and the affective forces that emerged through these relations.

In the opening story, the girls' response to Morgan's presence in the girls PE lesson clearly propels the PE assemblage in a particular way. Their frustration (or jealousy?) is felt by the PE teacher and perceived as unfair, resulting in the implementation of changes to the detriment of Morgan. This action from Morgan's peers could be a result of a lack of understanding regarding gender beyond the binary perspective. Rather than being open to the possibility that Morgan might identify differently to a boy, they perceive Morgan in a particular way, reading them as male, and consequently focus on this 'unfairness' of a 'boy' in a girls group. Another young person, Max, discusses a similar experience when he transferred to the boy's PE lesson after he came out as trans at school:

> "I remember not feeling welcome at all … some people were fine with it and they were totally chill, some people were actually happy like finally, finally, you're actually … here (laughs). But some people like obviously looked at me weird and was like 'why is this weird girl here'"

The array of peer responses here illustrates the variance that young people in schools have regarding their awareness of gender diversity. Some peers celebrated Max and Morgan's transgressions, for some it was a non-issue, whilst others responded in narrowly constructed ways that delegitimised their gender identity and misgendered them. This provides an interesting contradiction, as previous research has highlighted how young people in schools (as opposed to school staff) largely appeared to understand the complexities of gender diversity, had progressive attitudes towards gender and embraced difference within the school setting (Bragg et al., 2018). This said, Bragg et al. identified how binary gender structures within the school system inhibited these young people from enacting these liberal principles completely, and binary choices were often inevitable. For example, due to school cultures or policies which informed binary decisions around sports, uniforms, toilets, and friendships. Therefore, it is possible that in both Max and Morgan's context, the binary structure of PE contributes to the normalisation of the gender binary and with that, the less accepting views of their peers. Their peers may not consider their presence in the group as an abnormality if young people were not organised along

binary gender lines. Whilst it is partially down to PE teachers to decide on these binary organisations of students, it is important to consider how their decisions/views regarding gender diversity are formed (Wilkinson & Penney, 2023). They will be plugging in and out of a range of other assemblages (elite sport contexts, 'fairness' policy developments, trans athlete media narratives) in which new lines of flights emerge and shape their beliefs and consequent decision-making process. Whilst it may feel simpler to point the blame at PE teachers as knowing perpetrators of cisnormativity, there is a larger network of things at work which must be understood. I consider this issue in more depth in Chapters 7 and 8.

For other youth participants, moving groups was not provided as an option for them, resulting in their participation in a female-identifying group that they did not align with. When asked how their peers responded to their presence in the class, two participants shared the following:

> "It was just kind of like a confused look at me. Like … why have they put me here instead of somewhere else." (Thomas)

> "I did feel a bit like outcasted in the classes. … Probably because I, just don't do it the same as them. It's not the same, it's different. People are afraid of difference (laughs) … I'm not right there. Like I don't fit in … It it's weird. It's different to them and it's definitely not the same" (Stevie)

In this case, there is not an overt, verbal response from other students as there was with Morgan and Max, but still a sense of not belonging felt through other means (e.g., eye contact, body language). By grouping students by their assigned sex at birth, schools work to reinforce essentialist, dualistic ideas regarding identity and difference. In Kettley-Linsell's (2022) research, their trans and non-binary participants identified similar behaviours in PE, spanning from a feeling of being watched by peers, to more targeted microaggressions like whispers and laughing, all of which enacted a sense of social exclusion and abnormality felt by the participants. Thomas and Stevie's comments indicated similarly how their difference was not only sensed by others but internalised too.

Brett and Brassington (2023) theorise this experience through the application of Meyer's (2003) minority stress theory, identifying how a distal stressor (such as experiencing or witnessing microaggressions, discrimination or abuse) can cause a proximal stressor (such as feelings of anxiety, isolation, or rejection). This invokes a 'fear-of-something-happening' stress which can remain with the individual for some time, causing heightened distress in spaces deemed less accepting or inclusive (Brett & Brassington, 2023). Reading through other theory, this could be seen as the impact of affect which circulates within spaces, 'sticking' to some people whilst sliding over others (Ahmed, 2004). The sense of fear and anxiety circulating in this space does not stick to cisgender students as it does to gender diverse students.

There is an interesting contradiction in relation to how the young people are being treated, and the way in which PE teachers believe that cisgender students interact with their gender diverse peers. The PE teachers involved in this research largely indicated that young people had accepting views about gender diversity. For example, one teacher mentioned:

> "I think a lot of the students are actually quite aware of the other students' … gender diversity and how the other students … identify themselves so … when the [transgender] student comes into their class it's like well, 'they identify as a girl, so why wouldn't they be in a girl's class'." (Rosie)

However, it is possible that, whilst teachers may have gained confidence in identifying and challenging transphobic bullying in schools due to the introduction of anti-bullying laws, policies and training packages (Marston, 2015), the microaggressions that some of the young people have discussed may not be picked up by teachers as bullying behaviours (Linville, 2014). Furthermore, Rosie's comment suggest that it is possible that there is more of an awareness and acceptance from cisgender students towards those who align with existing binary structures (i.e., trans boys or girls). How would these students respond to a non-binary or genderfluid person in their changing room or PE lesson? If bodies are divided by binary gender, then there are assumptions (due to dominant beliefs about the

sex-gender system) regarding what those bodies will look like. When bodies or gender expressions do not align with these assumptions then they are considered abject or deviant (Devís-Devís et al., 2018; Landi, 2019; Pérez-Samaniego et al., 2016). This becomes an issue because the spotlight centres around how bodies *look* in PE*,* rather than a focus on what the moving body can *do* and *feel*.

The above highlights the humanistic tendencies of the PE setting to centre around difference as stable as opposed to multiple and relational. Within new materialist thinking, difference is theorized in less polarizing, boundary-ridden ways (Barad, 2014; Braidotti, 2013). Rather than concrete and fixed, difference is considered as constantly emerging through relations. In this sense, the dualism of us/them and the notion of otherness becomes void as difference is re-formed within each moment. Rather than considering ways to divide students (which inevitably results in a process of othering and exclusion), how can the PE setting consider ways of bringing them together? Of finding "knowledge and understanding between, and across, borders, boundaries, categories, fields and practices" (Riley & Proctor, 2022, p.268). Further considerations around student groupings and the possibilities of disrupting existing classifications will be explored in Chapter 8.

5.4 THE AGENCY OF FRIENDSHIPS

This chapter began by mapping out a network of moments that occurred within Morgan's PE assemblage. This has unravelled into explorations of how others (PE teachers and class peers) have responded to the presence of a gender diverse individual in that space, and the affective forces that these moments have generated. In these moments, gender diverse youth appear stagnant and unable to move towards more affirmative becomings, halted by beliefs and actions which delegitimise their gender identities and reduce the possibilities of joyful PE experiences. And yet, some of their friendships within these PE spaces seem to have the agency to propel them forwards again. We have already seen how Morgan's friends opened new lines of flight through their disruption of the status quo,

challenging the assemblage to shift and allow something new to happen. Whilst this was not sustained, it still provided a moment of new possibilities.

Supportive friendships appeared to be integral to many of these young people's PE (and wider school) experiences. Whilst some of the young people had not disclosed their gender identity to their class peers at large, they confided in their friends and saw them as a means of safety and support in matters relating to their gender identity. As explored in a previous section, the possible 'fear-of-something-happening' (Brett & Brassington, 2023) can emerge in spaces that individuals do not deem to be inclusive, and research has indicated how the PE context is typically an exclusionary space for gender diverse youth (Devís-Devís et al., 2018; Ferguson & Russell, 2021; Hargie et al., 2019, Kettley-Linsell, 2022). However, the youth participants spoke about the numerous ways in which their friends validated their gender identity, challenged cisnormative behaviours, and fostered a more welcoming PE space for them.

When Max's 'gender journey' began, he was aware of how PE was the "one subject where I feel most uncomfortable", and this resulted in him dropping out of PE for some time. When he began to socially transition in school, he thought about re-joining PE classes but feared what his peers' reactions would be to him joining the boy's PE lessons. He shared how his friends encouraged him to join the boy's class and helped to make it a welcoming space for him:

> "obviously some of my friends who who are like male … was like, 'yeah, come on do the boys ones you'll be so much more comfortable, we're chill with it'."

> "I'm glad I do have friends in there that are are actually like … welcoming and be like, hey, like, be in this group, come with us."

His friend's reassuring comments indicated to him that there were people in the boy's PE lesson that were supportive of his inclusion in that space, and common concerns over

being left out or picked last in activities (Ferguson & Russell, 2021; Kettley-Linsell, 2022) were avoided through his friends' welcoming actions.

Others explained how their friends would challenge cisnormative language in the PE space. For example, in relation to being misgendered in PE, Thomas said "[i]t's uncomfortable sometimes, but I don't always notice it and my friends sometimes point it out to the teachers as well". In this sense, friendships could be considered to not only be protective or reassuring for gender diverse youth, but a form of allyship and activism which seeks to change things for the better. Evans and Rawlings (2021) discuss the importance of friendships in the school space as a way of reducing the burden that gender diverse youth experience in advocating for their education and inclusion. When friends challenge misgendering or deadnaming, then "the task of educating students about … gender identity [is] shared and the workload reduced" (Evans & Rawlings, 2021, p.1498). In this sense, friends play a role in de-territorialising the PE assemblage through challenging teacher or peer assumptions regarding gendered language and pronouns, becoming the killjoy for the benefit of others. With every challenge, a line of flight emerges which interrupts the flow of the assemblage, encouraging it to re-configure in ways that acknowledge and affirm gender diversity. Jones et al. (2016) identified how increased abuse and poorer educational outcomes were common amongst gender diverse youth when incorrect pronouns were used in the school context, so in having friends that challenge these behaviours, multiple possibilities for more positive trajectories emerge for these young people.

Friendships in the PE space were also viewed as significant in heightened situations of distress. As will be unpacked in Chapter 6, Ezra found PE particularly stressful when menstruating and appeared to have friends who supported him with this. He wanted to remain stealth at his new school and explained how his "friends … don't say anything" to others about his trans identity to support this desire. He also mentioned experiencing panic attacks and heightened stress during PE and explained that "sometimes my friends would cheer me up after I got really stressed out in PE". These comments indicate the

various ways in which Ezra's friends could be considered a safe space or comfort to him, through knowing about his needs and acting upon them in caring ways.

Nonetheless, there were also experiences with friendships that proved difficult for gender diverse youth. When Jordan first came out as transgender, he said the following about his friends:

> "Erm it took them a while to get used to, when I first came out, but they were all kind about it. Some of them did feel uncomfortable because there is like, erm 'oh what if he immediately fancies me?' or whatever. The typical reaction that you get …"

Several things seem to emerge from this. Firstly, there seems to be a lack of awareness from Jordan's friends about what it means to be transgender. Their comments relate to attraction and therefore sexuality, thereby assuming that what has changed within Jordan's identity is his sexuality. Previous research has highlighted how this conflation occurs commonly within school contexts, with students and teachers assuming that gender transgressions automatically determine same-sex attraction (DePalma & Atkinson 2009; DePalma, 2013; Slesaransky-Poe & García 2009). Additionally, Jordan's comments indicate how his friends had concerns over him being attracted to them. Again, this is a common stereotype applied to the LGBTQ+ community, particularly within single-sex spaces like changing rooms or toilets, with LGBTQ+ individuals frequently perceived as, or in fear of being perceived as, sexual predators (Herrick & Duncan, 2020). This narrative is applied more intensely to gender diverse individuals, particularly within toilet and changing room contexts (Locantore & Wasarhaley, 2020; Scout, 2016). Jordan's experience indicates how the young people in his school assemblage lack a more nuanced understanding of the sex, gender, and sexuality trifecta, with perspectives that are informed by cisheteronormative beliefs.

Unfortunately, there were also instances where friends were not supportive of the youth participants. Ezra lost some friends when he disclosed his trans identity, sharing the

following: "And that's when I told them about me being trans. And they never talked to me after. It was a bit upsetting for me and I had to start new". Likewise, when Dylan came out as non-binary, whilst they had some friends who were supportive, one friend was quite the opposite:

> "… when I said to them [I was non-binary] they told me that they didn't care … And they just kind of continue to just do … stuff that made me uncomfortable in there. … So at break, … they just continued doing all this 'ahh let's do girls versus boys' kind of stuff and it's very hard to hang out with them in that group ..."

These insights are sadly not unique to Dylan and Ezra, with other research on gender disclosures to friends indicating that in some cases, friends have responded with negative or hurtful comments, behaved in ways that were not gender affirming (e.g., through misgendering) and distanced or ended friendships (Galupo et al., 2014). The research also highlighted that a lack of friends' knowledge or awareness regarding gender diverse experiences and communities impacted on their responses. Additionally, whilst other youth participants spoke about having friends who identified as LGBTQ+, neither Ezra nor Dylan referred to having such friendships at school. Prior research has indicated how connections with LGBTQ+-identified individuals in the school context can provide increased emotional support in the context of coming out in schools due to shared experiences or increased knowledge of sexual or gender diversity (Muñoz-Plaza et al., 2002). There are a multiplicity of factors which may inform a young person's understanding of gender diversity, and consequently influence the way in which they respond to gender disclosures in the school context. The final section in this chapter considers some of these.

5.5 ASSEMBLAGES BEYOND THE PLAYING FIELD

Whilst schools may embody a particular ethos regarding gender diversity that may influence young people's views (more on this in Chapter 7), there are a multiplicity of

assemblages beyond the school setting that young people plug in and out of all the time, affecting their thoughts, decisions and actions. For example, scrolling through Instagram, having conversations with grandparents, seeing a billboard that depicts a non-nuclear family. Through each intra-action, something new occurs, and the affective intensity of these moments work to propel bodies in particular ways. A young person who is consistently exposed to narrow conceptions of gender, or worse, to anti-trans discourse (e.g., by a parent or on social media), will enter the PE assemblage marked by their previous intra-actions with particular material-discursive relations, then enacting this same discourse on other matter (as demonstrated by the participants' comments above). As Cassar (2017) indicates, "what is left behind forms an integral part of what is becoming" (para. 1), so previous intra-actions will shape future acts, for better or worse. On the contrary, a lack of exposure to knowledge or representations of gender diversity in the school setting could result in a missed connection, an exclusion of the particular intra-actions that may lead to more expansive becomings in the PE space. If young people do not *know* about gender diversity, about the barriers and difficulties that gender diverse youth can face, then they are missing out on these affective intensities that could encourage them to disrupt current boundaries in PE.

The PE space, of which these young people are a part, is forever shifting and re-configuring, as the parts of the PE-machine encounter new relations, new intra-actions, which propel them in new directions. It is a space full of lively and vibrant possibilities. This chapter has highlighted instances of both continuity and discontinuity and what this looks like in the context of a gender diverse young person's sense of becoming in the PE and wider school context. It has also illustrated the importance of other actors in these spaces in the different trajectories that these young people can move towards in PE. When human entanglements are supportive, gender diverse young people's identities are affirmed, and acts of de-territorialisation can occur which have the potential to transform the PE space away from fixed gender boundaries, challenging dominant cisnormative beliefs. And yet, when other actors in this space lack knowledge, understanding or empathy regarding gender diversity, the possibilities for transformation are reduced, and

gender diverse youth remain stagnant and unable to move toward more joyful becomings in PE.

6 A MOMENT OF JOY

It's a chilly Wednesday evening in December. I'm sitting in a bright and colourful room within a community space in the city centre. I come to this building most weeks and help facilitate youth groups with LGBTQ+ young people. The groups range in age, from 8 to 25 years old, and we organise a wide range of activities for them. From arts and crafts to games and quizzes, to discussions on identity and mental health, to trips to the library or theatre. These two hours a week are undoubtedly some of my most cherished moments.

Today feels a little different though, as today I am working in another room, away from the main group who I can hear making their way upstairs, and I am working directly with Ezra and Dylan. They both agreed that they'd like to participate in this research, and decided they would like to do it together. I arrive early and try to make the space feel welcoming and comfortable, moving a sofa and two plush armchairs around a low table so we can chat and have space to draw. I feel a little anxious as I wait for them to arrive, concerned that perhaps they have forgotten (Ezra is well known for his forgetfulness!).

They both come bounding into the room and we say our usual cheery hellos before sitting down. I can sense that they feel a little nervous too, half-expecting this given the change of room and group dynamic. I have learnt that consistency is important to these young people's sense of comfort and safety.

I check they're happy with the plans for the session and upon their agreement, click 'Record' on my laptop and move it onto the floor away from view. Dylan and Ezra immediately pick up some paper and pencils and begin to draw. We start chatting about school, sports, their identities, the highs and lows of PE as a gender diverse student. The atmosphere feels quite solemn as we discuss some of the difficulties they've both faced. We move onto conversations about the range of extra-curricular sports and physical activities offered at their school. Dylan explains that their school has some, but they don't attend any.

Lois: OK, are there any sports that like you feel you would like to do? But maybe can't at the moment?

Ezra: I don't know if this is like classed as a sport but like gymnastics and stuff like that. But I get told a lot that that's only something that girls should do.

Lois: OK, and how does that make you feel then when they say that?

Ezra: It's upsetting a bit because I feel like I can't do that then, it upsets me. And I'd also like to do like ballet, like I've seen ballets and I've started to like do ballet by myself, like at home sometimes.

Lois: Oh, that's cool! What like following like YouTube videos or something like that?

Ezra: Yeah. I can stand on my toes like this …

Ezra then stands up energetically and begins to demonstrate his ballet skills, twirling around the room with visible joy. He lifts his arms in the air and rises high onto his toes in a ballet pointe technique. Dylan and I both grin as we watch Ezra twirl, his joy so infectious that we can't help but feel elated.

This moment struck me, and stuck with me, due to its sheer contrast from the overall sentiment sensed amongst the youth participants. The young people largely talked of feeling blocked, ignored, or misunderstood in the PE setting, which in turn informed feelings of sadness, frustration, and anger, and demonstrated a sense of never truly flourishing in the PE space. Yet, this moment of uninhibited movement and joy (particularly through a type of activity deemed inappropriate by some in Ezra's school and seemingly internalised by himself) illuminated the possibility that this same sensation achieved through movement could occur in other spaces too. What was it about the entanglement of objects, bodies, spaces, that invited this moment to emerge? How could a joyful becoming like this occur within the PE space? Through a deeper exploration of this

moment, and of the entanglements that led to this moment, perhaps new ideas would emerge which could be taken up in other spaces.

6.1 UNPACKING THE YOUTH SPACE ASSEMBLAGE

From the vignette above, hopefully it is clear that the moment outlined is not the first time that Ezra, Dylan, and I have met. In fact, both young people had attended the fortnightly youth group for several months, and it is, in part, our entangled histories that helped to generate this moment. Within that moment, there was an assemblage of many different things, human and non-human. There was a place, a familiar place geographically, yet shifted slightly from the norm. Several bodies, with thoughts, feelings, and relationships amongst them. There were objects; rainbow flags, colourful posters, the usual arts and crafts materials, a laptop. Though this assemblage had shifted from its usual manner (moving away from the usual youth group session upstairs), all its parts still connected in a way that caused joy through movement.

The youth group is a space created specifically for those within the LGBTQ+ community, and Ezra and Dylan attend the 'Under 13s' group. Here they have met other young people with shared experiences in relation to gender diversity, as well as a range of youth support workers (such as myself) who belong to the LGBTQ+ community. In a sense, these youth groups could be viewed as imposing rigid boundaries in relation to sexual and gender identities through the requirement of members having an LGBTQ+ identity. Yet, this boundary-making process is considered an essential step by LGBTQ+ organisations in ensuring that LGBTQ+ youth spaces are safe and comfortable for all. During the youth groups themselves, youth support workers typically engage in conversations with youth which disrupt this idea of a fixed boundary regarding what LGBTQ+ identities are, reiterating the fluidity and individuality of sexual and gendered experiences and the lack of concrete definition regarding certain terms (e.g., the term 'trans' is understood and embodied differently amongst trans people).

This contradiction regarding the different discourses that make up this youth group is interesting to consider further. From a new materialist perspective, creating a space specifically for LGBTQ+ youth by segregating young people based on their gender and sexual identities could be considered a shift away from a focus on disrupting dualisms (e.g., hetero/homo, cis/trans). Yet, within the youth group narrative we regularly question the notion of fixed identities as a way of disrupting these very same dualisms. Perhaps both are necessary in their own way. Dylan alludes to this idea when discussing mixed and single-gender PE lessons:

> "I think it's fair with some cases but with other cases it's not very fair … Because um if someone, if someone was like trans or something and they were, they felt more like a boy boy. They would then get picked as a boy. But then if they, if you haven't told anyone that then you're gonna get put under, who you're not feeling very comfortable with."

Clearly, some gender diverse individuals would seek comfort in aligning themselves with a binary gender, yet others such as Dylan (who is non-binary), find this a discomfort. Nevertheless, in the current climate, dominant discourses around gender identity do not lean towards fluidity or self-identification, and other spaces where young people reside, such as schools, typically perpetuate cisnormative ideas and reinforce a gender binary (Horton & Carlile, 2022; McBride & Neary, 2021). At the very least, young people at these youth groups are being introduced to new ideas about identity which they could draw upon to explore challenges in other spaces. From Ezra's perspective, perhaps it is this openness to gender fluidity that we have fostered in our youth groups over the past few months that enabled him to feel safe in moving his body in ways that his school environment had suggested were only appropriate for girls. Ezra made it clear that he felt blocked from certain activities due to their association with femininity, yet he felt able to express these behaviours in the youth group space without fear of having his own gender questioned or mistaken, a fear which is widely experienced amongst trans people (Gunn, 2020; McLemore, 2015, 2018). This fear appears to have been experienced by Ezra in

the PE space, as he describes feeling stressed due to the PE kits highlighting whether "someone has boobs or doesn't" and for him this caused concern "'cause not everyone in my class knows that [I'm trans]". Was it the privacy of the youth space that enabled him to express himself in this way? Or the safety in knowing that those in the youth group space already know that he's trans? There are many possibilities here, but ultimately it highlights the challenges faced by gender diverse youth in being (mis)read within typically cisnormative spaces, and the decisions they must make in disclosing their gender identity within each new space they enter. These tensions around gender identity disclosures, particularly within the PE and wider school setting, are unpacked further in Chapter 7 and 8.

The relationships amongst people within the youth group space could also be considered a possibility for bringing about joy in this moment. The youth groups focus on helping young people develop healthy, respectful relationships with their peers. Ground rules (see Appendix E) are discussed when a new member joins and reiterated by youth support workers when necessary (i.e., when healthy relationships begin to break down). These help to ensure the group has a set of core values regarding the way they treat their peers and wish to be treated themselves, as well as fostering a positive and welcoming culture for all. Anecdotally, young people at these groups often remark on how much they look forward to and enjoy the weekly sessions. Dylan once told me it was the time that they looked forward to most every week. It became clear during our conversation that Ezra and Dylan respected each other highly; both showed such politeness and manners, taking it in turn to answer questions and listening actively to each other's answers. I, likewise, approached our conversation in this manner, and ensured both young people felt listened to and respected throughout the session. Research has highlighted the positive impact that respectful behaviours can have on young people's confidence, sense of safety and belonging (Scales et al., 2011; Vaclavik et al., 2017). Therefore, could it be that Dylan's and my own presence were a generative part of the assemblage that enabled Ezra to perform such a joyful movement?

This is, perhaps, plausible when compared to Ezra's numerous comments regarding the way he has been treated by his peers in the PE space:

> "a lot of them … are mean to me. And and I don't know what it is, it's just like scary to do PE"

> "I've got this person in my class and they make fun of a lot of things and 'cause I've got epilepsy they made fun of that and I just feel like they're gonna make fun of me being trans. It's just really stressful"

> "Yeah it's the same 'cause in my old school I would get bullied, but the teachers would never do anything about it"

These comments build a picture of the PE setting as one which is not supportive or respectful of Ezra and his trans identity. Ezra's drawings in Figure 3 below reinforce this notion, with a simple yet powerful addition of tears coming down his face in one of the two pictures[2] he drew expressing how he felt about PE. The picture on the left depicts Ezra when he first joined the school; "this was like my hair when I first joined". On the right, Ezra drew "what I look like now". Alongside the change of hairstyle, blue tears can be seen rolling down both cheeks. Whilst it would be sweeping to suggest that it was simply Ezra's change in appearance that caused this emotional response, it is an interesting contrast visually and many of Ezra's difficulties in PE did appear to come down to his concerns about how his peers would respond to his trans identity. He regularly described his PE experiences as 'stressful' and 'annoying' because certain elements such as PE kits

---

[2] I was curious about why Ezra had crossed out the eyes in both drawings. For clarity, I asked him in a subsequent youth group, and he replied that he simply was not very good at drawing eyes and did not wish to draw them!
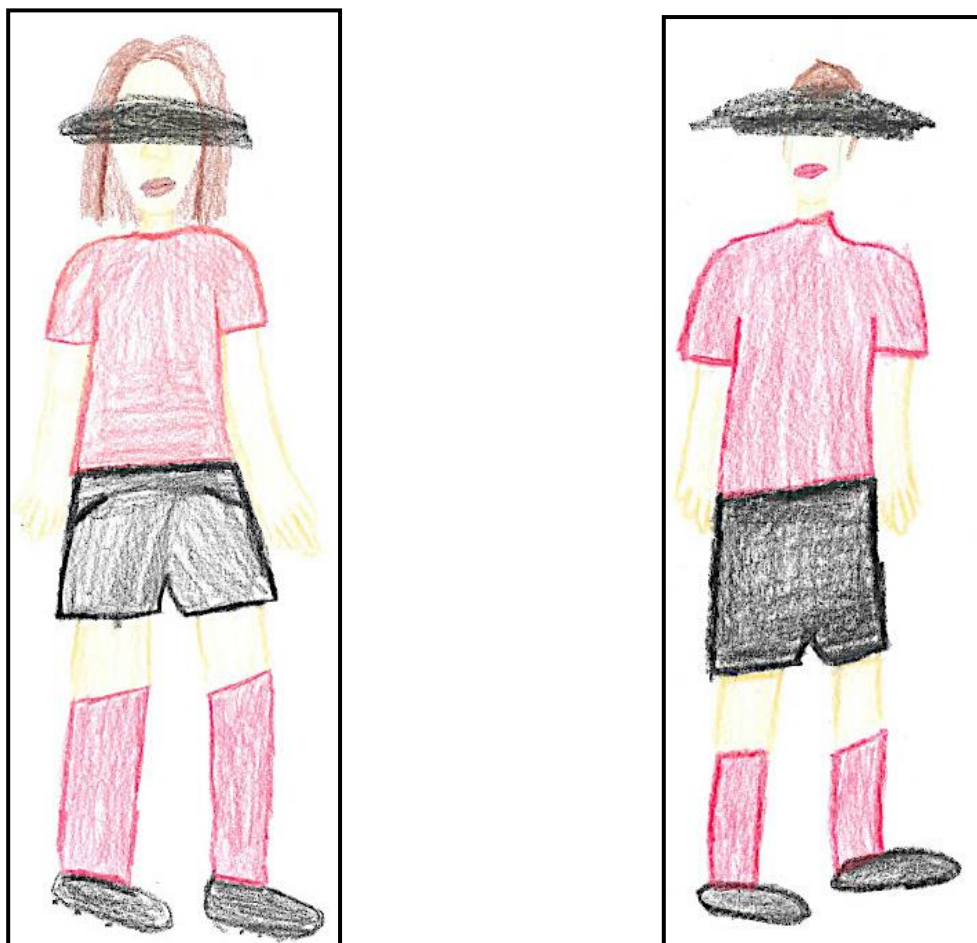
Figure 3: Ezra's drawings

and changing rooms drew attention to his trans body. These entanglements of objects-bodies-spaces within the PE assemblage produce a particular affect, and these encounters in PE will leave marks on the body which he carries forward through life, affecting his future becomings (Cassar, 2017). Yet Ezra was not deterred from performing ballet as he did for us that day.

Perhaps it was the presence of objects within the space we were in that contributed to this moment. The room itself felt bright, airy, and colourful, with comfortable seating encouraging a relaxed, informal atmosphere. There were rainbow flags and bunting across the walls, posters about LGBTQ+ and youth events, and a bookshelf filled with a range of vibrantly coloured books (including a visibly 'LGBTQ+' section). I wore a rainbow-coloured lanyard around my neck. The agency of the rainbow-coloured *things* in the

space we occupied felt palpable (to me at least). Rainbow symbolism, such as flags and other rainbow-coloured objects, is considered an effective signifier for LGBTQ+ young people to make connections with peers, express their personal identities and recognise others within the community (Wolowic et al., 2017). In general, symbols like flags are seen as a way of creating a sense of community and belonging amongst peer groups and larger populations (Hill Collins, 2010; Reichl, 2004). The presence of these objects, or lack of, can signify to LGBTQ+ youth whether spaces are welcoming and safe for them to be open about their gender or sexual identities (Wolowic et al., 2017). Conversely, this same symbolism can cause other groups to behave in intimidating and violent ways. For example, news articles have covered anti-LGBTQ+ groups or individuals burning rainbow flags as a statement opposing LGBTQ+ rights (Lavietes, 2023; Perry, 2023). Rainbow-coloured objects, whilst seemingly inanimate, clearly have a strong agentic force on the trajectory of an assemblage. However, it is not simply the presence of the object itself, but how they are entangled with different spaces, bodies, and politics, that seems to determine their affect.

In the PE context, gender diverse youth have discussed the importance and simplicity of having visible signs of recognition within PE spaces, such as rainbow stickers or 'safe space' signs on doors and corridors, to reassure gender diverse students (Storr et al., 2022). Similarly, in the research for this thesis, several PE teachers indicated how their staff donned rainbow lanyards and had flags and supportive signs in the PE corridors. However, the impact of a rainbow object's presence may also take a different trajectory dependent on the individual's identity. For example, a young trans person in Wolowic et al.'s (2017) research highlighted that "it's scary, because some places have pride flags and support gay people, but they don't support trans-[people]" (p.11). Dylan's broader comments about their school seem to resonate with this notion:

> "I think our school is very supportive about like like gay, lesbian, bisexual people. But I think it's more when it goes to like the trans and the non binary people it starts to get a bit more kind of, not as … not very supportive and like they're not really thinking about how this could make people uncomfortable"

Another young person, Ali, agreed with this sentiment:

> "It [LGBTQ+ awareness] was definitely a very basic understanding that there's a very stereotypical kind of posters with being like 'gay isn't a bad word' kind of thing. Or like we had like Pride Month and we'd have an assembly or something like that. But it always got very repetitive … I feel like we never talked much about about people who are transgender, especially not intersex as well"

These comments illustrate a clear contrast between the youth and school spaces being unpacked here. As explained previously, conversations regarding sexual and gender identity within the youth space are open, explorative, and fluid, inviting young people to express themselves in a multiplicity of ways. The school space, on the other hand, appears to reduce these discourses to narrow and dualistic understandings, or conflate complex individualities to have a one-size-fits-all approach to LGBTQ+ inclusion, assuming the 'LGB' experiences to align with those with gender diverse identities. This conflation is, in part, due to a lack of education explicitly around gender diversity, and conversations with PE teachers involved in this research support this point. Chapter 7 will unpack this element in more detail.

6.2 ALTERNATIVE SPACES OF SAFETY AND VALIDATION

Given that Ezra also pursued these joyful activities at home, it could be suggested that his home setting fosters similarly accepting values as the youth space. Having met Ezra's parents on multiple occasions, it is clear that they support his trans identity and could therefore be considered to have progressive views regarding gender diversity. Katz-Wise et al. (2016) explain how "parental acceptance of LGBT youth is crucial to ensure that youth develop a healthy sense of self" (p.17), so perhaps it was this assemblage within the home that also encouraged Ezra to feel confident in himself to display a bodily movement that he considered at odds with gendered societal assumptions. As explored in Chapter 4, not all gender diverse youth have such a supportive home environment,

which begs the question as to whether other gender diverse youth feel able to access bodily movement in such a joyful way. Through this line of thinking, it becomes clear how the connections between and across various assemblages of any individual will ultimately determine the way in which they are able to be and become in the world. Blocked becomings, in relation to the inability to joyfully express oneself through movement, appear to emerge from assemblages which are not conducive to the disruption of the gender binary and its associated characteristics. Whilst Ezra's PE assemblage did not encourage such a joyful becoming, his entanglements with other spaces, bodies and objects flowed into that moment, enabling him to experience joy through movement in uninhibited ways.

As the young people involved in this research all received support and acceptance in their home lives in relation to their gender identity, it is difficult to consider the impact of an unsupportive home setting on their desires or feelings about physical activity. Research has indicated how being out to parents can negatively impact on LGBTQ+ young peoples' motivations regarding sport and physical activity due to perceptions that their parents can control their access to certain sports or physical activities (Clark & Kosciw, 2022). The authors suggested that young people may remain 'in the closet' to parents in order to pursue particular activities that may have suggested their alignment with non-heterosexuality (e.g., a lesbian participating in a masculine-perceived sport). In this example, if the young person identifying as a lesbian had come out to her parents and they did not support this, they may prohibit her from participating over fears of others perceiving her as a lesbian. Whilst the authors discussed this in relation to sexuality, it is possible to assume that the same notions could be felt by those in relation to gender diversity. Ezra perhaps felt able to access a 'traditionally feminine' activity at home whilst identifying as male because he had the acceptance and support of his parents, boosting his sense of self and confidence to express himself in new ways without fear of disappointing his parents. Hypothetically, this could suggest that gender diverse youth without the support of parents may only feel able to access sports or physical activities that do not 'give away' their gender identity. Certainly, in the PE context, some trans

individuals have spoken of their preferences to engage in 'male' or 'female' activities which culturally matched their gender identity, but due to not yet being 'out of the closet', felt compelled to behave in ways which aligned with their assigned birth sex (Ferguson & Russell, 2021; Pereira-García et al., 2021).

Perhaps, as Ezra has, gender diverse youth are able to find safety to access sport and physical activity in another form of space; the digital world. An array of research has highlighted the ways in which the internet can provide gender diverse youth with safe and affirming spaces. Often in contrast to their offline experiences (Austin et al., 2020), the internet can serve as a source of protection and resilience where gender diverse youth can seek advice and support, facilitate meaningful relationships with others in their community, and most importantly, feel free to be their authentic selves (perhaps for the first time ever) (Bragg et al., 2018; McInroy & Craig, 2015; Raun, 2015). As Ezra's example illustrates, the internet also offers a space for gender diverse youth to access new ways of being with and moving their body, by giving access to a wealth of knowledge and resources on just about any sport or physical activity out there. For example, a quick YouTube search of 'ballet for beginners' brings up hundreds of video clips which young people could access and engage with at home without fear of surveillance or hostility. Whilst schools may continue to impose boundaries on the types of behaviours or activities deemed appropriate for young people, controlling their access to sports and physical activities, in the digital world the user creates their own boundaries and has agency to decide what they participate in. This connects to a wider debate around young peoples' agency regarding their PE and wider sporting experiences, and the fluidity of this agency, to be unpacked further in Chapter 8.

6.3 A BODY IN TRANSITION

Whilst gender diverse individuals may choose to go through a process of transition in one way or another (e.g., social or medical), for gender diverse youth there is an inevitable bodily transition that occurs for most as they begin to reach adolescence - puberty. Earlier

in this chapter, I shared some comments from Ezra that centred around his PE kit. The matter of clothing within Ezra's PE world was one of great significance and one that links closely with the experience of puberty, as is evidenced by his response to the question posed below:

> Lois: What would be, like your ideal PE lesson? What would that look like?
>
> Ezra: Probably like the PE kit less like, so you can't see if you have like boobs and stuff. I don't really know what else, that's just what I would like.

Ezra had begun to experience puberty, having started his period and developed breasts, and his discomfort regarding these processes was tangible. He was noticeably quieter, more awkward and shy during conversations surrounding these experiences, yet it seemed that he wanted to share these feelings, having disclosed them to me without being prompted. I was intrigued by his initial openness to share, given that feelings of shame and embarrassment are frustratingly common around menstruation (Wilson et al., 2018). Was it because he felt that I would understand his experience, given that I also experience periods? Perhaps, conversations around menstruation are not considered as taboo amongst his generation? Maybe, as explored earlier, there was a feeling of safety in the space we had created that day, allowing him to feel comfortable to disclose. Yet, his demeanour changed during these conversations, suggesting a sense of discomfort was still experienced. From a methodological perspective, this was an important learning experience for me as a researcher. Researchers are inherently curious and eager to learn more, and semi-structured interviews are often chosen under the premise that the researcher can 'probe' for more information on a given topic area and follow threads that interest them. I admit that I was certainly intrigued about Ezra's experience of puberty and menstruation, having come across very little literature on this topic and its intersection with PE and sport contexts. However, from Ezra's body language it was clear of his discomfort, and whilst it is possible that Ezra *would* have felt comfortable talking to me given our entangled histories, I could not be sure of the possibility of perceived obligation given our power differentials and did not wish to put him in a difficult position. As explored

in Chapter 4, being response-able in research involves making ethical decisions in the moment and being attuned to the consequence of these decisions (Barad, 2007; Thorpe et al., 2020). The need for care and sensitivity as a cisgender researcher of gender diverse communities is crucial, and the wellbeing of participants and transparency of the research (Namaste, 2000; Vincent, 2018) may have been at risk had I delved deeper. Nonetheless, Ezra's comments and the feelings sensed within that moment, were still highly insightful, and will be explored below.

Experiences of puberty and menstruation within the PE setting are beginning to be understood, though this is largely in relation to cisgender girls. There are insights regarding the ways in which cisgender girls support each other and manage their menstruation within PE and school sport contexts, for example, through hiding sanitary products for friends, communicating with teachers about peers that are in too much discomfort to participate, and checking that sanitary products or leaks are not showing through friend's PE kits (Evans et al., 2022; Harvey et al., 2020). Frank and Dellaria (2020) write (and draw cartoons) about the difficulties trans and genderqueer young adults have faced in relation to menstruation, with many experiencing major discomfort in navigating public bathrooms, buying sanitary products (and the associated marketing), and making sense of their own gender identity in a world that views menstruation as fundamentally feminine. Yet, the experiences of gender diverse youth experiencing puberty and menstruation are "virtually absent" (Lowik, 2021, p.1), particularly within educational contexts.

Ezra is navigating a school setting in which not everyone knows of his trans identity, alongside the experience of an undesirable puberty and the associated difficulties that come with menstruating:

> "even though I'm a boy, I still don't feel comfortable going in boys changing rooms. I just feel more comfortable going in gender neutral ones"

"'cause obviously I still have girl hormones and stuff, I get my period. And … last month I got my period. And my teacher didn't let me go to the toilet when I really needed to go to the toilet. And that really annoyed me."

"My friends are quite supportive and don't say anything [about my trans identity], but this friend who's a girl in my class … whenever, like I need to put something somewhere, she'll go take it in the girls changing rooms, then take it out for me … 'cause I don't want to put it in the boys, but I don't know where to put it so she'll go put it and take it out for me."

Though, it is not clear what Ezra is talking about in the final comment, his hushed tones and awkward behaviour during this part of the conversation led me to consider that he may have been talking about hiding or disposing of sanitary products. Many individuals who menstruate have memories of similar scenarios in PE; the discomfort of being on your period, the necessity to hide your sanitary products, the anxiety about a potential leak (Harvey et al., 2020). For Ezra, it seems clear that the unwanted changes that his body is going through are intensified within the PE space, where the moving (and typically more exposed) body is on show. His comments on the changing room reflect many others in the trans community. Often there is a sense of discomfort in being in the gendered space they align with, due to fears of surveillance, scrutiny, or harassment (Greey, 2023), or of being 'clocked' as a trans person by a cisgender person (van Midde, 2016). As he states, even though he is a boy, there is an awareness of his body developing differently to cisgender boys, and perhaps it is this awareness, or a fear of his peers' perceptions of him, that prevent him from feeling comfortable in a male changing space.

As his comments highlight, he was required to wear a slim-fitting top which accentuated his chest, was not permitted to access a toilet during lessons to deal with a menstrual issue, and it is conceivable that he required his female friends to hide sanitary products for him. By contrast, within the youth space, Ezra can wear whatever he likes, can access gender-neutral toilets at any time, and does not have to hide his trans identity from others. Seemingly, Ezra's lack of control over his developing body is mirrored by his lack of

control within the PE space to deal with these changes with ease or comfort. A key recommendation of his to improve his PE experience therefore revolved around the flexibility to wear clothing that is less exposing and more affirming to his trans identity, and for teachers to have an awareness of his needs in relation to menstruation. In Evans et al.'s (2020) study, they discuss the ways in which cisgender girls manage menstruation in PE and share coping strategies taken up by these girls, many of which are not dissimilar to Ezra's. And yet, Ezra's experience of menstruation comes to matter in more complicated ways that block him from appropriately managing it. Given that he is perceived by others as a boy, it is possible that he feels unable to ask for support or fears that it may draw attention to his trans identity, making him susceptible to possible negativity or judgement from his peers. Furthermore, though his PE teachers are aware of his trans identity, they do not appear to consider the additional difficulties he faces in relation to puberty and menstruation. These issues entangle in such a way that cause Ezra to emerge in PE with discomfort and distress.

In line with Caudwell's (2014) work on transgender boys in school sport, this experience of Ezra's highlights how he is constantly negotiating and navigating his identity as he moves through different spaces and scenarios; whilst he wishes to be stealth and read as male by those in the school setting, there is also a need to be open about his trans identity to friends and teachers in order to get the support he needs. Being 'out' as trans is a complex process, meaning young people can be open in some contexts and not in others (McGlashan & Fitzpatrick, 2018). As Caudwell (2014) explains, "'[o]utness' is not a simple and/or fixed process or social location. It is multi-layered, potentially infinite and exists beyond the individual concerned" (p.403). The pubescent body is an additional layer of navigation for gender diverse individuals, complicating an already-complex existence in the world, as typical bodily developments during puberty (such as breasts, facial hair, voice lowering) become known as essential gender signifiers that enable an individual to be 'read' in an instant. In van Midde's (2016) research with transmasculine adults, he articulates this complexity as "working against the fleshy body" (p.55), exploring how a trans body may be able to work against its corporeal limits and come to experience

gender euphoria (joy) through intra-actions with things like binders, hormones, mastectomies, packers, clothing, and haircuts. The affective agency of these intra-actions comes from being able to change parts of the body which are culturally read as signifiers of a gender they do not align with, and the consequent possibility of being 'read' correctly provides euphoria and joy. As Ezra's drawings indicated earlier, he was able to work against some of these signifiers by cutting his hair, but as a young person there are limits as to what else he can do[3] and the impact of this is on his sense of comfort and joy in the PE space is palpable.

Other youth participants also discussed the difficulties they faced with a body that was developing in ways that did not align with their sense of gender identity. The donning of comfortable, loose-fitting clothing was seen as a strategy to deal with the feelings of dysphoria that came with their changing body:

> "I'm what people would describe as kind of like a very like typically feminine body … I had a very kind of femininely curved body. Which obviously is affecting me now because I'm not very comfortable in my body. But during PE it's kind of like, very boxed … PE kits that a lot of women didn't like and I was like 'yeah this is great' and like like a lot of people didn't like PE kits, but I loved wearing them just because I I liked how it fitted me" (Ali)

This could be read through a new materialist lens as the loose-fitting clothing and Ali's body intra-acting to create an affective agency which allows them to experience comfort and joy in PE, but reading this diffractively brings with it different insights. Garrett (2004), drawing on Foucault, explores how the body is simply a surface which is "acted upon by culture, inscribed with power and mediated in discourse" (p.141). The discursive-material power of naming body shapes as 'more feminine' or 'more masculine' brings forth different ways of being and behaving. Foucault (1988) proposes a particular form of

---

[3] Hormone therapy, puberty blockers and other medical interventions are scarcely available to gender diverse youth under the age of 16. Binders are not always a feasible option and in the PE setting, could limit movement and comfort.

(disciplinary) power based on surveillance, whereby individuals feel compelled to behave as if they are being watched, resulting in the internalisation of these behaviours as cultural norms. Individual identities are then "constructed through evaluations of the body as if judged by others. These are mechanisms by which identity becomes 'embodied'" (Garrett, 2004, p.142). Therefore, Ali could be seen to be internalising an embodied identity which they seek to move away from, that of a feminine identity. But what is a curvy body? It is only deemed feminine because society has labelled it so. Whilst the impact of disciplinary power on behaviour and identity formation is clear (as seen through participants' concerns over being 'read', and desires to behave in 'gender-appropriate' ways), what if cultural understandings of femininity and masculinity could be disrupted? As Preciado (2019) states, "there are no sexes or sexualities but uses of the body acknowledged as natural or prohibited as deviant" (p.99). Through shifting understandings away from natural/deviant binaries, perhaps gender diverse young people would not feel such incongruence about their body and the arbitrary labels that body shapes and parts have been given, in turn, negating the need to behave in ways which hide the body on display.

Nonetheless, these gendered systems persist and are intensified in PE spaces, resulting in feelings of gender dysphoria for some. One participant, Max, expressed his feelings about his body in PE through the creation of a wood carving (shown in Figure 4). The carving seems to depict an outer layer around a body, perhaps suggesting the inner body as trapped or unable to emerge. This could align with a wrong-body narrative whereby gender diverse individuals feel they were born or trapped in the wrong body (Chu, 2017), causing feelings of

Figure 4: Max's wood carving

body dissatisfaction and discomfort in having a body assigned a particular sex that does not correlate with their gender identity (Mirabella et al., 2020). Others have re-framed this

narrative as "not trapped in the wrong body but trapped in the wrong society" (Jacques, 2015, p.305). Therefore, the outer layer of the carving could be a materialisation of gender essentialism, of discourse around societal norms and assumptions that dictate that the sexed body is naturally and inevitably aligned to one's sense of gender. Either way, both narratives indicate a blocked becoming, where an individual is unable to materialize as their desired self, due to social forces and power relations which dictate how a body should be.

Max shared the following thoughts in relation to his wood carving:

> "So it's a body and it's sort of like surrounded by like a er, thing, and it's kind of like taking over, it's supposed to be kind of like, erm, I don't know … it kind of reminds me a bit of like gender dysphoria, like I don't know what to do with like this [points at own body]. I don't know, it's hard to explain (laughs)"

Given that this comment was in relation to how he felt within PE, it is possible that Max felt a sense of discomfort with the body he inhabits that was potentially heightened in this space. PE forces young people to constantly be on display and moving in ways that centralise the body, bringing forth a sense of vulnerability and exposure in that space that is unique to this subject. For an individual who feels a difference between their body and their sense of gender identity, intra-actions with certain assemblages which perpetuate gender essentialist discourses (such as the PE space) and centre the physicality of the body, seem to bring forth affective forces of body dysphoria and disassociation from the body ("I don't know what to do with this"). Researchers have identified the developing young body as central to the emergence of these negative feelings towards the body (Huttunen et al., 2019; Pollock & Eyre, 2012), suggesting that the entanglement of the PE space and the pubescent body is one which affects a gender diverse young person's sense of becoming considerably.

With hormone-suppressing therapies now routinely banned by the NHS for prescription to young people in relation to gender identity (NHS England, 2024b), and given the rising

policy rhetoric denying young people the ability to socially transition in schools (Department for Education, 2023), it is conceivable that other gender diverse youth are going through similar experiences of discomfort and gender dysphoria as those identified by the young people above. Whilst much of this policy development is beyond the control of young people and teachers, there are possibilities for schools to reduce the impact of some of the affective forces that puberty can have on these young people during PE. For example, by becoming more aware of their needs with regards to menstruation, through becoming aware of the material aspects of PE (such as PE kits) which typically invoke stress and worry in these young people, and through challenging gender essentialist discourses that shape much of the PE setting.

6.4 TURNING BACK TO THE EVENT

This chapter began by sharing an event that occurred with Ezra, and the writing of that vignette led me to follow many unexpected lines of flight. Now I turn back to this event by way of summarisation. The moment of intense energy demonstrated by Ezra during our meeting could be considered a rupture in the long-standing territories of an array of assemblages. Conversations leading up to this moment highlighted how many of the assemblages that these young people found themselves in, particularly the school and PE space, reinforced cisnormative and essentialist beliefs regarding gender. Through the arbitrary gendering of spaces, objects, bodies and behaviours, there was a strong sense that these assemblages were stuck, blocking joyful becomings for these young people due to a lack of de-territorialisation. I sensed this in their body language and their tone, the sadness and disappointment about the way that things were. However, in this moment of energy many *things* came together, intra-acting. Through this intra-action, an unexpected line of flight by Ezra emerged, re-configuring the previously solemn space to one of excitement through joyful movement. The affective forces of this assemblage encouraged him to change paths, breaking away from previously held beliefs that had deterred him from expressing himself in perceived feminine ways. This *was* a process of

de-territorialisation; of rupturing previous paths of understanding, towards new ways of viewing movement and the body.

What seems clear is the impossibility to pinpoint a specific cause to this moment. Through exploring the material entanglements leading up to this moment of joy, it is possible to see a whole network of forces in motion which could have shaped the outcome of this moment, much like the DeleuzoGuittarian (1987) concept of a rhizome. The rhizome is made up of a multiplicity of roots, allowing for many points of entry and numerous connections (Gullion, 2018). Through exploring this moment rhizomatically, I have attempted to capture and explore a range of connections and how they may unfold to generate the joyful moment experienced by Ezra. Of course, through focusing on these connections, others have been missed (Giraud, 2019) and I am accountable, as all researchers should be, for imposing these specific cuts. Nonetheless, what this exploration of entanglements has led us to is a greater awareness of the messiness of events and the need to pay attention to the interconnectedness of things. In the PE context, this could entail looking broadly at a range of issues that could impact on a gender diverse young person's experience of PE, and their connections to other assemblages (e.g., the home, elite sport contexts) rather than considering things (such as changing rooms) in isolation.

I often wonder whether this experience propelled Ezra to continue acts of de-territorialisation in other spaces. Research within the field of psychology has highlighted the ways in which environments which foster feelings of safety, respect, acceptance, and support can strengthen young people's sense of self, identity, and self-esteem, driving them to have future hopes, dreams, and goals (*possibilities*) that they may not have felt able to move towards otherwise (Borba, 2003; Carter, 2023). Bearing in mind the inherent vulnerability of the PE space, PE teachers should consider what they could do to create more safe, respectful, and supportive spaces for gender diverse youth to experience joy.

7 KNOWLEDGES OF INCLUSION

Unlike many of the young people involved in this research, almost all the teachers that took part in the project were strangers to me, and I to them. As a researcher exploring the school context with little experience of operating within that very system (two months' work experience in a high school during my undergraduate days), I was anxious about many of the encounters I had lined up with PE teachers. Were they looking to me for advice? What if I was not knowledgeable enough about the profession? How would I respond to comments that seemed misaligned with the inclusive work this project set out to do? Morally I did not feel I could remain impartial on matters pertaining to the inclusion of young people.

Mikey and I exchanged several emails before agreeing to meet online, and it was here in his email signature that I noticed his additional role as a consultant for a PE organisation. Upon closer inspection, this organisation provided educational resources, training and lesson plans to cover all manner of topics around diversity, inclusion and equality in the PE space. A strange sense of panic came over me as I tried to envision how our conversation would go. Was I knowledgeable enough to engage with someone considered an expert on the topic? I had to remind myself that the participants are the experts of their own lives and contexts, and I was there to learn from them.

Upon meeting, I felt an immediate sense of relief. Mikey was passionate and highly driven to have meaningful discussions on 'difficult' topics. He was incredibly well-informed about gender diversity and how it operates (or not) within the PE setting. What struck me throughout our conversation was this immense sense of empathy from him regarding the lived experiences of gender diverse youth. He seemed to understand deeply what life might be like for gender diverse youth in PE, and he explained in depth where this drive for inclusion emerged from:

> *My son … ever since growing up … he was always just playing with … whatever he wanted to play with and dressing up and fairies and princesses*

and stuff. And as he got older and he started to vocalize about his identity and questioning his gender identity … I'm just looking at his vast array of nail varnishes and Pride flags and jewellery and everything else now and … he's just happy. Much happier with who he is ... And so knowing what he's gone through over the last however many years and then how gendered PE is and can be, I teach differently. … and that's been a big driver for me ... because I can put myself in his shoes … when I'm presented with students at school that go on similar journeys. I know that they've gone through a lot and that kind of builds my … sense of determination to do right for them when they're finding so many other aspects of life particularly challenging.

Mikey went on to discuss his work with SEND children and their families, his specialist safeguarding work during a leadership role, and his volunteer work with LGBTQ+ young people and their families. He attributed these experiences to the way in which he approached inclusion in PE, and it became clear that through these experiences, he understood more deeply the range of struggles that young people might experience in PE and beyond, particularly in relation to gender diversity. Understandably, it is not realistic to expect that all teachers could take on such varied roles alongside their own schedule. So how are PE teachers gaining an understanding of issues around gender diversity in PE? Do they understand the lived experience of a gender diverse young person and how to promote their inclusion? Where, if anywhere, are these sources of knowledge coming from? And how can we develop these affective intensities in the PE setting to encourage more considerate, empathetic, and ultimately, inclusive practices for gender diverse youth?

This chapter explores the entanglements in teachers' lives that have shaped their journeys towards greater awareness and inclusion of gender diverse youth in PE. It will explore their multiple knowledges around gender and inclusion, what shapes these territories, and with this, their pedagogical decisions and strategies relating to gender diversity in PE.

7.1 Making sense of gender diversity

During conversations with PE teachers, it became clear that within the PE domain there is often a disconnect between having good intentions towards inclusive practices for gender diverse youth, and thoroughly understanding the issues that these young people may face. Alison, the longest serving PE teacher involved in the project (having qualified in 1994), shared her reflections regarding the recent shift in her awareness of gender diversity in the PE context:

> "… I'm not comfortable with myself with this that in the past this … hasn't been on my radar, in the last 10-15 years of teaching. ... Naively, I was probably thinking, well, you know, if if the person has an issue, they'd speak up or it would be fine, or you know we're catering everyone."

> "I'm listening to people within the community and … I'm actually hearing how bad PE has been for them, which is really quite upsetting because I didn't realise, I didn't realise at all"

These honest reflections were synonymous with others in this research and highlighted how understandings of gender diverse students' experiences within the PE context have been largely unknown within the PE profession until recent years. Many PE teachers' initial teacher training (ITT) programmes did not provide content on this area, and it is only in the last decade that gender diverse narratives have become more visible within Western society (Straube, 2020). This said, there has been a dominance of a particular representation of identity, in the form of the "hyperfeminine, affluent transgender women" (Berberick, 2018, p.123), and predominantly White representations (McLaren et al., 2021), resulting in an increasing awareness of 'portions' of gender diverse existences whilst ignoring others. This awareness of only *some* gender diverse identities was seen throughout conversations, with many teachers able to make more sense of binary transgender identities but struggling to comprehend those beyond a gender binary (such as non-binary identities). This could suggest that their measuring of bodies continues to be framed by biological essentialism and a dualistic view of gender. They struggle to make

sense of non-binary or gender non-conforming identities because they do not fit the essentialist apparatus. But new apparatus can be taken up, and Alison's comments around her evolving understanding of student experiences and needs in PE indicates this. Wolfe (2021) explains how inequity is created in the school assemblage through the "erasure of what has not yet been imagined" (p. 22). Until Alison plugged into new assemblages which enabled her to imagine something different (e.g., through conversations with the gender diverse community), she could only imagine things as they were currently framed, resulting in the continued invisibility of gender diverse experiences. It has been recommended elsewhere that teachers should look to develop personal connections with gender diverse experiences to better understand the difficulties that they may face within PE (Foley et al., 2016), as Alison has done through her conversations with those in the community. In other research, PE teachers highlighted how hearing first-hand experiences from a transgender individual who was providing training helped them to more deeply understand how their gender diverse students might be feeling (Joy et al., 2021). Whilst I would question how the onus remains on the transgender individual to openly share their story, these examples do still show an important way that empathy and understanding can be fostered.

Whilst some teachers grappled to make sense of the multiplicity of gender diverse embodiments in PE, there were also frequent conflations across our conversations in relation to gender identity and sexuality. For example, when PE teachers were asked about their understanding of transphobia in schools, their responses often commented on homophobia and on the experiences of gay and lesbian students. In thinking about this rhizomatically, there are a multitude of pathways that may lead to this. As outlined in the literature review, conflations of sexually and gender diverse experiences within PE are common within the literature and have resulted in perceptions of LGBTQ+ PE experiences as ubiquitous (Drury et al., 2017) and consequently in the erasure of gender diverse experiences (Caudwell, 2014). Possibly, it is through these conflations that teachers are unable to differentiate between the different needs and experiences of the LGBTQ+ community. Perhaps, it is due to inadequate training programmes on these experiences.

Maybe other belief systems, such as the assumed inseparability of sex and gender and associated gender roles, feed into ideas that those with 'non-normative' identities are homogenous. Something that did strike me about these PE teachers (who often conflated LGBTQ+ identities) was their shared identity as cisgender and heterosexual. Perhaps then, it is something about the embodied experience of sexual or gender diversity, or of having a closeness to that embodiment (Mikey is cisgender and heterosexual but has experienced his child's sense of gender diversity), that helps to shape more nuanced understandings of the differences between gender identity and sexuality. Whatever it may be, these conflations felt particularly significant and indicated an action that could be taken to develop PE teachers' understandings around gender diversity, by clarifying how these experiences may differ to those who are sexually diverse.

Natasha, an openly bisexual PE teacher, touches on one of the possibilities mentioned above regarding heterosexual teachers:

> "… I don't think … a lot of people who are not part of the LGBT community … particularly understands … what it feels like and what that school experience is like … 'cause nobody comes into teaching to not care about kids, … like overall the majority of staff really care about kids but I don't think they really fully understand like what the experience is like and until they do, I don't think they think it's a bigger well, you know … 'I'll call out, you know, transphobia if I hear it' well, will you? And will you really follow up on it and properly? … and that's what I'm hearing from the kids when I've done student voices that they're not. Like even like the teachers that you think are, you know, are confident outgoing advocates … they'll be like 'no Miss this teacher she hears this kid say this all the time they always say that and she just lets it go'."

As Natasha explains, there is an understanding that teaching staff who do not identify within the LGBTQ+ community lack an awareness of what everyday school life may be like for gender diverse students. Natasha explained that non-LGBTQ+ staff rarely engaged with LGBTQ+ students to learn more about their lives and experiences (for

example, by attending LGBTQ+ lunch groups), and in her opinion, this resulted in these teachers failing to effectively challenge transphobia or engage in more inclusive practices.

Indeed, research has shown how LGB individuals are likely to have more positive attitudes towards gender diverse individuals than heterosexual individuals, due to the likelihood of similar experiences of stigma and marginalisation (Flores, 2015), and pre-service LGB teachers were found to have less transphobic attitudes than their heterosexual colleagues (Scandurra et al., 2017). This said, research in the Australian context has indicated how LGBTQ+ trainee teachers' own views towards sexuality and gender diversity feed into the way in which they perceive and support others in the LGBTQ+ community (Russell, 2021), and this was, at times, damaging regarding whether or how they acknowledged or advocated for LGBTQ+ awareness in schools. For example, one bisexual trainee teacher referred to being straight as "normal, [whilst] being gay, bisexual and lesbian is not" (Russell, 2021, p.568). They saw this as a rational basis to not discuss non-heterosexuality in the classroom and performed as a heterosexual teacher instead. Evidently, LGBTQ+ status as a teacher is complex and cannot be assumed to result in their LGBTQ+ advocacy in the school context. On the contrary, Russell's (2021) research also indicated the possible danger that LGBTQ+ teachers could find themselves in if they did 'too much' LGBTQ+ advocacy in the classroom.

In relation to the latter part of Natasha's comment, whilst the teaching profession is one which many of the PE teachers implied has an inherent level of empathy and care for young people, her comments highlight a disconnect between some teachers desires to care for and support gender diverse youth, and their willingness to do so. In this sense, the killjoy status of speaking up, challenging issues and enacting inclusive changes in schools appears to be embodied in theory, but less so in practice. This aligns with research by Swanson and Gettinger (2016), who found that teacher attitudes towards supporting LGBTQ+ students were significantly more positive than their actual level of LGBTQ+ inclusive actions. For example, 74% of teachers in this study felt that it was important to pursue training to improve their understanding of LGBTQ+ students, but only

29% of teachers indicated that they would do so (Swanson & Gettinger, 2016). This said, it is important to bear in mind that teachers can often view aspects of professional training as poor or inadequate, which could account for their lack of willingness to pursue it. For example, Costello and Boyle (2013) explore how pre-service teachers felt that they were not "adequately trained or prepared to implement an inclusive approach to education" (p.139), and consequently viewed training in a less positive light. Section 7.4 touches on some of the 'generic' training programmes that PE teachers in this research have been involved in.

More explicitly, in the PE context there is limited understanding regarding PE teachers' attitudes towards gender diversity explicitly and how this may differ by the teacher's own sexuality or gender identity. Whilst Drury et al. (2023) provide detailed accounts of PE teachers' approaches to gender diversity and inclusion, they do not indicate the teachers' own sexuality or gender identity. Therefore, this finding provides an opening for further exploration around how one's own sexuality or gender identity as a PE teacher may affect their provision for gender diverse students. One could speculate based on Natasha's comment and prior research that perhaps through having an embodied understanding of what it is like to be sexually diverse in PE helps LGB teachers to have empathy and address gender diverse issues in a more nuanced way than heterosexual colleagues. Nonetheless, researchers on LGBTQ+ student experiences in general school contexts have stressed the importance of cisgender and heterosexual teachers' roles in removing the burden on their LGBTQ+ colleagues by challenging cis-heteronormativity through their practice (DePalma & Jennett, 2010; Khyatt, 2006; Vega et al., 2012).

7.2 SPEAKING UP FOR INCLUSION

Alison's comments in the previous section around her assumptions that gender diverse students would 'speak up' if they were experiencing difficulties highlights the way in which teachers can often take a reactive approach to inclusion. This reliance on the student to speak up has been identified in other research (Neary & McBride, 2021) and reflects

comments from other PE teachers in this research too. As discussed previously, this puts the onus on the young person to be 'out' and advocate for the issues that they face, as opposed to PE settings evolving to cater to a wider diversity of students. This creates a paradox whereby gender diverse individuals who want to be read authentically and supported in schools must be 'out', but to be 'out' is, in some cases, a risky endeavour. Researchers have highlighted how this approach results in a 'student in charge' narrative taking precedent, whereby gender diverse pupils take the lead on decision-making related to their school experiences (Frohard-Dourlent, 2018). Whilst this may help to include the individual, it does not tackle the existing cisnormative structures and inequalities that caused their discomfort and erasure in the first place (Phipps & Blackall, 2023).

Jade's comments below expand on the issues discussed above, illuminating how some PE teachers have uncertainties around how to support gender diverse students, relying on the young person to guide them:

> "We're just trying to do the best for the … child, we don't know what the right or wrong thing to do is"

> "… as long as we know what they want to do and we can put it into place then we will do that … we'd make it as open and welcoming and comfortable as possible and and then in terms of the sports that they do, we speak to them and ask what group do they want to be in, girls or boys?"

Whilst this approach enables inclusion to a point, the binary nature of boys and girls PE groups diminishes opportunities for some gender diverse youth to be in spaces that they truly align with, indicating a lack of awareness of the multiplicity of gender diverse experiences or cognisance of how this approach may not be comfortable for all. This finding aligns with Berberick's (2018) work on the paradox of visibility, in that certain representations of gender diversity (i.e., transgender) are understood and accepted, whilst more fluid gender identities are ignored or silenced. Those who identify beyond the

gender binary (e.g., non-binary students) are still expected to align themselves to a binary identity, an experience which can be invalidating to these young people (Paechter et al., 2021).

The uncertainty and contradiction in Jade's comments mirror other PE teachers' accounts, suggesting that what is lacking is both a nuanced understanding of the multiplicity of gender diverse identities, and an awareness of the difficulties that PE contexts can pose to these individuals. As Jade's comments seem to suggest, perhaps it is because of this lack of knowledge that PE teachers are reverting to individualised modes of inclusion based on students speaking up. And yet, this brings with it a range of exclusions. Whilst a new entanglement may form through this individualised approach (changing the individual student's trajectory toward a more affirmative becoming in PE), the exclusions that occur because of this entanglement are ignored. How does this adjustment impact on other gender diverse students? How does this shape cisgender students' views towards gender diversity? What does this decision suggest about the prevalence of certain norms and beliefs in PE? As discussed previously, giving gender diverse students' individual agency through adjusting their provision does little to challenge the cisnormative structures that caused their discomfort in the first place, and these individual adjustments are futile to others who are questioning their gender identity or are undisclosed in the school setting (Omercajic & Martino, 2020; Phipps & Blackall, 2023). Rather than challenging the very way in which gender materialises in the PE context (for example through organising students in ways *other than* gender, or questioning the gendering of the built environment), these adjustments position gender diverse individuals as different, other, and abject, doing very little to disrupt the larger power apparatuses (of cisnormativity) that exist within PE. A level of sameness continues, with cisgender bodies and their needs continually perceived as most common and therefore most significant to centre within PE provision.

164

Whilst some teachers relied upon gender diverse students to indicate any difficulties within the PE setting, others recognised the uniqueness of the PE setting and how this might intersect with gender diverse experiences:

> "… when they're in maths, English, whatever, the focus isn't on them and their work is in a book. When you're in PE, your kind of, your work is on display for everybody to see, and they are looking at you and they're looking at your body just because it's inherent within the subject. And I think that makes a lot of them [gender diverse students] feel a little bit more uncomfortable 'cause they're not necessarily comfortable within themselves either" (Freya)

Findings in this research, as well as those from previous studies (Ferguson & Russell, 2021) highlighted how the PE setting caused gender diverse youth to experience discomfort and gender dysphoria due to their body being exposed, with the PE kit, changing rooms and the physical activities themselves causing youth to feel 'on show' and fearful of having their gender identity misread. Above, Freya demonstrates her understanding of this, and the way in which the PE space may intensify these issues for gender diverse students. This demonstrates a more critical approach to inclusion, whereby potential issues within the PE assemblage are acknowledged, and considered in relation to how they might intersect with the experiences of a gender diverse student. Through paying attention to, and responding to, the entanglement of things that may foreclose the possibility of joyful PE experiences for gender diverse youth (e.g., clothing, PE spaces, bodily movements, negative body image), these exclusions can be brought to light and contested. As such, Giraud (2019) suggests that, for productive change to occur, it is "necessary to contest certain relations in order to clear space for alternatives" (p.4). If teachers can become aware of the ways in which the entanglements of certain things in PE invoke negative realities for gender diverse students, then they can contest these relations, clearing space for new practices and policies that address them (such as private changing spaces, flexible uniform policies, PE activities that avoid individual performance). This said, whilst I felt that Freya was coming from a place of empathy, there

is also a clear deficit narrative within her comment whereby she frames gender diverse young people as inherently 'uncomfortable with themselves'. This can have negative consequences for how gender diverse young people are able to imagine themselves; if teachers assume that they must be uncomfortable with their body, it draws attention to an assumed 'difference' which could be internalised negatively.

7.3 LISTENING TO STUDENT VOICE

Whilst the previous examples have illustrated a variety of reactive and proactive approaches to inclusion in PE, almost all the teachers talked about their ambitions to draw on student voice to shape their inclusive provision in the future. Whilst seeking out student voice may not be considered a novel or innovative practice, it's evident from the slow-moving progress regarding inclusion in the PE setting that this approach is not one which has been a focus in the past. PE is well known for its persistently conservative, traditional ideals which do not reflect the range of students who participate in it (Kirk, 2010), and the profession has been criticised for remaining "resistant and/or slow in providing the so called 'student needs' they are charged with meeting" (lisahunter, 2019, p.4) in relation to students' increasingly fluid identities. During conversations around progress and social change in PE, Mikey explained how he felt the "the world is catching up … More people in the PE world are more open to those sorts of ideas now. Back in the day … the rest of the profession thought we were bonkers". This shift was evident through teachers' comments around their intentions to draw on student voice to inform their PE provision:

> "… I think I've spoken to … one of the trans students. I've spoken to one of the gay students and they are going to come and work with me in September and to … get this [PE/school sport policy] written, we'll write it together. And see what they think and whether they're going to be happy. So I think that's the best foot forward …" (Alison)

"I think it [the curriculum being offered] all hinges on student voice. … we we need to understand what motivates and what interests those young people if our true aim is to get young people more active, more often." (Liam)

"[Following the introduction of a student-led curriculum] We're gonna do another … student survey 'cause I think that's the only way of knowing, asking the students. And that will be big for us, but the impressions we get, are that it's good and we can tell this by numbers at clubs we've got loads of students who never used to come to PE clubs who now are. (Otis)

These comments are promising and suggest a positive move towards more student-centred policies and practices. And yet, given the multitude of experiences, desires and needs in PE that the gender diverse youth in this research shared, it is evident that there will not be a one-size-fits-all approach to these concerns. This adds an additional layer of difficulty for schools in their decision making around PE policy and practice. Additionally, there is a need to question the possible tokenism and process of exclusion that could emerge through these forms of student voice practices (Bragg, 2024). (How) are these voices actually used to inform change? Whose voices become amplified? And whose are ignored? I am also cognisant of a contradiction that arises here in relation to relying on student voice practices (such as student surveys or meetings with certain student demographics). If teachers are to be encouraged to create changes in their PE setting that take the burden away from gender diverse youth to speak up and ask for support, how can they draw on student voice to inform these changes? There are likely to be gender diverse youth who do have strong opinions about the way in which they wish to engage in PE, and seeking out these voices would be most beneficial to PE teachers. Likewise, findings from other research have highlighted how gender diverse students have felt empowered through their ability to speak up and challenge cisnormative structures in PE, having their voice and needs acknowledged and acted upon by PE teachers (Fuentes-Miguel et al., 2022). However, it seems crucial that teachers should also be educated elsewhere about the lives, experiences and needs of gender diverse

youth in PE to develop practices that are considerate of their needs, therefore reducing the significant 'inclusivity labour' (Newman et al., 2020; Neary & McBride, 2021) that gender diverse students may undergo in advocating for themselves. As Horton (2021) identifies in their research on institutional cisnormativity in schools, whilst gender diverse students may have the capacity to self-advocate and resist cisnormativity, there is also a need to be aware of "how many battles there are to fight, and how exhausting it is to combat and cope with institutional cisnormativity year after year at a young age" (p.14). Furthermore, it is the responsibility of schools and educators to ensure the safety, privacy and well-being of gender diverse youth, so to only intervene in cases where a gender diverse individual discloses an issue, as opposed to proactively seeking out ways to support their safety and wellbeing "constitutes a fundamental abnegation of responsibility" (Omercajic & Martino, 2020, p.9).

7.4 REFLECTIONS ON THE PE PROFESSION

Previously I alluded to a key issue that PE teachers had with regards to their ability to support gender diverse students: a lack of training. This next section explores teachers' experiences of sexuality or gender diversity-based training (or lack of), alongside wider reflections towards the teaching profession, initial teacher training (ITT) and teacher identity. One PE teacher, Liam, mentioned that "I honestly don't think teachers are trained or confident to … deal with it". This quote seems to embody a range of sentiments from the PE teachers around the lack of training given to guide them towards inclusive practices for gender diverse students within the PE setting. As discussed previously, this is in part, because the ITT programmes that these teachers attended did not include content around gender diversity. Even Otis, the youngest PE teacher having qualified in 2017, highlighted that their teacher training "didn't cover anything" regarding gender diverse students in PE. Previous studies have also highlighted this lack of content during ITT, attributing exclusive PE practices to this lack of knowledge (Drury et al., 2023; Williamson & Sandford, 2018). In fact, scholars have critiqued ITT programmes for their

inability to centralise research on LGBTQ+ lives in schools, particularly when considering the increasing availability of empirical research on this area (Quinn & Meiners, 2011). Research in other parts of the world has identified the inclusion of sexuality-based content within ITT programmes (Robinson & Ferfolja, 2002, 2008; Szalacha, 2004), though this is often referred to as 'LGBT' content without explicit reference to gender diversity, trans issues, or other content of this nature. One notable exception is that of Russell (2021), who identified how a pre-service teacher in Australia was involved in tutorials where conversations regarding transgender pupils and gender identity had emerged.

Interestingly, there appeared to be a divide in opinions when discussions turned to current PE ITT. Alison indicated that whilst the pre-service PE teachers that had placements at her school seemed to learn about equality and diversity within their ITT programme, she indicated that "it's still the same old 'gender' you know, … it's still boy, girl. It … doesn't seem to go much further than that". This suggests that content around diversity and equality in PE focuses on gender in the binary sense, failing to explore issues of sexuality and gender diversity within the PE setting and consequently perpetuating cis-heteronormative ideas. On the other hand, Mikey felt that "teacher training is getting better and there's a lot of good people in charge of teacher training courses … that are teaching the right way to go about stuff". This comment did not relate directly to matters of gender diversity in PE but followed a conversation around how the PE profession historically had teachers who "want to teach people like themselves". Mikey explained that he was beginning to see a shift in this regard, with an increasing awareness across the profession of the need to cater to a diversity of students and not just the 'sporty ones'. Perhaps then, we are beginning to see new lines of flight emerging in the PE assemblage, whereby long-held beliefs regarding those most suitable to participate are shifting. Fournier (2014) describes this as "the elusive moment when change happens … when a threshold between two paradigms is crossed" (p.121). In this sense, perhaps the traditional paradigm which privileges the white, male, heterosexual body with masculine, 'sporty' behaviours (Kirk, 2002; Gard, 2006; Storr et al., 2022) is being disrupted, in favour of more inclusive paradigms which consider a wider diversity of students. Still, the extent

of this de- and re-territorialisation is questionable when considering Alison's earlier comment. The gender binary still acts as a powerful apparatus, informing the way in which bodies continue to materialise within ITT in PE.

Otis' experience of ITT and his ensuing introduction to the 'real world' of school PE feels very powerful and speaks to a range of the issues unpacked above:

> "I've done the QTS [an ITT programme] … and it was very much 'this is how we would deliver this sport' ... So we didn't have anything on behaviour, how to lead a group, nothing on classroom teaching, and nothing on … like the sort of cultural environment? What … sort of teacher do you want to be? I mean, we didn't bring up anything on that, sort of you reflecting on who you are as a teacher and I think that needs to come in … I had to retrain myself as an NQT [newly qualified teacher] that not every student is, 'cause I love sport, obviously that's why I'm a PE teacher. But not every student does initially. So I had to really … retrain myself to not just think about the sporty students." (Otis)

When I spoke to Otis he had only been teaching for a few years, and he discussed how much of this journey involved him 're-training' himself, figuring out who he was as a teacher and the core values he wished to promote in his lessons. He felt lucky to have joined a particularly liberal and progressive school which had LGBTQ+ matters at the top of its agenda as this enabled him to receive training, have open conversations with staff and students, and be within a whole-school environment which fostered LGBTQ+ inclusivity. It felt clear that it was this particular school environment, as opposed to the ITT he received, that had enabled him to learn about the need to cater to a diversity of students, not just the 'sporty ones'. In this sense, it appears the ITT programme that Otis attended did not foster a level of reflection or criticality towards PE, allowing him to prepare to teach in the same, narrow ways that he was presumably taught. Bowler et al. (2020) discuss a similar scenario in relation to the presence of new PE recruits in ITT programmes who shared desires to continue facilitating PE in the same ways that were positive for them, without looking critically at the aims, content or delivery of PE. Others

have articulated this as a wider issue on how the subject of PE, and some PE teachers, have been stuck in 'Groundhog Day' (Casey & Larsson, 2019), slow in the uptake of development in line with societal changes (Kessel, 2016; Robinson & Randall, 2016). A key takeaway here is to consider that, if ITT programmes are not preparing pre-service PE teachers to consider and plan for a wide array of needs, interests and barriers within PE, it is possible that new PE teachers may continue to have narrow preconceptions about the make-up of their students and be unprepared to respond to issues relating to gender diversity, amongst other things. It therefore feels essential that this issue be addressed by researchers and policymakers alike.

Almost all the PE teachers explained that their school had, or was planning to, carry out LGBTQ+ awareness training as part of a professional development programme for staff. This was typically in the form of generic or whole-school training which covered key terms and anti-bullying policies. Whilst the teachers had found this useful in gaining an initial understanding into LGBTQ+ matters, there was "specifically in PE, very little [training]" (Callum), particularly in relation to gender diversity. As demonstrated in a previous section, some PE teachers were aware of some of the additional difficulties that PE posed to gender diverse students, but through a lack of subject-specific training, did not feel well-equipped with strategies to employ in PE.

Given these feelings of unpreparedness, some teachers decided to take learning into their own hands:

> "I also feel like … professionally … I should be working to help all these students … I just think morally … I should be treating everybody fairly and I should be … up to date with things really. … I want to get things right so I still beat myself up if I use the wrong pronoun. … I just think that, as a teacher, is what we should be doing. But you know everything like finding you, finding [local LGBT+ organisation], it's all legwork that I'm having to do and speaking to different people in my own time. … But … as teachers, we haven't got that paid time or actually when you leave here, the inclination to do more …. So yeah, it's difficult. It's hard" (Alison)

171

Alison's comments reflect a wider sentiment felt by many of the PE teachers that they have a desire and a responsibility to learn about the potential issues that their students face, and a duty to treat them fairly and with respect. Several discussed practices of self-led learning, where they explored the internet, read journal articles, or sought out local LGBTQ+ organisations to further their knowledge on gender diversity. As Alison indicated, this also involved connecting with myself as a researcher of this context (I have some reflections on this particular entanglement which I expand on later). Yet, the issue remains that there is little incentive beyond the teachers' own desires to create change and support inclusion in the PE setting in relation to gender diversity, and as Natasha's comment below illustrates, these desires are not reflected across the whole profession.

Natasha explained how she carried out training for staff on gendered language and its negative impact on gender diverse students in PE, and after this session the following occurred:

> "… I walk back over to PE and these are like my friends, my colleagues, my closest colleagues in my department and they're like 'right, boys!', you know … like they're not even really trying. … I get that it takes a while to change behaviour, but … I think that respect for teachers has really declined in the years I've been teaching. But you expect teachers to be this sort of pinnacle, of you know, … just doing the right things and like so progressive and really be ... on the cutting edge of moving forwards and they're not actually, they're really not, there's a lot of traditional habits stuck in, like 'this is what we do' … and when it's like that, you just think well who's going to move this forward?"

Natasha's sense of frustration in the above comment is palpable and highly relatable. Evidently, whilst many of the participants comments have highlighted a positive shift towards more empathetic and inclusive knowledges with regards to gender diversity, this is not necessarily reflective of the wider PE profession. The 'Groundhog Day' discourse touched upon earlier is reflective of Natasha's comments around the profession being stuck in traditional habits regarding gender. There are important questions to raise here

regarding how we can begin to encourage those who do not seem to desire progress in relation to gender diversity in PE. Thinking back to a point made in section 3.4, could it be that political assemblages are blocking such becomings from emerging for these PE teachers? Whilst their local assemblage within the PE space may encourage more inclusive thinking through, for example, connections with other teachers or LGBTQ+ training facilitated by their school, the dominant political discourse and associated media rhetoric surrounding gender diversity produces a starkly different knowledge regarding the existence of gender diverse students. In the recently published Department for Education (2023) guidance surrounding 'gender questioning' children in school, this materialises through the framing of these young people within a narrow apparatus of biological essentialism, thereby erasing bodies who exist differently to this framework. As governmental policy is largely viewed by teachers as objective, scientifically based and therefore trustworthy (Casey & Larsson, 2019), perhaps the immortalisation of this apparatus within such documents acts as a stabiliser within PE assemblages that may have been at the tipping point of more radical change. It will be interesting to track the impact of this guidance on the teaching profession, and essential that teachers are encouraged to look critically at what it proposes and understand their ability to enact change that does not align with this system of knowledge, particularly given that it is non-statutory.

7.5 A WHOLE-SCHOOL APPROACH

It is important to acknowledge that, whilst this thesis focuses on the PE context, the subject of PE sits within a much wider system of schooling cultures that inevitably affect, and are affected by, the culture present within PE. When discussing gender diversity in the PE setting, participants regularly drew on examples or experiences relating to their school's culture or values, as well as the school connections to other stakeholders such as parents.

> "I think for me this is, this is a whole school issue and sort of the culture of the school and sort of thinking how do you want the students to feel when they come

to your school? … I think the biggest problem is sort of assuming people are straight and maybe we need to sort of move away from that … we sort of teach people to judge others on sort of their values and morals and how they talk to each other rather than how they identify" (Otis)

Here Otis demonstrates how the matter of including gender diverse youth is not just one to be addressed within the PE setting, but across the whole school. This was a belief held by many of the PE teachers, and whilst these teachers commented on the progress being made regarding attitudes around LGBTQ+ identities in schools, it was clear that some schools still had a way to go. Lily had recently moved schools to one which she assumed would be "fairly liberal", but found it to be quite the opposite:

"I expected the atmosphere to be really positive [with regards to LGBTQ+ matters] as I'd experienced previously, but actually this is the worst atmosphere for that aspect that I've encountered … as a member of staff and it is changing. But it's changing very slowly. Because the parents as well, they have those views and they perpetuate them … to their students. And then students come in with those kinds of opinions, happily sharing them and that … creates a really negative atmosphere for those students [who identify as LGBTQ+]"

To further illustrate this point, Lily explained how she did not feel safe to disclose her bisexuality to students (having only disclosed to staff) over fears of being associated with sexual deviance, particularly in the PE changing room spaces. This had not crossed her mind in previous schools where she openly told staff and students about her female partner.

Another teacher, Liam (who identifies as heterosexual), discussed how further action was needed at his school to bridge the gap between teachers and students in relation to being open about their gender or sexual identity:

"I've been a bit more aware of particularly in emails [with pronoun sign-offs], and students don't really see that, but I do think staff are more aware of … how other

174

adults … within the school space identify. I think … there's probably more to be done there that we try and advocate that more between teacher and students than just teacher and teacher"

Previous research has indicated a particular separation that is commonly applied by LGBTQ+ teachers in relation to their professional and private lives (Russell, 2021). In this research, LGBTQ+ trainee teachers often indicated that their LGBTQ+ identity had no place within the school setting or was only appropriate to disclose to other staff members, and this was shaped by a particular discourse within their ITT programmes (Russell, 2021). Evidently, Lily has faced tensions in disclosing her own sexuality at a new school and has felt it necessary to separate this part of her identity. In alignment with Russell's (2021) findings, this is a particular difficulty that heterosexual teachers do not have to contend with. That said, Liam's comment above indicates that he is seeing a shift towards more openly LGBTQ+ teachers and views this as important within the school context. Research has highlighted the difficulties that LGBTQ+ staff can face by being 'out' to students (Toledo & Maher, 2021), yet further research identifies the potential benefits to LGBTQ+ students in having LGBTQ+ representation and role models across the staff team (Muñoz-Plaza et al., 2002; Nixon & Givens, 2004; Russell, 2021; Wright & Smith, 2015), as well as the positive impacts on LGBTQ+ staff (Gray, 2013; Neary, 2013). Gender diverse students involved in the research for this thesis also highlighted their desires to see more representation across the school staff, particularly in relation to gender diverse identities. However, cisnormative school cultures and the attitudes of staff, students and parents continue to impact on gender diverse teachers' decisions to be 'out' in the school setting (Bancroft & Greenspan, 2022; Bartholomaeus & Riggs, 2017).

Lily's earlier comment also highlights the importance of having parents on board if schools are to develop more inclusive cultures. Likewise, Drury et al. (2023) discussed the importance of a whole-school approach where "all staff, students and parents … [are educated on] gender identity and trans* issues" (p.10). And yet, the parental perspective on gender diversity in PE is largely unknown, with the notable exception of Kettley-

Linsell's (2022) work which captured a mix of parental views towards transgender and non-binary inclusion in PE, ranging from supportive and open-minded, to prejudiced and exclusionary. In the current research, Freya described an incident where a parent complained about a transgender girl wanting to change in the girl's changing room. Whilst this was something that Freya and the school wanted to support, the school did not have an explicit policy on this area and felt unsure of how to address it with the parent. Ultimately, the transgender student chose to change in a separate space as they "felt the hostility in that situation", and Freya was frustrated by this outcome. This scenario illustrates the need to educate parents on the legal rights of gender diverse students, given that this student should have been protected from discrimination by the Equality Act 2010. Following this, Freya's school developed a policy to ensure this type of incident would not occur going forward. Other PE teachers also shared their concerns over the potential for parental complaints regarding decisions that include gender diverse students in certain spaces or activities (e.g., changing rooms, competitive sports fixtures), and their uncertainty over how to address them. We can see here how entanglements of the physical space, school policies and parental views can emerge in complex ways that teachers are not necessarily equipped to deal with. Whilst clearer guidance on gender diverse students' rights within school may help these teachers develop the confidence to deal with these issues effectively, it's important to acknowledge that it must become a collective responsibility, as well as an individual matter, to develop knowledges and practices which are inclusive of gender diversity. A teacher's decision is never made in isolation and emerges out of the events that came before. Whilst there may not have been 'official' policy at Freya's school regarding changing room provision, there were customs and practices which dictated how things were done, arguably of a cisnormative nature. If actors (such as senior leadership, school staff, governors, parents, visiting professionals) within the school assemblage can become critical of this, question existing practices, suggest more inclusive ideas and policies, educate other actors on gender diversity, this may move the school and PE assemblages towards more inclusive trajectories.

7.6 MAKING DECISIONS

When it came to PE teachers making decisions in relation to gender diversity, many felt unprepared due to a lack of knowledge or experience, and ill-informed by the government and sport governing bodies. Although public awareness regarding gender diverse identities is increasing, teachers have been calling for guidance from the government to respond to increasing numbers of gender diverse youth (Krasteva, 2022). Whilst draft guidance has since been published by the Department for Education (2023), it is currently in a consultation period and as previously discussed, is framed within a gender-critical perspective which does not validate gender diverse youth. If teachers are relying on this guidance to inform their practice, then this is of great concern to the wellbeing of young people in schools. It is important to note that the below conversations with teachers occurred in 2022, before the moral panic and culture wars around gender diversity had reached the level with which they are now. Nonetheless, these conversations illustrate the significance that teachers appear to place on the government in shaping their teaching decisions and practices around gender diversity.

In discussions around making decisions on changing room policy, one PE teacher, Callum, highlighted how "no one wants to make a firm decision because it's something that's relatively new". By 'relatively new', and based upon other comments made my Callum, it is possible that he was referring to the increase in gender diverse students that he has seen at his school as a new occurrence which they are not prepared to respond to. And yet, gender diversity has always existed, and legislation like the Equality Act has been around for some time, which both recognises and protects those who are gender diverse. Perhaps, it is the increasing noise around gender diversity, from students, teachers, parents, the media, the government, that feels new to Callum. Possibly, there is fear over taking a stance as more polarised perspectives arise.

> "[T]eachers just need somebody to say this is the guidance. There just needs to be more guidance from … government." (Freya)

"I think like, the point that needs to be made is that schools … don't really know what they're doing, so it's hard to kind of be like 'well, that school shouldn't be doing that'. Because we don't have any guidance on what we need to do" (Jade)

"because there's not been that much research conducted, there's not been policy made, that is really hard because every school is thinking, trying to make the right decision … there is a massive need for for people to talk about this, a massive need for people to get together and write policy. And until they do, I guess it's there's going to be so much … differentiated approaches.'" (Callum)

The above quotes typify the predominant response from PE teachers, and there was a real sense of frustration and abandonment felt towards the government due to schools being left to figure out and respond to complex issues that arose in relation to gender diversity. In PE, where strongly gendered constructions typically inform much of the day-to-day activities within the subject, there was an even greater need felt by PE teachers to receive clear and practical advice. Whilst this is true, it is interesting to consider the disconnect here across PE and existing policy. In thinking about policymaking, Fox and Alldred (2020) explore the possibility of exploring the affective intra-actions between a policy assemblage and the event assemblage that the policy aims to address. As stated previously, the Equality Act (2010) has outlined a policy in relation to the protected characteristic of 'gender reassignment' and this relates to a range of contexts, including education. If an organisation (such as a school) has "a particular policy or way of working that puts people with the protected characteristic of gender reassignment at a disadvantage" (Equality and Human Rights Committee, 2021, unpaged) then this is considered indirect discrimination and goes against the Equality Act. In this sense, there *is* a policy in place which could be enacted within the PE assemblage and used to shape the PE teachers own policies and practices in relation to gender diversity. So, what is preventing this from happening? Fox and Alldred (2020) suggest that a policy assemblage will have some capacities to affect an event, whilst lacking in other capacities, and in identifying the aspects that do not affect the event, effective policy-making can be

enhanced. All the PE teachers in this research were asked about their awareness of policy documents and legislation around gender diversity and inclusion, and only one mentioned the Equality Act. Perhaps then, whilst the Equality Act does set out guidance that could affect the PE assemblage, there are missing connections in relation to how this information is materialising within the teaching profession. Further exploration would be needed to pinpoint these exclusions, but some possible examples could be through a lack of training or professional development on the Equality Act, misinterpretations of the term 'gender reassignment', or a lack of understanding in relation to how it could be enacted specifically within PE.

Alison explained a scenario that she had experienced with a transgender student who had joined the girls PE group and wished to participate in competitive fixtures and Sports Day in the female category:

> "How on earth are we going to make this comfortable so that if she's selected for the netball team or … the football team? What do we do? And nobody that I've spoken to yet has got policy or got any ideas or any answers … and even the national governing bodies are saying, oh, it's … case by case, family by family and so on. But I feel like it's me making the rules and putting them on her and … she's going along with it. I'm not comfortable."

Whilst many have argued that the biological diversity across humans means that the playing field has never been level, and therefore transgender girls do not automatically retain an unfair advantage in competitive sport (Bianchi, 2017; Torres et al., 2022; Walker & Zychowicz, 2023), to which my opinion aligns, I understand the concern felt by Alison. She was aware that the decision she made would impact on the transgender student's experience and could potentially trigger certain responses from parents, teachers or other students who deemed the decision unfair. This could be seen through her decision which enabled the transgender student to compete in the female category at Sports Day, but without being allowed to score. Interestingly, she added that the impact of this decision feels like "an adult issue in my book. The children, they don't notice. The children are fine,

but it's the adults making a big old meal out of it", suggesting that generational differences in attitudes towards gender diversity are evident in the school setting. Her comments highlight the anxiety felt by some PE teachers in holding the responsibility to make decisions that could cause upset or controversy in some way.

In an ideal world where gender diversity is better understood and more widely accepted, this decision might not have been one fraught with difficulty. Yet, given the political stance of the current government, the rising culture wars and its presence in mainstream media, and the recent publications of the school guidance and the Cass Review, it is worrisome to consider how PE teachers may now be responding to some of the above uncertainties. We are also seeing a lack of universal agreement from sport governing bodies with regards to gender diversity in sport, with international organisations proposing starkly different policies regarding transgender athletes, ranging from full inclusion to full exclusion (Harper, 2022). With such a range of perspectives towards gender diversity and inclusion in sport, it is no wonder that PE teachers are experiencing such uncertainty. And whilst these PE teachers wish for better guidance from the government and sport governing bodies, is this guidance going to be in the best interests of the young people it impacts? From conversations with PE teachers, I sense that there is a hesitancy to act or respond in particular ways over fear of lacking expertise and therefore 'getting it wrong', but in this sense, they position authoritative figures and organisations as experts who inherently 'get it right'. Yet, this thesis has highlighted the multitude of ways in which both the UK government and various sport governing bodies make decisions that commonly lack robust evidence, rationale, compassion, or thorough consideration. How could teachers become more empowered to think for themselves? To be critical of authority and put trust in themselves and their communities to make decisions that work for their students?

In conversations regarding what guidance for teachers on supporting gender diversity in PE might look like, Jade highlighted how, whilst she wished for "step by step" guidance, new guidance would need to consider the breadth of experiences of those who identify

as gender diverse, as "it won't be the same for every single trans person". She was aware of the differing needs of gender diverse students, for example, how some may solely wish to change their name but remain in the same PE group, whilst others may require a range of changes to improve their PE experience. Whilst Jade's perspective indicates her awareness of this diversity in experiences, her later comments around making decisions within competitive school fixtures illustrate the way in which her thinking is still shaped by cisnormative boundaries:

> "I've got a … trans person, who is biologically a female, played netball for us loads of times, transitioned into a boy but still plays netball for us. So that's just an example that he wants to still carry on doing what he was doing, but just sees himself as a boy. And that's absolutely fine. We don't let the other school know because we don't need to. Sometimes we have boys play on the netball team and then we just let the other school know. We say we've got a boy, but everyone is absolutely fine with that"

In essence, it appears that Jade does not view this trans student as a legitimate boy, viewing him as biologically female and therefore physically inferior. That she does not inform other schools of the presence of a trans boy in the netball team, but would disclose the presence of a cisgender boy, highlights the biological essentialism and cisnormativity that guides her thinking. This scenario is reminiscent of an experience from a trans boy involved in a previous research project (Ferguson & Russell, 2021) who highlighted how teachers supported his transition to the boy's PE group but would not allow him to participate in contact rugby due to fears over his safety. Both of these speak to a wider issue of tolerance over acceptance. Whilst teachers are making adjustments to support gender diverse youth in PE, these adjustments focus on the individual as a minority who does not fit the norms of the wider student demographic and therefore is tolerated as an exception, as opposed to developing more holistic changes that consider the diversity of the class and disrupt dominant gender binary structures and assumptions. This shares similarities with Berg and Kokkonen's (2022) research, in that PE teachers were found to

approach LGBTQ+ student issues on an individualised basis and still relied on cisnormative and heteronormative structures to shape their overall practice, therefore viewing these beliefs as the norm and LGBTQ+ students as the minority other. These scenarios outlined above are not unique, with several other PE teachers involved in this project demonstrating how similar belief systems guided their decision making and considerations around the inclusion of gender diverse youth in PE. It feels, as I have referred to earlier, that these PE assemblages are so often at the tipping point of change. PE teachers take on new understandings of gender diversity, they welcome new strategies and ways of including gender diverse youth, they *want* them to materialise in ways that are comfortable and empowering for them, yet there are other power apparatuses (such as biological essentialism and cisnormativity) that continue to territorialise the space, preventing them from truly re-configuring the PE space into one where all bodies matter equally. In this sense, these teachers are keen to welcome new ways of doing things but are not quite ready to become the killjoy who enacts them.

7.7 CONCLUSION

The participants' accounts highlight how progress towards inclusion in the PE setting is never linear or of a binary nature. These teachers are in a constant process of becoming, and with each new intra-action their trajectories shift and re-form. Cassar (2017) states that "[e]xcitement, pain, disappointment, despair and curiosity motivate and instigate becomings" (para. 1), and in this chapter we can see how many of these feelings spurred PE teachers on to learn about gender diversity and incorporate inclusive practices within the PE space. As their stories have highlighted throughout this thesis, different connections with students, colleagues, schools, the news, the government, training programmes and more, have shifted their pathways in a multitude of ways. Yet, it also highlights the missed connections and contradictions that prevent such expansive becomings: the missed learning opportunities through a scarcity of inclusive training, policy and education; a hesitancy to question existing policy or dominant perspectives; a

continuation (as opposed to a disruption) of the same traditional understandings of gender through an essentialist lens across a range of assemblages; a lack of connection and empathy toward gender diverse students in PE.

I signposted earlier that I had some reflections on the way in which I was entangled with the teacher participants and what this entanglement might produce. I wish now to draw some connections between the opening vignette, Alison's reference to 'finding you' (on page 170), and some reflections made in Chapter 4. As discussed, I had some concerns over my perceived role of a researcher in the eyes of the PE teachers involved in this research. It felt as though there was an expectation that I could provide them with solutions, and this seemed conducive to their decisions to participate in the research. Indeed, I did aim to provide these teachers with a space to explore ideas, to provide guidance and reassurance, and to encourage them to explore their own context critically and consider new ways of doing PE. There is an interesting tension here regarding who is framed as the expert; I viewed the teachers as having experiential and theoretical knowledge of their PE context, of which I am aiming to understand, whilst many teachers viewed me as holding theoretical understandings of gender diversity, of which they hoped to understand and apply in practice. Instead of experts, which has hierarchical connotations, I like to consider us both as learners, engaging in dialogue and gaining new knowledge from one another. Nonetheless, Casey and Larsson (2019) provide an interesting commentary on the role expectations between PE teachers and researchers. Given the largely positivistic discourses which have guided the subject of PE for many years, research has predominantly been considered by teachers as a way of identifying problems and providing them with solutions (Casey & Larsson, 2019). Yet, this results in the centring of particular forms of knowledge and the erasure of others. What works in some contexts may not work in others. Whilst there are general ways in which teachers could be encouraged to develop inclusive practices in relation to gender diversity (many of which have been explored in this thesis), what seems more crucial is to support these teachers to look critically at their own contexts, the forms of knowledge being produced there, and the possibilities they have in disrupting those knowledges which enforce

narrow expectations on students or erase certain bodies from being in PE. Whilst scholars have indicated how teachers may engage in resistant or radical practices on an individual level which may disrupt dominant gender discourses in the classroom (Harris & Gray, 2014), other research has highlighted the way in which teachers have avoided recommendations to critically examine their wider school context in relation to gender normativity (Smith & Payne, 2016), thereby allowing a continuation of norms and practices which may not be inclusive of gender diversity. Perhaps the fear or uncertainty sensed in the PE teachers in this research stems from something similar; a hesitancy to openly question and critique one's own workplace practices, cultures and systems – a hesitancy to become a killjoy.

8 THE TIMETABLE

It's out of our hands ... it's the timetable ... we have no control over it ... it's the timetable ... the timetable decides the groupings ... timetable, timetable, timetable.

This chapter unpacks the timetable as a thing with many capabilities and influences on the configuration of the PE lesson and the consequent PE experiences of gender diverse youth. It aims to unpack the ways in which a timetable is constructed, understood, utilised, enforced; the ways in which it brings certain configurations into being. The timetable stood out to me as an interesting thread to explore due to the multitude of ways in which it showed up and affected bodies, spaces and practices in the PE assemblage. This seemingly lifeless object intra-acted with things in the PE setting in countless ways, resulting in a range of emergences and exclusions.

In its most universal sense, the timetable could be considered an organisational tool which says what, where and when something is happening. In the school setting, timetables are used to tell students and teachers which subject lessons are occurring, in which spaces, and at what time of the day. There is an expectation for everyone to follow their timetable correctly, with negative consequences for those who do not. For example, a student who misses lessons may get a detention or suspension. Already, we can see the power that this timetable has over the lives of students and teachers in determining their movements, actions and behaviours. It determines how bodies, spaces and objects become entangled, and the possible outcomes of these entanglements. Of course, particular things, human and non-human, feed into the creation of a timetable too, making each one unique to the particular context it was created for. In what follows, I illustrate the multiple ways in which the timetable is entangled with its surroundings, and the various trajectories that it invokes.

8.1 WE DON'T REALLY HAVE ANY CONTROL

This first section explores how the timetable comes to matter in the PE assemblage, and the level of control that teachers perceive themselves to have in its materialisation. One PE teacher, Alison, discussed how school facilities, staff availability, ease of student management, and the prioritisation of other subjects informed her PE timetable:

> "It's number driven by other subjects and it's staffing driven, but also from us for self-preservation. We also keep it single sex because that seems to be an … even split so we can manage the children and yeah, so again not thinking about them necessarily but having to just manage the numbers that are in front of us and also our facilities … we've got a dance studio which was built and it can house about 30 students at a time, so we're limited in space"

She explained that students were grouped in other subjects, divided into single-sex PE groups and allocated a teacher for each group. Here we can see a whole assemblage of things coming together and shaping the timetable. The physical environment of the dance studio holds up to 30 students, therefore determining how the timetable informs class sizes. And yet, this physical space does not determine the gendering of this process, and it appears that this is a 'common-sense' decision made by the department given the assumption of a balanced split of male and female students. Already, we can see how this decision is framed by cisnormativity, but under the guise of pragmatism, with assumptions made regarding the gender of students within that cohort informing these 'practical' decisions. Alison is honest in stating how these decisions do not consider the needs of the students per se but revolve around managing the logistical and practical elements of PE. This aligns with Wilkinson and Penney's (2023) finding that student groupings in PE are rarely informed by discourses of gender diversity, equity, or inclusion, but discourses of pragmatism. They go on to suggest that these 'pragmatic' decisions "simultaneously express and legitimate established and often stereotypical gendered practices in PE" (p.11).

Barad (2007) explores how materiality is produced-in-practice, "not a thing but a doing" (p.151), and in this sense, the timetable materialises through the *doing* of practices deemed by teachers as logical and pragmatic. A gender binary is coded as 'logical', and therefore, bodies materialise within PE spaces as always-already gendered. This becomes an issue for all young people, as gender is imposed on the body under the guise of naturality, rather than through an acknowledgement of difference, bodily diversity, and self-identification. Gender diverse bodies, then, materialise in ways that do not fit this 'logic' and are consequently positioned as abject or 'other', stunting their potential for affirmative becomings.

Some teachers perceived the timetable to be lacking in flexibility and beyond their control, whilst simultaneously sharing approaches that they have taken to decide on the student groupings. For example, Alison goes on to say the following: "It's completely out of our hands in the way that the timetable's written and so we literally get a cohort of children sent to us … so we don't really have any control as to who comes to us". There appears to be a lack of accountability here in relation to the specific cuts that Alison or her PE department have made in relation to the timetable. Whilst there are elements that are out of her control (class size, staff numbers, facilities), an explicit decision has been made to organise bodies in particular ways, underpinned by a biological discourse of a two-sex system. Wolfe (2021) identifies how the imposing of this apparatus naturalises certain behaviours as common-sense, thereby privileging those bodies who align with these behaviours (cisgender bodies). Through taking notice and paying attention to difference within the student cohort, perhaps considerations around alternative ways of organising students could begin, and gender diverse students may be able to materialise in more affirming ways.

8.2 AN EASY LIFE

Given the numerous pressures and responsibilities that teachers have today and the associated impact that these can have on their wellbeing (Brady & Wilson, 2021; Räsänen

et al., 2020; Skinner et al., 2021), it is understandable that some may choose pedagogical options that are perceived as easiest and most convenient for them to implement. In her first quote, Alison explained how decisions around the timetable were made, in part, for self-preservation. Other PE teachers also seemed to indicate how their timetable decisions were informed by a desire for less pedagogical difficulties. Rosie shared how her school had previously facilitated mixed gender timetables for all students, but adapted this to single-gender classes following the below events:

> "We found that a lot more difficult because even in year seven the girls in particular, don't work with boys, the boys don't particularly want to work with the girls. So we did football, the boys wouldn't pass to the girls. … When we played netball, the girls won't pass to the boys"

A range of literature has highlighted the complexities that can be present in mixed gender PE lessons, particularly in relation to girls' engagement levels due to embarrassment, fears of being judged by male peers (Derry, 2002), and the often-dominant nature of boys in these spaces (Stidder, 2000). Whilst this literature is dated, comments from PE teachers have highlighted how these issues remain in some PE contexts. Jade, another PE teacher, identified how 'less able' girls felt embarrassed and uncomfortable around 'more able' boys who were described as 'cocky' and 'arrogant'. This issue was then used as a common-sense argument for the division of students by gender. Yet, there are a wide range of practices and pedagogical approaches developed to facilitate more harmonious mixed gender lessons (Hills & Croston, 2012; Walseth et al., 2018) so it is possible that these teachers are not challenging these issues through want of an easier life.

As Jade's experience indicates, sporting ability seems to be tied to these moments of awkwardness, discomfort or embarrassment experienced by girls in PE. To avoid these feelings amongst girls (and to avoid dealing with wider behavioural issues), discourses regarding ability seem to be a deciding factor in the development of a particular timetable, one that follows a binary gender. In this sense, it appears as though these teachers are upholding a particular plane of consistency within the PE context, preventing a process

of de-territorialisation from occurring. As discussed in the literature review, a dominant sporting discourse suggests that physical strength and sporting ability are determined by assigned sex at birth, consequently informing how sport is shaped and understood, and privileging hegemonic masculinity (Travers, 2018b). This power apparatus permeates the PE context (Gard, 2006; Storr et al., 2022), ensuring that the assemblage remains stable and preventing new lines of flight from emerging. The PE teachers' inability to consider how it is this very power apparatus which shapes the behaviours and outcomes of students in their lessons (e.g., cocky boys, embarrassed girls) means that this apparatus continues to shape the behaviours of individuals in PE in similar ways; things remain the same. It does not resolve the deeply entrenched, systemic issues within PE regarding the assumed differences of the sexed body, but instead naturalises them (Schultz, 2022). Reverting to traditional PE timetables which divide students by gender *seems* like an easier option for these teachers in resolving the participation issues relating to girls. Yet, in reality it does not fix the issue but condones the poor behaviour of boys in PE and reinforces assumed sex differences, simultaneously avoiding the challenges that binary gender discourses present for gender diverse students. It appears that Rosie and Jade perceive that issues relating to cisgender girls and gender diverse individuals' PE participation are unconnected, whilst the above discussion highlights how they are interconnected, both impacted negatively by the power apparatus at play; the belief of a two-sex system which views boys as innately more physically able than girls.

On the contrary, Mikey shared how he felt about this issue in mixed gender PE lessons:

> "if it's a case of the boys dominating lessons then you're teaching it badly because there's a culture problem there, potentially … or if you're playing … too many games activities where boys are dominant and not passing it to perceived weaker people. You know weaker in terms of physically weak or not as good, not as able, then that's also a problem as well and your learning focus of the lesson needs to change"

Whereas Rosie and Jade used concerns over negative behaviour to allow the continuation of a traditional single-gender timetable, Mikey flipped this by suggesting that a mixed gender PE lesson could be facilitated through addressing negative behaviours and adapting your teaching practices, thereby including young people regardless of their gender identity or ability. Mikey has re-framed the PE context so it, and the timetable, are not shaped by beliefs regarding the physical abilities of particular bodies in relation to their assigned sex but revolve around finding a way for all young people to participate, therefore challenging these dominant beliefs and re-territorialising the assemblage. This approach seems essential if PE teachers are to encourage the PE assemblage to disrupt and shift away from configurations that are not conducive to inclusive and affirming becomings. Again, this is not solely in relation to gender diverse individuals but applies to all bodies who are less valued in the PE setting than the white, cisgender, heterosexual, able-bodied boy. Riley and Proctor (2022) argue for the need to "challenge historically situated, culturally located and socially mediated discourses" (p.268) that cause certain individuals to become erased in PE, and through Mikey's *doing* of alternative practices, those least engaged can begin to matter in PE.

8.3 TRANSGRESSING THE TIMETABLE

Accounts from the youth participants in this research, as well as several previously discussed studies (Berg & Kokkonen, 2022; Ferguson & Russell, 2021; Hargie et al., 2017; Neary & McBride, 2021; Storr et al., 2022), highlight the range of negative impacts that gender segregated PE lessons can have on gender diverse youth. It seemed that all PE teachers had some awareness of this too, as they allowed gender diverse students to move to groups that they felt more comfortable in (e.g., a trans girl being allowed to join the girls PE class). However, as discussed, this only benefits those students who have 'come out', neglecting those who may not feel able to disclose their gender identity to a teacher. Therefore, the perceived rigidity of timetables does appear to have flexibility, but at the teacher's discretion. This finding also reflects insights within Neary and McBride's

(2021) work around trans and non-binary inclusion in the Irish PE context which identified the "significant inclusivity labour" (p.10) that gender diverse youth engaged in to be included and recognised in PE. Whilst participants in their study were grateful for supportive PE teachers that allowed them access to gendered spaces that they aligned with, ultimately their inclusion still relied on their decision to publicly 'come out'. Additionally, this flexibility in the timetable only enables those who identify within a binary gender to access their preferred space. Non-binary or gender non-conforming students following PE timetables shaped by binary gender continue to be forced into spaces that they do not align with.

One PE teacher, Freya, indicated her concern over this, and the way in which the timetable intensified the issue of youth facing potential difficulties over their groupings:

> "[W]e have a mixed gender for one set and then we have like a boys and a girls set. To be honest, that's more because of the timetabling. I would be happier with three mixed gender because then you don't have any kind of … issues with gender and .. students feeling out of place and … not sure where … to kind of go."

However, she goes onto explain that the mixed gender set is one which "students can kind of opt into" if they are not comfortable in another group. This approach appears to provide a happy-medium in the sense that there are options for students to move to groups that are not organised by a gender binary, a decision which might be particularly desirable to those who identify as non-binary or gender non-conforming. Yet, it still relies on the student *asking* to switch groups and therefore, inclusivity labour and an emphasis on gender identity disclosure is still occurring. As was evident from Morgan's story in Chapter 5, this process of disclosure can be difficult for a gender diverse young person, and in their case, did not result in the meaningful PE experience that they had hoped for. Phipps and Blackhall (2023) discuss how, whilst this individualised approach enables inclusive practices to emerge, it "fails to disrupt structural inequalities which contribute to the erasure of trans identities in the first instance" (p.1107). This individualised approach to inclusion allows the PE assemblage to continue being shaped by binary gender

discourses, with gender diverse students forced to 'fit' into existing gendered structures (Omercajic and Martino, 2020).

8.4 STUDENT-CENTRED TIMETABLES

Given that PE is largely facilitated in mixed gender classes at both primary school level and at GCSE and A Level (Wilkinson and Penney, 2023), it is somewhat strange that decisions are made to divide students by gender upon reaching secondary school. This thesis has explored some of the possible reasons behind these decision-making processes and the way in which power apparatuses from other assemblages (e.g., male athletic superiority beliefs in elite contexts) may trickle in and affect the materialisation of a gendered timetable. However, other PE teachers in this research drew on a different discourse when considering their PE timetable, one that favoured a student-centred approach.

At Lily's school, students are timetabled differently dependent on the year group. For year 7 and 8, students are organised in PE by "their form groups which … are mixed gender anyway", whilst year 9 to 11 "get to choose a pathway that they want to be on". Other teachers highlighted similar structures within the timetable, with students in lower year groups arranged into mixed gender groups, and older year groups given options as to which group they joined. These options differed in terms of the make-up of students:

> "At the start of year 9 and year 10 we offer them a choice to go single gender or mixed gender. 'All genders' is the term that we've started to use because … if there's someone who's non-binary then that just helps with that." (Mikey)

> "So it's all mixed apart from when they get to year 9 they get … the option to pick a group so they get more choice in terms of what they can do. And they pick it based on … their values for sport" (Otis)

This student-centred approach provided students with a range of options on the types of activities they wanted to engage in based on their own sporting values and interests. For example, Lily explains; "[s]o we have 4 pathways … competitive, recreational, fitness and aesthetic route, and then the kids choose which … pathway they want to be on". Mikey aligned this form of student organisation with a Sport England (2015) report which identified a range of youth personalities within the sporting context. These distinct personalities could be catered for through adaptations to the PE provision being offered, for example:

> "if you want to be competitive and … really focus on sports performance and improving that then … you can choose this path ... If you want to focus more on recreational connection with your peers and positive relation with physical activity, then you can go down the other routes" (Mikey)

> "PE1 is … if you're taking GCSE … PE2 is if you love competition … PE3 is non-competitive. And PE4 is less traditional sports … like yoga … trampolining" (Otis)

In facilitating this, these teachers highlighted how typical barriers that gender diverse youth faced in PE were mitigated:

> "… there's now not that kind of stigma attached to it, where someone who's thinking about identifying as the opposite gender is now in a girl's group … we've kind of negated that problem because it's not girls PE and boys PE. It's just that you're on this pathway and it doesn't matter what gender you are, you're taking part with the other people who've chosen that option." (Lily)

Recently, Wilkinson and Penney (2023) identified similar practices amongst PE teachers in a large-scale survey in the UK, finding that these teachers chose such an approach so that trans and non-binary students were no longer being allocated to single-gender groups that assumed their gender, but instead were provided with a range of choices. Whilst this practice was relatively uncommon amongst their sample (22 of 818 participants), it still indicates the progress and attitudinal shifts occurring within the PE

setting, with teachers beginning to make adaptations that are not simply individualised and reactive, but proactive and with the aim of disrupting larger cisnormative structures in PE.

Through facilitating a timetable design that is student-centred and informed by their own interests and values, students gain control of their PE experiences, are no longer grouped in ways which assume their gender, and the responsibility for gender diverse youth to disclose their gender identity to be included is removed[4] (Sykes, 2011). The PE teachers who developed student-centred PE timetables saw significant increases in PE engagement, not just with their gender diverse students, but across the board. This supports the notion that the "architecture of gender which excludes and 'others' trans and gender diverse young people in schools is the very same frame that restricts the interests, abilities and pathways of all young people" (Neary & McBride, 2021, p.11). By disrupting this framework of gender and enabling students to have agency in their PE participation, all students benefit. Furthermore, studies have highlighted how providing students with autonomy can also benefit the wellbeing and motivations of PE teachers (Cheon et al., 2014), so this approach could be a significant benefit to teachers' lives too.

Through this framing of the timetable as a lively and dynamic *thing* with multiple capabilities, we can see how a specific entanglement of things can shape the timetable in rather disparate ways for gender diverse students. Barad (2007) states that "individuals do not pre-exist their interactions; rather, individuals emerge through and as part of their entangled intra- relating" (p.xi), and so students will emerge in the world differently, depending on their intra-actions with a timetable. In the earlier examples whereby gender diverse students follow a single-gender timetable, their agency to become emerges through their intra-action with the phenomenon of a timetable, which is shaped and re-shaped by teachers, school facilities, discourses regarding sex and ability, and student behaviours. This entanglement results in gender diverse students emerging in ways which

---

[4] The latter point feels particularly key in the current climate, given that the Department for Education's recent guidance regarding gender diverse students in schools could result in a culture of 'outing' students to their parents without their consent.

are not inclusive or affirming, unable to act in particular ways and *become* a student who can engage joyfully in PE. On the contrary, in the latter examples, the phenomenon of the timetable is shaped by teachers, students' values, and discourses around gender diversity and inclusion. Therefore, gender diverse individuals can emerge through these intra-actions with more positive possibilities in the PE assemblage. The timetable could therefore be seen as a boundary-making process, able to be disrupted and re-configured to encourage new ways of being and doing in the PE space.

8.5 THE FLUIDITY OF STUDENT AGENCY

This chapter has so far explored how the phenomenon of a timetable emerges through entanglements with a range of assemblages, as well as the sense of agency that teachers perceive themselves and others to have within it. This next section unpacks how gender diverse young people come to matter and be understood in the PE space through their entanglements with the timetable and other gendering practices.

From the young peoples' perspectives, flexibility, choice, and autonomy within the PE timetable were seen as crucial aspects towards their engagement and enjoyment in PE lessons, as well as feelings of validation regarding their gender identity. Whilst so many other aspects of school life are shaped by cisnormative systems and beliefs which determine how gender diverse youth can engage with schooling (Bower-Brown et al., 2023; McBride & Neary, 2021), this research found that those that had agency in the way in which they participated in PE experienced more joy in these spaces. This is understandable, given that student autonomy in PE is considered a central facilitator of motivation in PE (Ntoumanis, 2001; Perlman & Webster, 2011) giving rise to more positive relations to physical activity and sport. These research findings also highlighted the ways in which some young people were blocked from such becomings. It did, however become apparent that whilst there were instances of both trajectories, agency for these young people was fluid, shifting across time and space.

Young people involved in this research had a range of opinions regarding the way in which they hoped to materialise within the timetable, and this was not clearly demarcated by their sense of gender identity. Whilst some who identified as non-binary welcomed spaces where the emphasis was on diversity and gender labels were not present, some trans individuals also welcomed mixed gender spaces for this reason, whilst other trans and non-binary youth preferred single-gender spaces, if they were afforded the opportunity to access the space that they aligned with. For example, Stevie mentioned that they would "Probably [prefer] the mixed class because for myself, I … would like to be with different people", whilst Dylan said, "I'm fine like being put in a team that's maybe mostly boys but not strictly being told this is who I am".

Dylan's PE timetable was one which grouped their whole year group together, unlike other configurations which were shaped by a gender binary. It is likely that this is because Dylan was in their final year of primary school, where mixed gender PE lessons are typical. Based upon earlier discussions regarding the benefits of a mixed gender timetable for non-binary students, one might assume that this would make Dylan's PE experiences more positive as concerns over which group they should be in are diminished. And yet, Dylan's experience of being in limbo shone through in their artwork in Figure 5 and our conversation, illuminating other spaces and practices

Figure 5: Dylan's drawing

which enforced binary constructions of gender. Dylan spoke frequently about this idea of being categorized within a gender binary, and their desire to exist outside of this

framework. Their artwork here encapsulates this feeling of being in the middle of two genders, as well as on display with a spotlight shining down on them. Dylan told me that this drawing illustrated the two changing rooms, girls and boys, with the figure at the bottom-right being the "PE instructor … saying 'oh you need to go in that one'" but "they don't feel like they should be going in that one there".

Other examples Dylan gave centred around picking teams, with team captains picking students via a 'boy-girl-boy-girl' system, as well as choosing a boy and girl to be 'star of the lesson'. Whilst Dylan could be considered to have more agency than others in the sense of not being constrained to a single-gender PE group, it is evident that there are material (built environment) and discursive (gender norms around team-picking and achievements) elements which block a sense of becoming beyond the binary. If meanings are materially enacted through practice (Introna, 2013), then the doing of these practices in Dylan's PE assemblage continue to inform what kind of bodies can exist in this space - those who fit the boundaries of male and female. Whilst these elements can pose issues for binary trans youth too, they are somewhat intensified for non-binary or gender non-conforming individuals given that they do not identify within the plane of consistency that is gender (Fournier, 2014).

Ali and Stevie, two particularly sporty participants, took part in the girl's PE lessons and highlighted their mixed relationship with PE. For Stevie, this was due to being "in the wrong group of people", and Ali explained how they were "in the wrong place because there wasn't really a place for me being non-binary, it was either you're in the girls group or the boys group". This notion of being 'wrong' seemed particularly significant in relation to those with non-binary embodiments, again indicating how bodies were not considered to make sense within the PE assemblage unless they neatly fit these gendered expectations.

One issue for Stevie centred around their concerns of peers seeing him in the girls group; "[Being in the girls PE] doesn't make me feel great because other groups can see me going with my group". Thomas' experience of PE reflected Stevie's in this sense, and they

197

expanded on this concern; "[a]re they gonna realise that I'm not actually a girl because some of them just didn't know me before I was there as a boy … so it's always kind of worrying as you walk past".

Both Stevie and Thomas identify as non-binary and with he/they pronouns, preferring more masculine presentations and favouring the boys PE lessons. Their presence in the girls PE lessons invoked fears of having their gender identity invalidated by peers that they felt they belonged with (the boys), due to assumptions that they must be the same gender as others in their group. Through the labelling and organising of bodies as gendered, these bodies *become* gendered and can only be read as such. Whilst previous studies have highlighted the internal discomfort, misalignment or dysphoria felt due to being in the wrong group, uniform or changing space (Ferguson & Russell, 2021; Hargie et al., 2017; Williamson & Sandford, 2018), this finding extends on these insights in that it highlights how this discomfort can also come from fears of being misread by peers, in particular, peers who the individual aligns their gender identity with.

Earlier reflections in Chapter 5 highlighted how both Stevie and Thomas experienced microaggressions from their peers in PE due to being 'different', so in bringing these insights together, it is possible to see the complex impact this gendered practice has on their PE experiences. Not only are they navigating a setting where they are fearful of being misread and lacking a sense of belonging, but this fear is actualised through the behaviours of their peers who draw attention to their difference, enacting a sense of abnormality and social exclusion.

A comment by Freya, a PE teacher, mirrored some of the above concerns:

> "If you're put into a girl's class and yes, OK, that might be your assigned gender [at birth], but it's not actually your gender, people are going to automatically assume that. So I think it makes things more challenging as well for the students"

The power of the timetable, in enforcing the movement of bodies in and across particular spaces, is illustrated here. These young people are entangled in this moment due to the

particular configuration of their timetables which dictates their movements alongside female-identifying students, consequently subjecting them to additional difficulties and fears over being misread and the possibility of microaggressions. The importance of passing and a sense of belonging is well-documented as integral to some[5] gender diverse individuals' sense of self and identity formation (Nicolazzo, 2016), particularly within physical activity contexts (Barras, 2022), so this physical divide of bodies into spaces based on gendered assumptions can have harmful impacts on how young people see themselves and imagine their futures. Furthermore, the experience of being misgendered has been linked to increased psychological distress (McLemore, 2018). Of course, as discussed above, many things influence and shape the configuration of a timetable, so this is not to say that this *thing* alone actualised such an experience, and other boundary-making practices within the PE assemblage will also be contributing to their affect. However, by drawing attention to the agentic capacity of the timetable in affecting students' becomings, it is possible to see what gets excluded from becoming. As Rennolds (2022) states; "the present 'doing' affects what comes next and if we fail to pay attention to the now, different futures can be included or excluded" (p.33). Gender diverse young people in the above examples are unable to authentically become their desired sense of gender due to entanglements with timetabling practices which do not enable this embodiment to emerge. But through re-configuring the timetable in such a way that gives young people more agency to choose the spaces they want to be in, gender diverse youth could experience more expansive and joyful becomings that bring about a sense of authenticity and validation in the PE context.

Interestingly, Jordan, a transgender boy, provided quite a contrasting perspective regarding his position within the gendered PE timetable. When he began to transition, his school provided him with the option to join the boy's PE lessons. He chose to remain in the girl's class, sharing the following explanation:

---

[5] It is important to note that, whilst passing is desirable to *some* trans individuals, it is a contested term within the community as it implies that there is something clandestine or shameful about being trans. Other trans people wish to identify outwardly as trans (Barras, 2022; Nicolazzo, 2016)

"I'm OK with it because most of my friends are girls … and they're more supportive of it [being transgender] whereas the boys are a bit, some of them try and be cocky and everything about it so, yeah. It's nice to feel supported by the girls"

Jordan appeared to thrive in PE lessons, speaking often of his joy in these spaces and of his desires to become a sports leader at school. It appears the presence of a supportive environment in the girl's class, surrounded by friends who validated his identity, was conducive to these positive experiences. Whilst others felt a lack of belonging through being in the 'wrong' group, Jordan's description of the boys as 'cocky' could suggest that these behaviours, associated with hegemonic masculinity (Martino, 2012), are not those which he aligns with. Could it be that Jordan felt concerned over the possibility of the other boys' cocky behaviours being directed at him? Certainly, other participants have divulged experiences of such behaviours from male peers in their PE setting. And yet, Jordan's presence as a trans boy in a girls PE lesson and the joyful experiences he has had here shows the potential for re-shaping the boundaries that inform the organisation of bodies in PE. If bodies in girls PE lessons are no longer expected to conform to narrow ideas of femininity, with a broader range of gender expressions accepted (such as Jordan's), then this could be transformative for all young people. Through opening pathways for young people to determine the entanglements through which they emerge in PE, these young people gain agency to determine how they will be read and made sense of, as opposed to having labels imposed on them that do not always 'fit'.

Jordan also shared how more choice within the timetable was necessary in relation to the PE curriculum and available activities for young people:

"I think if we was all given a selection of sports we wanted to do …I think they should do that. Instead of just allocating a sport to each gender."

"saying that like football is a boy's sport and then netball is a girl's sport, it, it creates a barrier where the boys think this is what I've gotta do and the girls think this is what they've got to do and everything. So, I like how the teachers are allowing us

to choose sports that we want to do, rather than saying that we have to do certain sports. … I think that is good for everyone."

This structuring of PE lessons reflects the way in which several of the PE teachers shaped their own PE provision, with a focus on student choice to decide which spaces, bodies, and objects they desired to be entangled with. Objects like rugby balls and netballs emerge in the sporting world with gendered connotations, thereby imposing a certain understanding of gender onto those who are entangled with them (e.g., 'rugby is a boy's sport'). But if "objects make us, as part of the very same process by which we make them" (Miller, 2010, p.60), then what Jordan and his teachers seem to propose is a re-thinking of these objects outside of this dominant discourse of gender. If the boundaries which dictate that certain sports (and their associated objects) are masculine or feminine are disrupted, then those who participate in them are no longer inevitably entangled with said discourse. In this sense, this approach would disrupt existing gender norms and expectations within the PE assemblage that determine what behaviours, activities and associated equipment are appropriate for students, making sport and physical activity accessible and enjoyable to all, regardless of gender.

8.6 SAFETY DISCOURSES AND THEIR ENTANGLEMENT WITH SPACE

Whilst some of the insights above highlight the ways in which some PE teachers aimed to create environments that gave gender diverse youth freedom to engage in PE in meaningful and affirming ways, a range of contradictions also emerged regarding their knowledges and practices. These contradictions centred around concerns regarding the protection and safety of students and appeared to be at odds with their generally progressive attitudes and desires to create empowering PE environments.

Leahy and Harrison (2004) propose the notion of an at-risk self in the PE context, illuminating a dominant discourse whereby students are taught to consider themselves as inherently at risk (of injury, disease, addiction, etc.) and consequently in need of skills and

knowledge to reduce said risks. This is reflected in discourse on the purpose and aims of PE, where the focus is around encouraging young people to "lead healthy, active lives" (Department for Education, 2013, p.1). In this sense, all young people are framed as 'at risk' in the PE assemblage, in need of knowledge and skills to support a healthy life. And yet, risk is imposed on young people in additional ways in PE, and the timetable in its numerous configurations informs these ideas around risk and safety by creating certain parameters around where students can be, and with who. Particular groupings of bodies in spaces inform different perceptions of risk, and this section unpacks these ideas around student safety, supervision and risk in the PE setting. These will be explored in relation to the entanglements of space and safety discourse that stood out across our conversations - in the changing room and on the field.

Within the changing room space, one PE teacher shared their concerns around managing gender diverse students and the difficulties that their presence seemed to impose:

> "That these students identify different to to a specific gender. So therefore they have to change somewhere else. Well, that's unsafe and … our role is to keep students safe within our environment and … under our care." (Liam)

> "I've probably got … five students per cohort that would identify as … not a boy or not a girl and therefore can't change or won't change within those environments, which creates quite a dangerous situation in my opinion. You know I'm responsible for this group of young people in terms of …keeping them safe, supervising them … whilst they're in the changing rooms, which is technically my classroom. … I'm having to allow students out of my direct supervision to get changed for their lesson, which … creates an issue for me as a teacher that I don't know where they are and I can't supervise them as well as if they all identified as a specific gender" (Liam)

Liam's comments demonstrate a paternalistic framing of the perceived responsibility for surveillance or supervision of students. Whilst teachers have a duty of care for their

students and a responsibility for their safety within the school setting (National Education Union, 2023), it is interesting to unpack the breadth of interpretation in relation to this practice. Unlike the comments above, other PE teachers encouraged their gender diverse students to change in spaces that were comfortable for them, understanding that this meant they could not always keep an eye on their students, but trusting that through allowing these adaptations, these students would be more willing to turn up and engage in PE. This willingness is also illustrated in comments from young people involved in this project, who indicated feeling more likely to engage in PE due to flexibility in changing spaces. Likewise, in Berg and Kokkonen's (2022) research, they found that many PE teachers provided similar alternatives for changing their clothes, with one stating that it was the 'little things' that would make everyday life easier for an LGBTQ+ student. Evidently, there are other interpretations of a teacher's duty of care that do not see an unsupervised adolescent getting changed comfortably as a danger, but as a positive step towards their comfort and inclusion in PE.

Nevertheless, this notion of constant supervision of students is embedded within wider cultures of control and surveillance, for example, in the dominant authoritarian responses to student behaviour and discipline (Johnson & Sullivan, 2016), and in surveillance of students' online activity (Hope, 2018). This also emerges through the actual architecture of schools (Piro, 2008). In Foucault's (1991) work on prison architecture, he sees the built environment as a particular disciplinary power; "enclosed, segmented space, observed at every point, in which individuals are inserted in a fixed place, in which the slightest movements are supervised" (p.197). School buildings often mirror these characteristics, giving power to those (such as teachers) who can use this architecture to ensure their control of students. This is demonstrated in Liam's comments in relation to the need to supervise all physical spaces that young people are in. Whilst it is Liam's concern around the students' safety that appears to underpin his frustration, there is also quite a clear indication that it is the gender diverse students that are an 'issue' to him imposing particular practices on the premise of avoiding risk. These young people are the killjoys, exposing problems with the teacher's preferred practices in search of their own comfort

and joy. This framing of gender diverse students as the problem in PE spaces is reflective of other research, though in these scenarios it was their presence in gendered spaces which was considered a threat to the safety of the wider school community, resulting in 'protective' practices of risk assessment being enforced upon gender diverse youth (Ferfolja & Ullman, 2021; Phipps & Blackhall, 2023). In both cases, implicit discourses of control are entangled with the changing room space and gender diverse bodies, causing them to materialise in the PE assemblage as risky bodies, in a way that cisgender bodies are not.

But is it a great risk to allow an individual to change in a separate changing room, away from direct supervision? In line with the Equality Act, schools are expected to make all manner of accommodations for students with different needs (for example, in relation to religion or disability), giving leniency from certain rules and access to different spaces and resources - because schools, and PE more specifically, are not typically set up to cater for a wide range of needs. What appears to be lacking within this scenario is a level of trust and respect between teacher and student. This reads very differently to the student-teacher relationship outlined in Fuentes-Miguel et al. (2023) work, where mutual respect, trust and communication between a PE teacher and a trans student led to the student's empowerment in PE and a celebration of gender diversity within the school environment. Whilst it is unrealistic to assume that all PE teachers could develop such close relationships with their students, perhaps a better understanding of gender diverse students' lived experience may have helped, in Liam's case, to develop a level of trust and respect that shifts the perceived 'problem' away from these students themselves.

Turning now to the playing field, teachers shared a range of views regarding perceptions of risk and student safety that encompassed or informed certain PE activities, and there were a range of uncertainties regarding how to address matters of safety with gender diverse students. For some, these perceptions of risk were presented as facts informed by certain rules or policies that sport governing bodies proposed:

"we have gender specific sports so we will do, for example dance we will do girls dance, boys dance. Uhm, things like rugby legally we have to separate girls and boys, uh, because obviously they can't go together. Well, they can't tackle each other" (Jade)

"[regarding mixed lessons] the challenge was that with certain NGB's [national governing bodies] and certain sports, erm it becomes unsafe, particularly in the secondary school space. So if I'm teaching rugby yes, skills in isolation, fine, but as soon as you get to the point that you're playing contact erm you have, you have to have a divide." (Liam)

Rugby was considered a key sport in PE that required gender-segregated classes on the premise of safety. Universally, this sport is considered to have a high risk of injury compared to other sports (Roberts et al., 2013) and for this reason, it has historically been gender-segregated under the assumption of significant biological differences across male and female bodies and the associated physiological advantages that these differences 'naturally' bring about for boys and men (Travers, 2018b). The Rugby Football Union [RFU] (2018), the national governing body for rugby, prohibits the mixing of boys and girls in contact rugby from the age of 12 and upwards "due to physical and psychological development changes brought about by puberty" (p.188), and this rule profoundly influences PE policies, curriculums, and the consequent attitudes of those within the PE space. The RFU policy emerges in PE as taken-for-granted and unchallengeable, with guidelines emerging as a legality, thereby embedding itself in the PE assemblage as the only viable option. This presents as a self-fulfilling prophecy; if sports policies are informed by a discourse of biological essentialism, then the organisation of sporting activities can only take place within the boundaries of this discourse, consequently shaping how bodies are organised and able to emerge. Bodies are read immediately as biologically male or female, informing decisions over their fragility, level of protection required and consequent access to certain spaces and forms of activity (e.g., contact or non-contact), thereby narrowing the possibilities for inclusive and engaging sports participation.

With this essentialist discourse informing decisions around safety on the field, PE teachers felt uncertain about how these policies should be applied to gender diverse students in rugby lessons. This was summarised by Callum below:

> "If we're in year 10 or 11 and … a student, born as a female and identified as a male is in a year 11 class doing rugby, you know, is that, should that be permitted? You know in terms of safety?"

In this sense, transgender students are being read in relation to their assigned sex at birth, as opposed to their gender identity, and the associated decisions around their fragility and protection are then made without any consideration as to their *actual* body or its physical strengths and abilities. This aligns with previous research which illuminated how PE teachers inherently read transgender students as their birth assigned sex, dictating their ability to access certain PE activities perceived as 'risky' (Ferguson & Russell, 2021). In this entanglement of discourse, bodies and spaces, a student who is assigned female at birth is automatically considered to be at risk if they participate in a contact sport with cisgender boys. But reducing students to the 'M' or 'F' on their birth certificate ignores the multiplicity of other factors that feed into their physiological development, and many argue that biological sex alone should not be the central indicator for what is considered fair and safe in PE, and sport more widely (Bianchi, 2017; Coggon et al., 2008; Walker & Zychowicz, 2023). Given the recent (and widely criticised) decision by the RFU to ban transgender women from women's rugby on the premise of fairness and safety (Rugby Football Union, 2022), it is understandable that PE teachers may share Callum's concerns regarding what to do in these scenarios. As PE policies are largely built upon NGB and elite sport rules and policies, the RFU's transgender ban could encourage stricter rules regarding gender diverse students' inclusion in particular school sports. This, in turn, would result in the systematic exclusion of some gender diverse students within parts of the PE curriculum, going against many of the positive actions that some PE teachers are pursuing to encourage greater inclusion in PE.

Several teachers reflected upon the contradictory nature of these sporting policies informed by biological essentialism and the policies' inability to organise bodies accurately or safely:

> "I guess the issues … and the concerns that people have are along kind of safety sometimes, I think … that's an issue in sport as a whole. Uhm like contact sport for instance sometimes it can be quite worrying about a, … a male for instance, playing football with a female … but then I always say that we have concerns about, say, a really tiny year 10 playing football with a really large year 10, 'cause they're all at different kind of you know levels of maturity and things and we haven't really had any issues with that" (Freya)

> "You can name so many different activities that you do in PE … that don't make a blind bit of difference and yet the go to is 'oh you can't teach boys and girls 'cause it's not safe in rugby'. Erm but even if in my year 7s if I have an all boys class there will be a kid that's 5 foot eight and 13 stone and a kid that's 4 foot. And you, you just use basic understanding of Physiology to manage that carefully so that none of them get injured and … if it's a case of the boys dominating lessons then you're teaching it badly because there's a culture problem there" (Mikey)

These comments are promising in that they demonstrate how, in some PE settings, we are beginning to see a shift away from essentialist beliefs, towards an understanding of biological diversity - the apparatus used to measure students' bodies and abilities is changing. As Mikey and Freya stated, in a boy's rugby class there is still a risk of injury. The risk is not automatically removed by separating students by biological sex, and likewise, the risk is not automatically increased by having a mix of differently sexed students in one class. Therefore, the concerns that some PE teachers have regarding the inclusion of gender diverse students in contact sports are unfounded. It also highlights how risk is perceived differently across genders; boys are considered able to cope with anything, regardless of their shape and size, and girls too are considered safe to participate in *certain* sports without risk. Yet when a gender diverse body emerges in this

207

context, they are viewed as inherently risky, either to themselves or to others. I believe that many PE teachers are aware of the arbitrariness of this perception as they *see* the biological diversity in front of them every day across their student cohorts. What seems to restrict their openness to moving beyond essentialist understandings of gender, is the way in which elite sport and national governing bodies continue to develop and perpetuate specific ideas and policies regarding fairness and safety in sport with a particular rhetoric that not only assumes biological essentialism as a reality but assumes that competition is the desirable and favourable approach within all sport settings. Does PE, with its aim of getting young people active, healthy, and engaged in lifelong participation (Department for Education, 2013), really need to follow such restrictive policies that centre around competition? Ali, a gender diverse young person involved in this research, epitomises this point below:

> "PE is meant to be a way for children to have access to … physical exercise. It's not about the competition like that, and I don't see why it's taken so seriously. It's this big thing where it's like, no, we have to have women separate from men, just in case the men are faster than women and something ridiculous like that."

Furthermore, the belief held within PE to divide students by assumed biological sex for contact rugby on the premise of safety is illogical by other means. White et al. (2022) found that contact rugby was compulsory in 91% of English state secondary schools, but that PE teachers perceived it to have the "highest risk of harm of the activities they delivered" (p.1) within their PE curriculum. If teachers are concerned about student safety and welfare on the field, why do they include contact rugby in the PE curriculum at all? In line with this, Wilkinson and Penney (2023) highlight the need to question the appropriateness of certain activities within the PE curriculum, given how some provide such narrow possibilities for inclusion (Penney et al., 2018). I am reminded of the possible impact of such curriculums and policies on the PE experiences of those with non-binary or gender non-conforming identities. Under the guise of avoiding risk and protecting students from harm, these young people are once more erased from the assemblage,

unable to exist as they wish to do so, with teachers deciding what their bodies can do and be.

8.7 CONCLUSION

"[W]ould it be so radical to ... move beyond classifying and grouping by gender in PE in pedagogical and coaching practices?" (Neary & McBride, 2021, p.7)

In thinking about summarising this chapter, I found myself repeatedly coming back to the above statement. Really, what is so radical about looking at bodies and their abilities in ways that go beyond their assumed gender? As this chapter has illuminated, the timetable both informs, and is informed by, entanglements of risk, pragmatism, biological essentialism, bodies, spaces, and more. It determines where gender diverse bodies can go, how they can feel, whether they can be understood, how they can *materialise* in the PE assemblage. Certain entanglements are more conducive to experiences in PE that are affirming and validating to gender diverse youth, whilst others continue to maintain the dominant power apparatus of binary gender. Although this chapter views the timetable as a thing with agentic capacity, able to affect the lives of both gender diverse students and PE teachers, I acknowledge that this is, of course, a 'cut' that I have imposed which presents a particular way of viewing the world. I do not suggest that PE teachers can simply change a timetable overnight and solve the myriad of issues relating to gender diversity and inclusion in PE. However, I do propose that more attention be given to this *thing* in the future. To pay attention to the pathways that do not emerge and consider ways of unearthing hidden possibilities within the timetable to enable configurations of PE that are more inclusive. What if more PE teachers began to critically assess the different elements that feed into the development of a PE timetable? Or sought to become a killjoy by exposing the issues that the timetable may invoke, rather than waiting for a student to do so? For some, the perceived rigidity of the timetable provides an escape route for them to continue enacting the same power apparatus that came before, but if these teachers can challenge this perception of rigidity by discussing timetabling issues with others who

are involved in its development (e.g., the PE department, senior leadership or administrative staff), it may be possible to develop a more inclusive timetable which values all bodies and experiences.

9   FINDING JOY / BECOMING KILLJOY

This final chapter brings together two key threads which surfaced through a process of writing as inquiry: finding joy and becoming a killjoy. These somewhat paradoxical ideas stemmed from several realisations. Firstly, that gender diverse young people were able to find joy through movement despite the dominant apparatuses in PE which made their participation a struggle. Secondly, that whilst we are beginning to see greater awareness and celebration of gender diversity in PE, there is still resistance and denial across the profession, and a desire by some for things to remain the same. Change in PE, therefore, becomes a killjoy endeavour that not all feel prepared to take on. Before unpacking these two points, I begin by reflecting on my local context of Norwich, to illustrate the very real events within which this research emerges. Then, I discuss the practical, theoretical and methodological contributions of this thesis, and provide several reflections for the future.

9.1   A FINE CITY?

In the introduction to this thesis, I described the climate within which gender diverse young people emerge in the UK as tumultuous. As this thesis draws to a close, I reflect on some historical and recent local developments which illustrate this increasing tension. Norwich, the city where this research came to life, has a significant LGBTQ+ history and has long been considered a haven for the gender diverse community. Gay News covered Norwich's LGBTQ+ scene in 1977 (as shown in the newspaper cover in Figure 6), highlighting its largely accepting attitudes towards the community
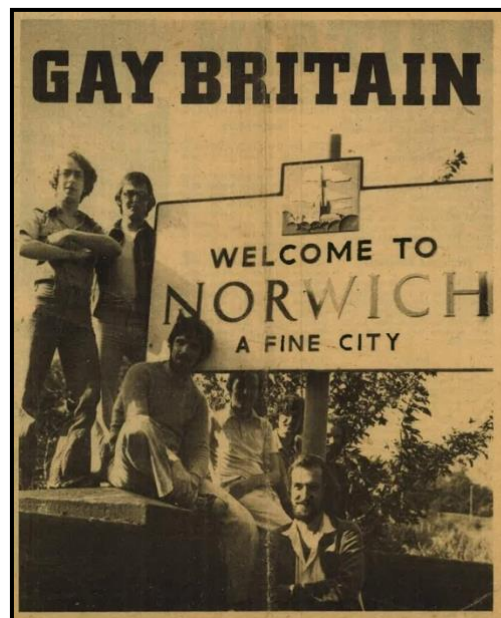

Figure 6: Gay News front cover

at a time when violence and discrimination was rife (Henderson, 2020). Historical archives

at the local library shine a light on the trans support groups that have been going since the 1980s. The University of East Anglia is thought to be the first UK institute to host a conference on transgender topics, with social worker Barbara Ross inaugurating the first event in 2001, bringing together leading experts from around the world (BBC, 2007; Johns, 2011). More recently, the latest Census has shown that Norwich has the 2nd largest population of trans people, following Brighton (Office for National Statistics, 2023a). The city has been home to Pride celebrations for many years, and I have seen firsthand how safe and content my trans and non-binary friends have felt within this city. I have always considered this city to be, as its renowned slogan states, 'a fine city'. But recently, events have occurred here which have ruptured this harmonious assemblage.

In May of 2024 at the University of East Anglia, a protest from a far-right group was organised following publicised complaints about an individual's use of the sports centre changing rooms who was assumed to be transgender (Hannant, 2024). Just weeks before this, the city's central library was subject to media scrutiny following its exhibition of a trans-led art show which depicted trans bodies and healthcare experiences (Storey, 2024a). Discussion over the appropriateness of the exhibition took place on the online public forum Mumsnet, with the leader of the Norfolk County Council personally apologising on the forum for the exhibition. Following this, senior leadership at the library ordered staff to remove a poster from the public space that identified the library as a trans-friendly location (Storey, 2024b). The local community response to both incidents was hugely supportive, with counter-protests organised, letters sent to senior leadership and local MPs, and demands made to reinstate the posters and educate senior leadership on creating inclusive public spaces. Whilst these events ended positively and inclusive actions have since been made, their emergence brought forth a range of emotions. In conversations with the local community during the counter-protests, there was shock and upset, a disbelief that these forms of discrimination would happen within a supportive community with such a vibrant LGBTQ+ history. And yet, many others felt that, given the amplification of gender-critical perspectives across political and mainstream media platforms, it was only a matter of time before these emerged within the city. Indeed,

several weeks later, in the lead up to the 2024 general election, the campaign material shown in Figure 7 came through the letterboxes of tens of thousands of local people.

Figure 7: Party of Women campaign material

Encouragingly, Linda Law received only 1% of the vote share, illustrating that, whilst the local gender-critical movement may seem loud in their flagrant and derogatory discourse in recent events, their following makes up a very small minority. Whilst it has felt, to me at least, that this damaging rhetoric has intensified in the last few months, in some ways this shift had already been happening locally. Norwich's crime statistics from 2022-23 demonstrate how trans hate crime had increased by 11% from the previous year (Norwich City Council, 2024). In 2022, Norfolk County Council had to postpone several drag queen story hour library events across Norfolk following the presence of protestors outside the building (Anderson, 2022). Movement towards social justice does not follow a linear path, but ebbs and flows as different assemblages form and re-form, plugging into one another. This thesis has illustrated some of this - the numerous shifts in attitudes, understandings, rights and protections for the gender diverse community. I have seen the impact of this

turbulent climate firsthand; some of my gender diverse friends no longer feel safe in public toilets, the trans and non-binary young people that I work with are now fearful of how their school might respond to the government's school guidance, and there is a fear that many in the teaching profession will conform to the government's proposed policies to silence discourses around gender diversity. More than ever, we need to find the little moments of joy and consider how we might amplify these further to enhance the lives of the gender diverse community.

9.2 FINDING JOY

This research did not initially set out in search of joy. On the contrary, it's original aim was to search for key issues within the PE context, and to provide solutions. Certainly, this thesis still does this in some ways, but in also exploring the joyful moments that have occurred, it contributes to the field through the production of knowledge which frames gender diverse experiences as expansive, hopeful, as having positive trajectories and future possibilities. So often, as I have discussed previously, gender diverse youth are positioned within a deficit model, framed by negative tropes and victim narratives which centre their vulnerability (Asakura et al., 2020; Horton, 2022; McBride & Neary, 2021). But in that moment when Ezra jumped up and danced around the room, a line of flight appeared which shifted the research assemblage towards new paths.

In her blog about white men in academia, Sara Ahmed (2014) says the following:

> "White men as a well-trodden path; the more we tread that way the more we go that way. To move forward you follow the traces left behind of those who came before. But in following these traces, in participating in their becoming brighter, becoming lighter, other traces fade out, becoming shadows, places unlit; eventually they disappear." (para. 34)

She proposes that if academics continue to primarily cite and platform white male academics' work, we continue down the path of sameness and lose sight of other ways of knowing. I find this notion apt in explaining much of what this thesis proposes too. If we continue to centre and platform cisgender ways of knowing in PE, then gender diversity fades out, and gender diverse youth disappear[6]. Whilst this may come across as a passiveness, of simply continuing as things were, the difference now is that schools and educators know much more about other ways of being that expand beyond cisgender embodiments, often seeing this diversity firsthand within their classrooms. In following the well-trodden path, schools and teachers may continue to provide joy to some in PE, but there is a clear awareness that this denies others from experiencing joy. Of course, many of the PE teachers in this research were acutely aware of this, of the need for change and transformation so that PE can begin to take a new path - one which allows for gender diversity to emerge, and therefore for those with gender diverse bodies to materialise authentically, thereby spreading joy to those least included. And yet there were also moments of resistance and denial, where teachers' actions were made *despite* what they knew. For example, in decisions to deny gender diverse youth from intra-acting with the spaces, activities, objects and bodies that would bring them authenticity and joy.

This research has also highlighted some of these contrasting instances in the youth participants' lives. Whilst often fleeting, there were times when these young people felt they were read, acknowledged or accepted for how they saw themselves to be, as opposed to having gendered or biological assumptions imposed on them. There were also instances where the opposite was true, and entanglements that the young people were a part of resulted in the erasure or invalidation of their gender identity, and with this, the diminishing of joy. For example, through organisational practices which located them with bodies that they did not wish to align with, or through clothing which drew attention to the body in ways which brought forth assumptions about their gender. In these

---

[6] Disappear in the sense of no longer acknowledging their existence within society. For example, the Conservative government's administration attempted to make trans people disappear through removing their rights in public spaces, healthcare, education, sport and more, to make it impossible to be trans in these spaces.

moments, these young people are unable to move forward and experience a joyful becoming, stunted by these entanglements which framed them within an essentialist apparatus and invoke feelings of discomfort, fear, frustration and anger.

Black feminist poet Toi Derricotte once wrote how 'joy is an act of resistance', and I find this statement epitomises the way in which the young people involved in this study seemed to respond to marginalisation in their own lives. These young people searched for and created joy for themselves, despite the difficulties they faced and the possibilities they feared would materialise. In creating their own joy, they are resisting and disrupting the rising narrative that positions gender diverse youth as unable to exist within the school setting or wider society. In this sense, these young people can be viewed as having agency over how they become in the world. Of course, this thesis has highlighted the way in which material entanglements impacted on these young people's sense of agency. For example, the configuration of the timetable fed into the way in which these young people could intra-act with bodies, objects, spaces and practices in PE, impacting on how they experienced joy. Some experienced happiness through their presence within a particular space, others sought joy through their friendships, whilst some turned to clothing or the digital world as a source of joy. This understanding of the material, non-human and more-than-human as also constitutive in the shaping of these young people's realities highlights the necessity to pay attention to these within the PE setting and open up more possibilities for joy. For example, how could the digital world be harnessed to engender joy in PE for those least engaged? How could flexibility in the PE uniform encourage youth to emerge in more joyful ways? How could more consideration be given to menstruation and sanitary products and the way in which they shape PE experiences? Crucially, it is important to consider that in paying attention to these entanglements, it is not just gender diverse students who could benefit.

9.3 BECOMING A KILLJOY

"If you expose a problem, you pose a problem; if you pose a problem, you become the problem" (Ahmed, 2023, p.18)

In her book 'The Feminist Killjoy Handbook', Sara Ahmed (2023) proposes that for some communities to have joy in their life, they must first become killjoys. The feminist killjoy is someone who is unwilling to go along with something, who reacts and speaks back to authority, who gets in the way of others' happiness. For example, by calling out racism, sexism, or transphobia; for asking for things to be different. Those on the receiving end of the killjoy are unlikely to enjoy it and may have preferred how things were before the problem was exposed. Yet, the feminist killjoy is someone who wants to expand joy to everyone, as opposed to only certain groups. In this research, there were a multitude of killjoy instances. Young people spoke about how their very presence in PE spaces caused questions, comments, difficulties or discomfort to others. For them to take up space and feel joy as their true self, they must kill others' joy by disrupting 'the way things are'. Problems that were always there, but previously unexposed, become problems that schools, teachers and peers must deal with. I am reminded of a comment by one teacher who saw the presence of gender diverse students as a significant disruption to his ability to supervise and 'protect' students in changing spaces, calling these students the problem. In this instance, these students were killjoys, denying their teacher the ease of carrying on as normal, through their own desire for comfort and joy. This issue of protection is unpacked further in section 9.5.

The PE teachers demonstrated how there were often good intentions to become a killjoy through speaking up and calling things out, questioning existing policies and practices, and engaging in learning and actions to enhance inclusion in the PE setting. Yet, we can see how some teachers were unable to do this in practice, and some shared stories of their own PE colleagues who, following conversations and training on gender diversity and inclusion, did not appear to have taken on board these inclusive practices. It appeared that, becoming a killjoy was considered an additional element that teachers must choose

217

to initiate themselves, as opposed to being considered an essential part of their critical reflections as a practitioner. Likewise, accounts from the young people indicated times where teachers avoided these killjoy moments by privileging cisgender student needs (Morgan's story in Chapter 5 stands out here, in particular). Did these teachers fear becoming a killjoy? Perhaps they felt that it could be left to others (those who are LGBTQ+?) to kill joy. But as Ahmed (2023) explains, to be a killjoy is to be world-making and joy spreading and is not in fact *intended* to kill joy. Rather, a killjoy is *willing* to cause disruption for the purposes of spreading joy to new constituencies.

To be a killjoy is to be empowered, to question the status quo, knowing that things will change for the better (Ahmed, 2023). How might we encourage teachers to see the worth in becoming a killjoy? To feel able to open new lines of flight which re-configure the PE assemblage towards something better? I propose that there are several key areas that could be reflected upon within the educational domain to encourage killjoy endeavours, and with that, the development of more inclusive PE and wider school environments for all students. These relate to curricula and policy development, reflections on the teacher's role, and the school community. Whilst these areas are deeply interconnected, I separate them here to highlight and discuss the practice-based contributions that this research offers, and each section ends with a series of prompts which could be reflected upon by those in the field of PE. Ahmed (2023), quoting Audre Lorde, reminds us to be "vigilant for the smallest opportunity to make a change" (Lorde, 2007, as cited in Ahmed, 2023, p.78), to do "what you can, when you can, where you can" (Ahmed, 2023, p.78). Whilst the reflections below may not all be possibilities for the PE profession to draw upon, I hope they may provide a starting point for thinking about the opportunities for change that may arise.

9.4 CURRICULA AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT

This research has highlighted how some PE teachers are hesitant to enact changes to their PE curriculums or policies in relation to gender diversity without 'official' guidance from the government or sport governing bodies. For example, in relation to changing room provision, the types of activities offered to students and the way in which students were timetabled. Teachers appeared to fear making decisions which departed from existing practices, preferring instead to have a directive from authorities. In this sense, they could be considered to absolve themselves from responsibility and action, from making killjoy decisions, by instead centring authoritative discourses as essential to the shaping of their PE provision. For example, the gender essentialist discourse across some sports NGBs proposes that for safety purposes, "obviously" (Jade) "you have to have a [gender] divide" (Liam) in certain sports. These discourses were largely viewed as commonsense and absolute, thus illustrating the power that these NGBs appear to have over some PE teachers' ability to make new paths in PE and develop truly compassionate and inclusive PE settings. In turn, these discourses shaped beliefs about bodies and their abilities in very particular ways, thereby informing PE curriculums and policies along binary gender lines. For example, through gender-segregated PE lessons, unequal activity opportunities, and gendered PE kits.

In particular, this thesis has illuminated how these curricula and policy developments impact on non-binary students in specific, and arguably more detrimental, ways – a unique contribution to the field which has insofar lacked insight into current non-binary embodiments in PE. Whilst trans students were often allowed to assimilate into the gendered class that they aligned with, these binary organisations caused non-binary students to feel at once both isolated and exposed – as if they do not exist or belong in that space, with that group of bodies. In this sense, it could be suggested that non-binary bodies are unable to materialise authentically in some PE spaces, thereby limiting their ability to connect with their bodies, with movement and with physical activity in a joyful and life-affirming way. Moreover, the entanglement of gender essentialism with PE policy and curricula development impacts on all young people, not simply those who are gender

diverse. If girls are told that they cannot participate in certain sports with boys due to safety concerns, they are being told that they are weaker, more at risk, fragile. How might this impact on how they engage in PE? Or how they view the capabilities of their bodies? Likewise, how might these essentialist discourses impact on the expectations that boys place on themselves to be strong and tough? How might students with physical disabilities respond to these gendered bodily expectations perpetuated in PE? What about those who are LGB-identified? What about students who cannot afford a new gendered PE kit? When we consider the diversity of student identities and the hugely intersectional nature of experiences, it feels rather arbitrary to enforce such narrow expectations on all students.

Yet, PE teachers in this research have reflected upon the bodily diversity of their students. There is a clear awareness from some that the physiological capacities of their students are wide ranging and not simply dictated by their assigned birth sex, thereby refuting the gender essentialist perspective. Likewise, research has highlighted how dualistic sex categories oversimplify the wide spectrum of bodies and their capabilities (as discussed in Chapter 2). So why is it that students and teachers are not taught about the biological diversity of bodies or the ambiguity of the sexed body? Would education on intersex and DSD bodies be so radical? An exploration of bodily diversity and the fluidity of gender, and a questioning of the oversimplified sex categories which dictate what bodies can achieve may encourage an understanding of bodies and their abilities as more expansive, as opposed to reducing the body's capabilities to the presence or absence of certain body parts. This in turn may allow the emergence of more inclusive curricula and policies which embrace gender diversity in PE. For example, through developing timetabling practices which consider students' own sporting interests and values, as opposed to focusing on their assumed abilities or interests based on their assigned sex. Or through challenging the gendering that occurs with particular sports (e.g., football for boys, netball for girls) and encouraging participation from all students through a gender-neutral curriculum. Or through removing uniform policies which uphold the dualistic sex-gender system. Encouragingly, this research has highlighted how some PE teachers are beginning to problematise these issues, but it is still far from the norm. If sex and gender are understood

to be broader, more diverse categories, then perhaps the rigidity of the gender binary in PE may soften, enabling the development of more inclusive and engaging experiences for all.

The overarching question for teachers here is this; how can you become more inclusive in your practice? The following questions have been developed in the hope that they may prompt teachers to engage in deeper, more critical reflection on their curricula and policy development in inclusive ways that will engender joy for many:

- What is your understanding of the physical abilities of students' bodies? Where has this come from? Why do you believe this? Can you think of any experiences which contradict this belief? How is it reflected in your teaching practice, curriculum, and policies? How do your existing curriculum, policies and organisational practices impact on all students' abilities to feel comfortable and engage in PE? What steps could you make to adapt these? For example, in relation to uniform policies, timetabling practices, changing room provision, PE curriculum provision
- What is your rationale for including PE activities where sport NGBs have gender-based policies (such as separate boy's and girl's activities)? Is there something else you could offer instead which supports equal engagement from all students?
- How much control do you perceive yourself to have over the development of your PE curriculum and policies? Are there areas in which you feel you have greater control? What other stakeholders could you work with to make inclusive adaptations to the PE curriculum and policies?

9.5 THE TEACHER'S ROLE

Building upon points made earlier in this chapter, a key insight from this research was on the sense of agency that PE teachers perceived themselves to have in relation to enacting inclusive changes for gender diverse students. It seemed as though some teachers' fears over a perceived lack of expertise in this area disempowered them from making decisions

that they may then have to robustly defend, an understandable concern given the climate of culture wars, and earlier reactions from parents and the media in relation to other issues relating to LGBTQ+ lives (for example, the parent protests at Birmingham schools about the LGBTQ+-inclusive curriculum). And yet, each school assemblage is different, and there will not be a one-size-fits-all approach to supporting these young people. Whilst this thesis, in line with others (Neary & McBride, 2021; Omercajic & Martino 2020; Phipps & Blackall 2023), has argued that individualised approaches to inclusion do not allow for systemic changes in relation to gender diversity (as only students who are 'out' benefit), it has drawn attention to the need for teachers to look critically at their own contexts and develop tailored changes that work for that setting. Teachers must be empowered to embrace the killjoy, to question, disrupt and critique not only their own local contexts, but broader educational policies and discourses, and to feel confident in their professional judgement to do what is best for their students' wellbeing and engagement.

This leads to wider reflections about what teachers perceive their role to be in PE. This research has highlighted an interesting tension regarding issues of risk, protection and safeguarding in various PE spaces. For some, the 'protection' of students appears higher up on a hierarchy over compassion, empathy or inclusion. But what does protection mean to PE teachers? And who is protected? Over the last decade, the responsibility of child protection and safeguarding has been increasingly placed on teachers (Tarr et al., 2013; Treacy & Nohilly, 2020), and has seen significant traction within wider sporting contexts (Brackenridge & Rhind, 2014; Owusu-Sekyere et al., 2022). Understandably, this has impacted on PE teachers' roles and responsibilities in the school setting. And yet, this research has highlighted how the issue of protection seems to materialise differently dependent on the student's gender identity. There were two key issues that emerged here; concerns over the ability to supervise students in changing spaces when they challenge the existing gendered changing room provision, and concerns over the possibility of risk to other (cisgender) students when gender diverse students (particularly those assigned male at birth) participate in certain PE activities.

In relation to the first issue, the NSPCC (2024a) highlights that "[i]t should not be necessary for adults to remain in the changing room in order to maintain good behaviour" (p.4) and that transgender and non-binary students should be "supported to use the toilets and changing rooms that they feel comfortable with" (NSPCC, 2024b, para. 4). These statements position the young person as having the capacity and maturity to change without direct supervision, and platform notions of trust and respect. PE teachers should reflect upon whether their perceptions of their students align with these qualities, or whether their views are of a more paternalistic nature. Afterall, students are not directly supervised when going to the toilet, or when walking from class to class, so why does this become an issue when they wish to use a different space to get changed? Is it genuinely a concern over a young person's safety? Or does this relate to a more complex authoritarian value within the individual? Or a form of subconscious prejudice? Certainly, this highlights the need for PE teachers to reflect more widely on their own beliefs and values, and how these may inform their approaches to inclusion.

The second issue interweaves with earlier discussions about the way in which students' bodies have gender imposed on them through essentialist discourses, informing the development of PE policies and curriculums and consequently dictating which bodies are considered appropriate for particular activities. Whilst authoritative bodies like sport NGBs and governmental guidance may suggest that, for safety purposes some sports are required to be sex-segregated, there is a need for PE teachers to question how this safety discourse frames safety in relation to an individual's assigned sex, as opposed to their actual physicality. Gender diverse individuals are not an inherent risk to themselves or others by participating in certain activities, and it would be beneficial for PE teachers to reflect upon where these assumptions stem from and the impact this has on all students' abilities to positively engage in PE. Adapting PE activities to suit the differing needs of students was considered common practice by some of the PE teachers involved in this research, so if there is genuine cause for concern, then rather than prohibiting an individual from participating due to an increased risk of harm, why not adapt the activity

to allow their inclusion? This enables the teacher to be both compassionate and inclusive whilst still protecting students from possible harm – the hierarchy becomes flattened.

The above discussion links to a wider issue regarding the competing purposes of PE, and the qualities that PE teachers wish to reinforce in their lessons. PE has been scrutinised for many years due to its overly masculinised form (Kirk, 2002), privileging hegemonic notions of masculinity (Gard, 2006) such as stoicism, competitiveness and toughness (Storr et al., 2022). High intensity, performance-based and competitive activities (such as contact rugby) which align with these ideals result in disengagement from numerous students (Aggerholm et al., 2018; Bernstein et al., 2011; Flintoff, 2008), yet research suggests that PE teachers are resistant to recommendations which suggest alternative activities (Griggs & Fleet, 2021; Herold, 2020). PE teachers could reflect upon the appropriateness of platforming these ideals in PE, whose participation it allows and denies, and the way in which it shapes students' views about future sport and physical activity involvement. This requires schools to provide PE teachers with the space, time and resources to reflect on who they are as a teacher, on the values they wish to platform in their classrooms and on how they want their students to feel both during their lessons and beyond the boundaries of the school.

It also requires a wider critique of PE ITT programmes and how, or whether, they appropriately prepare PE teachers to respond to the ever-changing diversity of students they will be teaching. Certainly, comments in this research from one more recently qualified PE teacher, Otis, indicated that reflections on teacher identity and values was absent in their training programme. Whilst there is a dearth of research exploring how PE ITT programmes nurture and shape the development of PE teacher identities and values (Keating et al., 2017), Puchegger and Bruce (2021) have suggested "that there is a value in PETE [PE teacher education] programs finding ways to help students embrace the necessity of allowing flux and unpredictability within teaching and learning moments" (p.186). In this sense, there is an understanding of the PE context as dynamic and evolving, and I argue that pre- and in-service PE teachers should be supported to learn

how to respond with compassion and understanding. In addition, an open dialogue (e.g., through CPD training, ITT engagement or student voice) on the lived experiences of gender diverse young people, and of the benefit to all students in embracing a more gender-expansive approach, could support PE teachers' abilities to have greater empathy, to respond compassionately to their gender diverse students' needs, and to think more broadly about how their PE provision might hinder or embrace gender diversity.

The above suggestions require schools, teachers and teacher educators to pursue the task set out by Wolfe (2021) to "feel, listen, take notice and take account" (p.24). Below are some prompts for reflection which could support the profession in these endeavours:

- What do you believe your role to be as a PE teacher? What values do you wish to platform through your teaching? How do these values impact on the way in which you teach PE, and on the PE experiences of your students? How might these values impact on students differently?
- What do your gender diverse students show or tell you about their experiences of PE? How might you garner a better understanding of these experiences?

9.6 THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Much of the discussion so far has revolved around the values, decisions and possibilities of PE teachers to embrace gender diversity, but they are just one part of the PE assemblage, and as suggested in section 7.5, movement towards inclusion cannot simply be an individual matter, but one of collective responsibility. Whilst PE teachers appeared to face the burden of responsibility in making complex decisions about the inclusion of gender diverse students, this research has highlighted the importance of working with other staff, with parents, and with students to develop a more inclusive school culture which both understands and embraces gender diversity. Whilst PE teachers may oversee decisions which could be deemed controversial to some, through opening a conversation

with the wider school community about gender diversity and the way in which it can support all students in the PE and wider school context (e.g., through reducing gender stereotypes and expectations), these decisions may not be fraught with such difficulty. This could be done through a dialogue combining both compassionate and legislative aspects.

The compassionate approach could involve developing opportunities for conversations around the lived experience of gender diversity, to provide education on the everyday struggles and concerns that the gender diverse community may face in life, and the possibilities that embracing a more expansive understanding of gender could bring to all students. Fuentes et al. (2023) provides an innovative approach to address this, through a collaborative development of critical drama performances, presented throughout the school day in various class- and staff rooms, which exposed and critiqued key issues relating to gender diversity. Alternatively, this could take the form of educational resources (such as leaflets or posters), followed by school assemblies and parent-school meetings which encourage conversation around gender diversity. Some of the young people involved in this research suggested that an educational video or animation could provide an engaging solution to share to the school community. I expand on this idea later. Importantly, an opportunity for two-way dialogue is essential here; a chance for questions to be asked, views to be heard, and solutions to be developed collaboratively. This research, and others (Meyer et al., 2019; Payne & Smith, 2014), has highlighted the fear and anxiety that school staff can face in broaching this subject, so schools could also consider collaborating with local LGBTQ+ charities and services to gain the skills and confidence to facilitate such conversations. In addition, this could involve unpacking the way in which sport as a social and cultural domain shapes particular understandings of gender, and the consequences of this to those with different identities. As suggested by others (Foley et al., 2016; Joy et al., 2021), an open dialogue could encourage the school community to develop a more personal connection to the gender diverse community, thereby developing a sense of empathy and compassion. In previous chapters, I indicated how the PE assemblage seemed to lack the affective intensity to propel people forward,

to pay attention and act. Perhaps, through encouraging more personal and emotive connections to gender diverse narratives, the school community may feel compelled to become the killjoy and enact meaningful change.

Secondly, the legislative approach provides backing and evidence as to the legal need for the development of inclusive policy in relation to gender diversity in PE and beyond. This could be a particularly key aspect to emphasise if gender-critical views arise, for example, through a parental complaint. The Equality Act 2010 sets out clear protections for gender diverse individuals in education, but this research has indicated a lack of clarity from PE teachers in this regard. Critical engagement with governmental equality policies and guidance would support the development of fair and robust PE policies as they relate to gender diverse students, and educating the school community about this legislation and the way in which it works to protect students and support more joyful learning environments is required. At the time of writing, we are yet to see the latest school guidance on supporting gender diverse students in schools, but given the gender-critical framing of the draft guidance published recently (Department for Education, 2023), schools should also consider how they might interpret this non-statutory guidance, and whether it is truly in the best interests of their students. Central to this aim is the need to interweave these conversations with a compassionate approach which humanises gender diverse students, in contrast to the dominant media and political rhetoric which typically dehumanises and devalues these individuals' lived experiences (Montiel-McCann, 2023; Trans Media Watch, 2024).

Some questions to consider:

- How could you engage with the school community to open up conversations about gender diversity? What might this look like with staff, parents and students? What might this look like in the PE setting?
- How could you work with the school community to develop a better understanding of UK equality legislation as it relates to gender diversity?

9.7 CONTRIBUTIONS, CHALLENGES AND REFLECTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

I have been deeply moved by this research inquiry; by my entanglements with the young people and PE teachers, the spaces where we met, the artistic creations that materialised, the events that emerged and stuck to me. By engaging with a deep empiricism, an exploration of materiality, and an acknowledgement of my entanglement with the research assemblage, this research provides unique contributions to the field of PE. It highlights the necessity for schools to pay attention to the multiplicity and relationality of matter in the PE assemblage, the way in which it emerges and affects. For example, having 'inclusive' things in the PE space (such as flags, gender-neutral toilets or inclusion training programmes) does not automatically result in greater inclusion; this will depend on the way in which these things relate and become entangled. A trans flag could be taken down[7] or defaced by students if, for example, they have not been introduced to gender affirming discourses or have become entangled with gender-critical discourses in other assemblages (e.g., through social media or in the home). Non-binary students could be denied access to gender-neutral spaces if PE teachers do not understand the necessity for these spaces (e.g., through lacking an awareness of non-binary experiences). Inclusion training programmes could be ignored if PE teachers do not deem them to be useful or relevant to their profession (e.g., if they do not overtly see gender diverse students in their classroom).

With a few notable exceptions (Durden-Myers & Bartle, 2023; Landi, 2019; Taylor et al., 2018) the academic world of PE has previously had little engagement with new materialist and posthumanist ideas, relying heavily on interpretivist and positivist approaches which centre the human in their inquiry. Through drawing on new materialism and posthumanism, this work has brought forth new ways of knowing about gender diversity in PE, creating an agential cut which seeks to shift the boundaries of knowledge toward something more expansive. It has also highlighted, in line with others (Barad, 2011;

---

[7] This has parallels with the library event detailed earlier in this chapter whereby the library senior leadership team lacked an awareness of the importance of material representations for trans people in public spaces, instead becoming entangled with gender-critical discourses from Mumsnet and authoritative figures.

Giraud, 2019), the necessity to explore what could have been, but fails to become, due to missed connections and exclusions of particular ways of knowing. Given these insights, I hope that this thesis may encourage others to loosen the boundaries of conventional methodology and begin to think and inquire about PE topics in new and generative ways.

Whilst this research is a killjoy endeavour, aimed at disrupting the status quo and proposing new ways of understanding gender in the PE context, I believe that it has also been joy-giving. It has provided an opportunity for gender diverse young people and PE teachers to have meaningful conversations, to share their stories, to know that they are making a difference and changing things for the better. Many of the participants, particularly the young people, shared how cathartic and empowering they had found the experience, and they shared their gratitude for the opportunity to be listened to and affirmed about matters which they had not previously felt they had the agency to affect. Whilst the latter aspect is significant, it also demonstrates a key argument that this thesis recognises; that young people's own voices and agency are seldom acknowledged (Pickles, 2019; Toft & Franklin, 2020; Whittington, 2019). This signifies the need for a wider academic and societal effort to include young people in conversations about matters that affect them directly. Encouragingly, the young people also expressed their joy to me toward the inclusion of arts-based activities, further reinforcing the methodological point about the value of creative approaches with young people.

This thesis has also challenged long-held assumptions regarding the vulnerability of LGBTQ+ youth and the perceived risks of doing 'sensitive' research with these populations. It has highlighted the need for RECs to develop greater knowledge in facilitating, as opposed to prohibiting, possibilities for researchers to work with (what they deem to be) vulnerable populations. Academics are beginning to problematise the 'protection-inclusion dilemma' that RECs are faced with in relation to under-represented and vulnerable adult populations (Friesen et al., 2023; Gelinas et al., 2023; Schroeder et al., 2024), but it remains largely unchallenged in relation to youth research (Heath et al., 2007; Pickles, 2019), particularly for those experiencing intersecting marginalisations

such as being both trans and a young person. As the discussion in Chapter 4 has highlighted, currently one must jump through a series of hoops before being approved to facilitate research with such groups, and even then, the protectionist framework imposed by RECs can still prevent researchers from reaching those least represented in research. Peter and Friedland (2017) suggest that this overly cautious approach could be due to RECs distance from research topics that involve vulnerable populations, thereby generating "an excess of possibilities regarding risk" (p.112) that can be difficult or time-consuming to justify. Therefore, a suggestion for RECs would be to consider diversifying their membership to include those who have expertise in working with vulnerable youth populations. And also, for RECs to engage in greater thinking, reading, and conversation with and about vulnerable youth populations, to become familiar with their contexts and concerns, and consider approaches to research that are mindful of this. For example, for research with young people where parental consent is not viable, how could the researcher be supported to effectively assess Gillick competence themselves? If adults continue to be gatekeepers to the inclusion of youth voices in research, then youth research continues to be shaped by only *certain* voices. Encouragingly, this research has facilitated change at my own institute, with other doctoral students subsequently being approved to work with young people without compulsory parental consent, thereby illustrating the possibilities of research to disrupt planes of consistency (REC protocols regarding parental consent) to make way for new, more inclusive approaches.

RECs could also reflect on the positivistic perspective of separating 'researcher' from other aspects of one's identity. In my case, and in similarity with the work of Slovin and Semenec (2019), my experience as an LGBTQ+ youth support worker meant that I could approach this research in more ethical and accountable ways, using my skills and prior history with the participants to form deeper, more supportive connections with these young people which (I believe) allowed them to feel safe and affirmed throughout the research. Likewise, the REC's request that I remain impartial if problematic perspectives (e.g., discriminatory attitudes or practices) were to arise in the teacher interviews highlights their desire for me to separate my identity as activist and ally from this work.

Ultimately, this research is concerned with exploring how inclusive practices might be improved to support gender diverse students in PE, so when opportunities arise to open a dialogue about this with PE teachers, it seems apt to do so. Whilst feminist researchers have paved the way for consciousness-raising and engaged approaches to researching with communities, highlighting the way in which they encourage participants, researchers and wider communities to self-reflect and self-critique on social issues (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2007; Sowards & Renegar, 2004), this approach did not appear to be valued within my research application (as demonstrated by the REC's comment, quoted in section 4.4). Their comment suggests that efforts towards social change can (or should?) only occur *after* the research has taken place, but I disagree. Afterall, research never truly comes to an end and will continue to affect and be affected as it intra-acts with the world. Through my intra-action with the PE teachers, we both emerged as something new, something different from before. Had I denied the possibilities for consciousness-raising, for a space to share and reflect on one's views and practices, I do not believe I would have been approaching this research with ethical accountability.

Alongside these ethical challenges, the potential insights of this research were limited by a lack of consideration into exploring wider intersectional experiences, for example, in relation to race, ethnicity, social class, disability or faith. As reflected upon in Chapter 4, an agential cut was made during recruitment which did not adequately consider these aspects of social identity and their possible interplay with gender diverse experiences in PE, thereby excluding certain voices from emerging. Whilst post-qualitative inquiry is not concerned with finding and representing "something that exists in the empirical world of human lived experience" (St. Pierre, 2021, p.163), and therefore matters of representation and generalisability are not sought after in this approach, this lack of diversity in experience opens up questions about the nature of the knowledge produced, and the thinking that it allows or denies. For example, whilst this inquiry may help teachers to think differently in relation to the gendering of bodies and their capacities, it does not consider how these may interweave with colonialist (Flintoff & Dowling, 2019) or ableist (Fitzgerald & Stride, 2012) apparatuses which also inform particular understandings of the sporting

body, thereby shaping PE assemblages and the possibilities for joy in particular ways. Future research should consider the intersectional nature of sporting experiences to support the re-imagining of the PE assemblage toward a more equitable and inclusive future.

In thinking about the future, it is also important to consider where this research might go next. Flexner et al. (2021) discuss the way in which academic institutions and conventions can limit the possibilities of real, tangible change for communities, with researchers typically bogged down with pressures to continuously secure funding, produce 'high impact' publications, and support their institute to move up in international rankings. Likewise, at the doctoral level, whilst the ideas and insights developed in this thesis may provide a good starting point for reflection, the words alone in this thesis do not provide an immediate value to gender diverse youth and teaching communities. With this in mind, I have begun to explore how I might develop forms of collaborative dissemination and knowledge exchange which could have a tangible impact on these communities. Based upon the suggestions made by some of the young people involved in this research, I hope to develop creative workshops with gender diverse youth to co-create an educational video or animation which could be shared to schools across the country, with a focus on encouraging affective intensities of empathy and compassion which propel the school community to develop more inclusive PE settings for gender diverse youth. I am keen to platform the talents of local artists and animators from the gender diverse community to develop this output. I would also like to develop workshops, perhaps in collaboration with LGBTQ+ charities and services, which could be offered as training to both pre-service and in-service PE teachers. The prompts for reflection developed earlier in this chapter could provide a basis for these workshops, encouraging PE teachers to question and critique, learn from others, and develop actions in their local PE contexts that would support the inclusion and enabling of joy for those least engaged in PE. I feel that these prompts could be easily adapted to suit the changing nature of the school assemblage, and in this sense could be considered 'living prompts' that could support teachers' professional development throughout their career. These workshops could also

encourage opportunities for PE teachers to work with their students through creative means to learn about gender diversity, for example through creating posters, poems or performances which explore ideas that may arise from conversations about gender diversity. I look forward to exploring where else this research may lead through continued engagement with these communities in the future.

9.8 CONCLUDING REMARKS

"Bodies in flight do not leave the world behind ... they take the world with them – into the future" (Massumi, 1992, p.105)

When I read the above quote, I think about the young people involved in this research, their capacity for joy, the hopes and possibilities that they bring into the world. Through their desire for authenticity, to live and express themselves in ways that make sense to them, they are bodies in flight - challenging the norms of society, opening up new understandings and ways of being in the world. It is a powerful and courageous undertaking, and it propels the world forward, towards something new. I would like to end this thesis by extending my deepest appreciation and thanks for the young people and PE teachers who chose to take part in this research. Though it may feel like a turbulent time for these communities, it is deeply encouraging to see the way in which they are engaging in conversation and action toward greater inclusion in PE. The PE assemblage may go through periods of continuity and discontinuity in its inclusivity endeavours, but my engagements with these individuals has highlighted that there is a strong desire to share experiences, increase education and ultimately facilitate social change, and this provides real hope for the future. Contrary to the title of this thesis, there *is* a place for gender diversity within the PE assemblage – but it requires a collective responsibility to think and act differently, to seek out new ways of knowing beyond the limits of binary gender, and to create space for gender diversity to thrive.

REFERENCES

Abdul, G. (2019, December 16). This intersex runner had surgery to compete. It has not gone well. *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/16/sports/intersex-runner-surgery-track-and-field.html

Academies Act 2010, c.32, https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/32/contents

Adams St. Pierre, E. (1997). Circling the text: Nomadic writing practices. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *3*(4), 403–417. https://doi.org/10.1177/107780049700300403

Aggerholm, K., Standal, Ø. F., & Hordvik, M. M. (2018). Competition in physical education: Avoid, ask, adapt or accept? *Quest*, *70*(3), 385–400. https://doi.org/10.1080/00336297.2017.1415151

Ahmed, S. (2004). *The cultural politics of emotion*. Edinburgh University Press.

Ahmed, S. (2014, November 4). White men. *Feministkilljoys*. https://feministkilljoys.com/2014/11/04/white-men/

Ahmed, S. (2023). *The feminist killjoy handbook*. Penguin Books.

Ainsworth, C. (2015). Sex redefined. *Nature*, *518*(7539), 288–291. https://doi.org/10.1038/518288a

Alabanza, T. (2022). *None of the above: Reflections on life beyond the binary*. Canongate.

Alaimo, S. (2017). *Gender: Matter*. Macmillan Reference USA.

    https://go.gale.com/ps/i.do?p=GVRL&sw=w&u=univea&v=2.1&it=bob&id=GALE%7C8N

    WD&sid=bookmark-GVRL

Alaimo, S., & Hekman, S. J. (Eds.). (2009). *Material feminisms*. Indiana University Press.

Aldridge, J. (2017). Advancing participatory research. *Relational Social Work*, *1*(2), 26–35.

    https://doi.org/10.14605/RSW121702

Allen, L. (2008). Young people's 'agency' in sexuality research using visual methods. *Journal of*

    Youth Studies, *11*(6), 565–577. https://doi.org/10.1080/13676260802225744

Allen, L. (2024, July 18). *Holding Open Queer Potential in Education*. Queer-in(g) Education:

    mis/uses and matterings (online). https://www.bera.ac.uk/wp-

    content/uploads/2024/04/Abstracts-for-the-Web.pdf

Anderson, S. (2022, August 2). Drag queen's story time called off amid protest at library. *North*

    Norfolk News. https://www.northnorfolknews.co.uk/news/20677372.drag-queens-story-

    time-called-off-amid-protest-library/

Appleby, K. M., & Foster, E. (2013). Gender and sport participation. In E. A. Roper (Ed.),

    Gender relations in sport (pp. 1–20). Sense Publishers.

Armour, K., Sandford, R., & Duncombe, R. (2013). Positive youth development and physical

    activity/sport interventions: Mechanisms leading to sustained impact. *Physical Education*

    & Sport Pedagogy, *18*(3), 256–281. https://doi.org/10.1080/17408989.2012.666791

Asakura, K., Lundy, J., Black, D., & Tierney, C. (2020). Art as a transformative practice: A participatory action research project with trans* youth. *Qualitative Social Work*, *19*(5–6), 1061–1077. https://doi.org/10.1177/1473325019881226

Aspers, P., & Corte, U. (2019). What is qualitative in qualitative research. *Qualitative Sociology*, *42*(2), 139–160. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11133-019-9413-7

Aultman, B. (2014). Cisgender. *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly*, *1*(1–2), 61–62. https://doi.org/10.1215/23289252-2399614

Austin, A., Craig, S. L., Navega, N., & McInroy, L. B. (2020). It's my safe space: The life-saving role of the internet in the lives of transgender and gender diverse youth. *International Journal of Transgender Health*, *21*(1), 33–44. https://doi.org/10.1080/15532739.2019.1700202

Ayvazo, S., & Sutherland, S. (2009). Uncovering the secrets: Homophobia in physical education. *Action in Teacher Education*, *31*(3), 56–69. https://doi.org/10.1080/01626620.2009.10463528

Bachmann, C. L., & Gooch, B. (2018). *LGBT in Britain: Health report*. Stonewall. https://www.stonewall.org.uk/system/files/lgbt_in_britain_health.pdf

Bailey, R. (2006). Physical education and sport in schools: A review of benefits and outcomes. *Journal of School Health*, *76*(8), 397–401. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1746-1561.2006.00132.x

Bancroft, K., & Greenspan, S. (2022). Facilitators and barriers of inclusion: A critical incident

    technique analysis of one non-binary Physical Education teacher's workplace

    experiences. *Sport, Education and Society*, 1–13.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/13573322.2022.2034143

Barad, K. (1996). Meeting the universe halfway: Realism and social constructivism without

    contradiction. In L. H. Nelson & J. Nelson (Eds.), *Feminism, science, and the philosophy*

    of ccience (pp. 161–194). Springer Netherlands. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-009-

    1742-2_9

Barad, K. (2003). Posthumanist performativity: Toward an understanding of how matter comes

    to matter. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, *28*(3), 801–831.

    https://doi.org/10.1086/345321

Barad, K. (2007). *Meeting the universe halfway: Quantum physics and the entanglement of*

    matter and meaning. Duke University Press.

Barad, K. (2014). Diffracting diffraction: Cutting together-apart. *Parallax*, *20*(3), 168–187.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/13534645.2014.927623

Barras, A. (2021). *The lived experiences of transgender and non-binary people in everyday*

    sport and physical exercise in the UK [Doctoral thesis, University of Brighton].

    https://research.brighton.ac.uk/en/studentTheses/the-lived-experiences-of-transgender-

    and-non-binary-people-in-eve

Barras, A. (2022). The politics of passing for trans and non-binary people in physical activity in

    the UK. In G. Molnár & R. Bullingham (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of gender politics*

    in sport and physical activity (1st ed., pp. 234–246). Routledge.

    https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003093862-25

Bartholomaeus, C., & Riggs, D. W. (2017). Whole-of-school approaches to supporting

    transgender students, staff, and parents. *International Journal of Transgenderism*, *18*(4),

    361–366. https://doi.org/10.1080/15532739.2017.1355648

Barton, C., Fairbairn, C., Pyper, D., & Lipscombe, S. (2024). *Non-binary gender recognition:*

    Law and policy. https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9515/

Bassi, S., & LaFleur, G. (2022). Introduction. *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly*, *9*(3), 311–

    333. https://doi.org/10.1215/23289252-9836008

BBC. (2007). *UEA hosts transgender conference*. BBC.

    https://www.bbc.co.uk/norfolk/content/articles/2007/06/18/radionorfolk_transgender_200

    70618_feature.shtml

Beauchamp, T. (2018). *Going stealth: Transgender politics and U.S. surveillance practices*.

    Duke University Press. https://doi.org/10.1215/9781478002659

Beausoleil, E. (2015). Embodying an ethics of response-ability. *Borderlands*, *14*(2), 1-16.

Belmont, N., Cronin, T. J., & Pepping, C. A. (2024). Affirmation-support, parental conflict, and

 mental health outcomes of transgender and gender diverse youth. *International Journal*

 of Transgender Health, *25*(1), 50–62. https://doi.org/10.1080/26895269.2023.2252418

Berberick, S. (2018). The paradox of trans visibility: Interrogating the 'year of trans visibility'.

 Journal of Media Critiques, *4*(13), 123–144. https://doi.org/10.17349/jmc118107

Berg, P., & Kokkonen, M. (2022). Heteronormativity meets queering in physical education: The

 views of PE teachers and LGBTIQ+ students. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*,

 27(4), 368–381. https://doi.org/10.1080/17408989.2021.1891213

Berlant, L., & Warner, M. (1998). Sex in public. *Critical Inquiry*, *24*(2), 547–566.

Bernstein, E., Phillips, S. R., & Silverman, S. (2011). Attitudes and perceptions of middle school

 students toward competitive activities in physical education. *Journal of Teaching in*

 Physical Education, *30*(1), 69–83. https://doi.org/10.1123/jtpe.30.1.69

Bianchi, A. (2017). Transgender women in sport. *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport*, *44*(2),

 229–242. https://doi.org/10.1080/00948705.2017.1317602

Biggs, M. (2023, January 29). *Gender identity in the 2021 census of England and Wales: What*

 went wrong?. https://doi.org/10.31235/osf.io/yw45p

Billson, C. (2024, January 31). *Keir Starmer promises trans-inclusive conversion therapy ban*

 under Labour. PinkNews. https://www.thepinknews.com/2024/01/31/keir-starmer-

 promises-trans-inclusive-conversion-therapy-ban-under-labour/

Blair, K. L. (2016). Ethical research with sexual and gender minorities. In A. E. Goldberg (Ed.),

    The SAGE encyclopedia of LGBTQ studies (pp. 375–380). SAGE Publications, Inc.

Booth, R. (2023, November 8). *Census records trans population in England and Wales – but*

    accuracy is doubted. The Guardian.

    https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/nov/08/census-records-trans-population-in-

    england-and-wales-but-accuracy-is-doubted

Booth, R. (2023, November 8). *Census records trans population in England and Wales – but*

    accuracy is doubted. The Guardian.

    https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/nov/08/census-records-trans-population-in-

    england-and-wales-but-accuracy-is-doubted

Borba, M. (2003). *Esteem builders: A K-8 self-esteem curriculum for improving student*

    achievement, behavior, and school climate (2nd ed). Jalmar Press.

Bornstein, K. (1995). *Gender outlaw: On men, women, and the rest of us* (1st ed). Vintage

    Books.

Bos, J. (2020). *Research ethics for students in the social sciences*. Springer International

    Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-48415-6

Bower-Brown, S., Zadeh, S., & Jadva, V. (2023). Binary-trans, non-binary and gender-

    questioning adolescents' experiences in UK schools. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, *20*(1), 74-

    92. https://doi.org/10.1080/19361653.2021.1873215

Bowler, M., Newton, A., Keyworth, S., & McKeown, J. (2020). Secondary school physical education. In S. A. Capel & R. Blair (Eds.), *Debates in physical education* (2nd ed., pp. 170–189). Routledge.

Bozalek, V., & Zembylas, M. (2017). Diffraction or reflection? Sketching the contours of two methodologies in educational research. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *30*(2), 111–127. https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2016.1201166

Brackenridge, C., & Rhind, D. (2014). Child protection in sport: Reflections on thirty years of science and activism. *Social Sciences*, *3*(3), 326–340. https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci3030326

Brady, J., & Wilson, E. (2021). Teacher wellbeing in England: Teacher responses to school-level initiatives. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, *51*(1), 45–63. https://doi.org/10.1080/0305764X.2020.1775789

Bragg, S. (2024). A logic of care in / of / for voice: Tuning-in, enacting and assembling in student voice practices and education. *International Journal of Primary, Elementary and Early Years Education*, *52*(6), 843–855. https://doi.org/10.1080/03004279.2024.2331955

Bragg, S., Renold, E., Ringrose, J., & Jackson, C. (2018). 'More than boy, girl, male, female': Exploring young people's views on gender diversity within and beyond school contexts. *Sex Education*, *18*(4), 420–434. https://doi.org/10.1080/14681811.2018.1439373

Braidotti, R. (2013). *The posthuman*. Polity Press.

Braidotti, R. (2019). A theoretical framework for the critical posthumanities. *Theory, Culture & Society*, *36*(6), 31–61. https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276418771486

Braidotti, R. (2022). *Posthuman feminism*. Polity.

Brett, A., & Brassington, J. (2023). *Pride & progress: Making schools LGBT+ inclusive spaces*. Corwin.

Brink, H. I. L. (1993). Validity and reliability in qualitative research. *Curationis*, *16*(2), 35–38. https://doi.org/10.4102/curationis.v16i2.1396

British Educational Research Association. (2024). *Ethical guidelines for educational research* (5th ed.). www.bera.ac.uk/publication/ethicalguidelines-for-educational-research-2024

British Medical Association. (2024, July 31). *BMA to undertake an evaluation of the Cass Review on gender identity services for children and young people.* British Medical Association. https://www.bma.org.uk/bma-media-centre/bma-to-undertake-an-evaluation-of-the-cass-review-on-gender-identity-services-for-children-and-young-people

British Rowing. (2023). *Trans and non-binary competition eligibility policy and procedures*. British Rowing. https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/British-Rowing-Transgender-and-Non-Binary-Competition-Eligibility-Policy.pdf

Brown-Saracino, J. (2021). Unsettling definitions of qualitative research. *Qualitative Sociology*, *44*(4), 591–597. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11133-021-09498-9

Burnham, H. (2020). *An investigation into teachers' self-reported attitudes and self-efficacy*

   toward transgender youth in the Northeast [Doctoral thesis, Johnson & Wales

   University].

   https://www.proquest.com/docview/2405208237/fulltextPDF/378B8B7BDBFD4E64PQ/1

   ?accountid=10637&sourcetype=Dissertations%20&%20Theses

Butler, J. (1990). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. Routledge.

Butler, J. (1993). *Bodies that matter: On the discursive limits of 'sex'*. Routledge.

Butler, J. (2024). *Who's afraid of gender?* Penguin Random House UK.

Capel, S., & Blair, R. (2007). Making physical education relevant: Increasing the impact of initial

   teacher training. *London Review of Education*, *5*(1), 15-34.

   https://doi.org/10.1080/14748460701241444

Carter, J. (2023, January 16). Creating a trauma sensitive classroom. *Edpsy*.

   https://edpsy.org.uk/blog/2023/creating-a-trauma-sensitive-classroom/

Casey, A., & Larsson, H. (2018). "It's groundhog day": Foucault's governmentality and crisis

   discourses in physical education. *Quest*, *70*(4), 438–455.

   https://doi.org/10.1080/00336297.2018.1451347

Cassar, J. (2017, July 4). Becoming. *New Materialism*.

   https://newmaterialism.eu/almanac/body/becoming.html

Caudwell, J. (2014). [Transgender] young men: Gendered subjectivities and the physically

    active body. *Sport, Education and Society*, *19*(4), 398–414.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/13573322.2012.672320

Caudwell, J. (2020). Transgender and non-binary swimming in the UK: Indoor public pool

    spaces and un/safety. *Frontiers in Sociology*, *5*, Article 64.

    https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2020.00064

Caudwell, J. (2022). Queering indoor swimming in the UK: Transgender and non-binary

    wellbeing. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, *46*(4), 338–362.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/01937235211043648

Cavanagh, S. L., & Sykes, H. (2006). Transsexual bodies at the Olympics: The International

    Olympic Committee's policy on transsexual athletes at the 2004 Athens Summer

    Games. *Body & Society*, *12*(3), 75–102. https://doi.org/10.1177/1357034X06067157

Chatziefstathiou, D. (2008). Reading Baron Pierre de Coubertin: Issues of gender and race.

    Aethlon: The Journal of Sport Literature, *25*(2), 95–115.

Cheon, S. H., Reeve, J., Yu, T. H., & Jang, H. R. (2014). The teacher benefits from giving

    autonomy support during physical education instruction. *Journal of Sport and Exercise*

    Psychology, *36*(4), 331–346. https://doi.org/10.1123/jsep.2013-0231

Chu, A. L. (2017). The wrong wrong body. *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly*, *4*(1), 141–152.

    https://doi.org/10.1215/23289252-3711613

Clark, C. M., & Kosciw, J. G. (2022). Engaged or excluded: LGBTQ youth's participation in

    school sports and their relationship to psychological well-being. *Psychology in the*

    Schools, *59*(1), 95–114. https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.22500

Cleland, J., Cashmore, E., & Dixon, K. (2021). Why do sports fans support or oppose the

    inclusion of trans women in women's sports? An empirical study of fairness and gender

    identity. *Sport in Society*, *25*(12), 2381–2396.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/17430437.2021.1942456

Coggon, J., Hammond, N., & Holm, S. (2008). Transsexuals in sport – Fairness and freedom,

    regulation and law. *Sport, Ethics and Philosophy*, *2*(1), 4–17.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/17511320801896091

Colebrook, C. (2019). A cut in relationality. *Angelaki*, *24*(3), 175–195.

Connolly, M. D., Zervos, M. J., Barone, C. J., Johnson, C. C., & Joseph, C. L. M. (2016). The

    mental health of transgender youth: Advances in understanding. *Journal of Adolescent*

    Health, *59*(5), 489–495. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2016.06.012

Cooky, C., & Dworkin, S. L. (2013). Policing the boundaries of sex: A critical examination of

    gender verification and the Caster Semenya controversy. *The Journal of Sex Research*,

    50(2), 103–111.

Cooper, D. (2019). A very binary drama: The conceptual struggle for gender's future.

    Feminists@law, *9*(1), 1-36. https://doi.org/10.22024/UNIKENT/03/FAL.655

Cooper, J. (2023). Fair competition and inclusion in sport: Avoiding the marginalisation of

    intersex and trans women athletes. *Philosophies*, *8*(2), 28.

    https://doi.org/10.3390/philosophies8020028

Costello, C. G. (2023). The intersection of transgender and intersex experiences. In J. E.

    Sumerau (Ed.), *The Rowman & Littlefield handbook of transgender studies* (pp. 67–84).

    Rowman & Littlefield.

Costello, S., & Boyle, C. (2013). Pre-service secondary teachers' attitudes towards inclusive

    education. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, *38*(4), 129-143.

    https://doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2013v38n4.8

Craig, S. L., McInroy, L. B., & Austin, A. (2018). "Someone to have my back": Exploring the

    needs of racially and ethnically diverse lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender high

    school students. *Children & Schools*, *40*(4), 231–239. https://doi.org/10.1093/cs/cdy016

Cumming-Potvin, W. (2023). The politics of school dress codes and uniform policies: Towards

    gender diversity and gender equity in schools. *International Journal of Educational

    Research*, *122*, Article 102239. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2023.102239

Darwin Holmes, A. G. (2020). Researcher positionality—A consideration of its influence and

    place in qualitative research—A new researcher guide. *Shanlax International Journal of

    Education*, *8*(4), 1–10. https://doi.org/10.34293/education.v8i4.3232

Davies, A. W. J., Vipond, E., & King, A. (2019). Gender binary washrooms as a means of gender

    policing in schools: A Canadian perspective. *Gender and Education*, *31*(7), 866–885.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2017.1354124

Davies, D., & Dodd, J. (2002). Qualitative research and the question of rigor. *Qualitative Health*

    Research, *12*(2), 279–289. https://doi.org/10.1177/104973230201200211

Davis, G., Dewey, J. M., & Murphy, E. L. (2016). Giving sex: Deconstructing intersex and trans

    medicalization practices. *Gender & Society*, *30*(3), 490–514.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243215602102

De Landa, M. (2002). *Intensive science and virtual philosophy*. Continuum.

DeFrancisco, V., & Palczewski, C. (2007). *Communicating gender diversity: A critical approach*.

    SAGE Publications, Inc. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781483329284

Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (1987). *A thousand plateaus: Capitalism and schizophrenia*.

    University of Minnesota Press.

Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (1993). *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and schizophrenia*. University of

    Minnesota Press.

DePalma, R. (2013). Choosing to lose our gender expertise: Queering sex/gender in school

    settings. *Sex Education*, *13*(1), 1–15. https://doi.org/10.1080/14681811.2011.634145

DePalma, R., & Atkinson, E. (2009). '*No Outsiders*': Moving beyond a discourse of tolerance to

challenge heteronormativity in primary schools. *British Educational Research Journal*,

35(6), 837–855. https://doi.org/10.1080/01411920802688705

DePalma, R., & Jennett, M. (2010). Homophobia, transphobia and culture: Deconstructing

heteronormativity in English primary schools. *Intercultural Education*, *21*(1), 15–26.

https://doi.org/10.1080/14675980903491858

Department for Education. (2013). *Physical education programmes of study: Key stages 3 and

4. National curriculum in England*. Department for Education.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7c74e2e5274a5255bcec5f/SECONDA

RY_national_curriculum_-_Physical_education.pdf

Department for Education. (2017). *Preventing and tackling bullying. Advice for headteachers,

staff and governing bodies.* Department for Education.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/625ee64cd3bf7f6004339db8/Preventing_

and_tackling_bullying_advice.pdf

Department for Education. (2019). *ITT Core Content Framework*. Department for Education.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment

_data/file/974307/ITT_core_content_framework_.pdf

Department for Education. (2019a). *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education

(RSE) and Health Education*. Department for Education.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/62cea352e90e071e789ea9bf/Relationshi
ps_Education_RSE_and_Health_Education.pdf

Department for Education. (2023). *Gender Questioning Children—Non-statutory guidance for schools and colleges in England*. Department for Education.
https://consult.education.gov.uk/equalities-political-impartiality-anti-bullying-team/gender-questioning-children-proposed-guidance/supporting_documents/Gender%20Questioning%20Children%20%20nonstatutory%20guidance.pdf

Department for Health & Social Care. (2019). *UK Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines*. Department for Health & Social Care.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/832868/uk-chief-medical-officers-physical-activity-guidelines.pdf

Derry, J. A. (2002). Single-sex and coeducation physical education: Perspectives of adolescent girls and female physical education teachers. *Melpomene Journal*, *21*(3), 21–29.

Devís-Devís, J., Pereira-García, S., López-Cañada, E., Pérez-Samaniego, V., & Fuentes-Miguel, J. (2018). Looking back into trans persons' experiences in heteronormative secondary physical education contexts. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*, *23*(1), 103–116.
https://doi.org/10.1080/17408989.2017.1341477

Drury, S., Stride, A., Firth, O., & Fitzgerald, H. (2023). The transformative potential of trans*-inclusive PE: The experiences of PE teachers. *Sport, Education and Society*, *28*(9), 1118-1131. https://doi.org/10.1080/13573322.2022.2034142

Drury, S., Stride, A., Flintoff, A., & Williams, S. (2017). Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender young people's experiences of PE and the implications for youth sport participation and engagement. In J. Long, T. Fletcher, & B. Watson (Eds.), *Sport, leisure and social justice*. Routledge.

Durden-Myers, E., & Bartle, G. (2023). Physical-literacy-enriched physical education: A capabilities perspective. *Children*, *10*(9), Article 1503. https://doi.org/10.3390/children10091503

Durwood, L., Kuvalanka, K. A., Kahn-Samuelson, S., Jordan, A. E., Rubin, J. D., Schnelzer, P., Devor, A. H., & Olson, K. R. (2022). Retransitioning: The experiences of youth who socially transition genders more than once. *International Journal of Transgender Health*, *23*(4), 409–427. https://doi.org/10.1080/26895269.2022.2085224

Dutta, A., & Roy, R. (2014). Decolonizing transgender in India. *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly*, *1*(3), 320–337. https://doi.org/10.1215/23289252-2685615

Dwyer, S. C., & Buckle, J. L. (2009). The space between: On being an insider-outsider in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *8*(1), 54–63. https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690900800105

Education Authority. (2021). *Supporting transgender young people: Guidance for schools, EOTAS centres, and youth service on supporting transgender young people*. Education Authority. https://www.eani.org.uk/school-management/policies-and-guidance/supporting-transgender-young-people

Elling-Machartzki, A. (2017). Extraordinary body-self narratives: Sport and physical activity in the lives of transgender people. *Leisure Studies*, *36*(2), 256–268. https://doi.org/10.1080/02614367.2015.1128474

Elliott, D., & Hoyle, K. (2014). An examination of barriers to physical education for Christian and Muslim girls attending comprehensive secondary schools in the UK. *European Physical Education Review*, *20*(3), 349–366. https://doi.org/10.1177/1356336X14534358

Equalities Act 2010, c.15, https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents

Equality and Human Rights Committee. (2021). *Gender reassignment discrimination*. Equality and Human Rights Committee. https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/equality/equality-act-2010/your-rights-under-equality-act-2010/gender-reassignment-discrimination

Erikainen, S., Vincent, B., & Hopkins, A. (2022). Specific detriment: Barriers and opportunities for non-binary inclusive sports in Scotland. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, *46*(1), 75–102. https://doi.org/10.1177/0193723520962937

Evans, I., & Rawlings, V. (2021). "It was just one less thing that i had to worry about": Positive experiences of schooling for gender diverse and transgender students. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *68*(9), 1489–1508. https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2019.1698918

Evans, R. L., Harris, B., Onuegbu, C., & Griffiths, F. (2022). Systematic review of educational

    interventions to improve the menstrual health of young adolescent girls. *BMJ Open*,

    12(6), Article e057204. https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2021-057204

Falkingham, K., & Roan, D. (2022, May 11). Transgender women in sport—The scientists' view.

    BBC Sport. https://www.bbc.com/sport/61346517

Fausto-Sterling, A. (2000). *Sexing the body: Gender politics and the construction of sexuality*.

    Basic books.

Faye, S. (2021). *The transgender issue: An argument for justice*. Allen Lane an imprint of

    Penguin Books.

Ferfolja, T., & Ullman, J. (2021). Inclusive pedagogies for transgender and gender diverse

    children: Parents' perspectives on the limits of discourses of bullying and risk in schools.

    Pedagogy, Culture & Society, *29*(5), 793–810.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/14681366.2021.1912158

Ferguson, L. & Russell, K. (in press). The ethical challenges of compulsory guardian consent

    for research with LGBTQ+ youth. In A. Brett and C. Lee (Eds.), *The LGBTQ+*

    researcher's guide. Emerald Publishing.

Ferguson, L., & Russell, K. (2021). Gender performance in the sporting lives of young trans*

    people. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *70*(4), 587–611.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2021.1996099

Fernandez, M. (2016). *Posthumanism, new materialism and feminist media art* [Paper

presentation]. 22nd International Symposium on Electronic Art, Hong Kong, China.

https://isea-archives.siggraph.org/wp-

content/uploads/2019/06/2016_Fernandez_Posthumanism_New_Materialism.pdf

Fetterman, D. M. (2008). Emic/etic distinction. In L. M. Given (Ed.), *The SAGE encyclopedia of*

qualitative research methods (pp. 249–250). SAGE Publications.

FINA. (2022). *Policy on eligibility for the men's and women's competition categories.* FINA.

https://resources.fina.org/fina/document/2022/06/19/525de003-51f4-47d3-8d5a-

716dac5f77c7/FINA-INCLUSION-POLICY-AND-APPENDICES-FINAL-.pdf

Fisette, J. L. (2013). 'Are you listening?': Adolescent girls voice how they negotiate self-

identified barriers to their success and survival in physical education. *Physical Education*

& Sport Pedagogy, *18*(2), 184–203. https://doi.org/10.1080/17408989.2011.649724

Fitzgerald, H., & Stride, A. (2012). Stories about physical education from young people with

disabilities. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, *59*(3), 283–

293. https://doi.org/10.1080/1034912X.2012.697743

Fitzpatrick, K., & McGlashan, H. (2016). Rethinking 'straight' pedagogy: gender, sexuality and

physical education. In D. B. Robinson & L. Randall (Eds.), *Social justice in physical*

education critical reflections and pedagogies for change (1st ed., pp. 102–121).

Canadian Scholars.

Flintoff, A. (2008). Targeting Mr average: Participation, gender equity and school sport

    partnerships. *Sport, Education and Society*, *13*(4), 393–411.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/13573320802445017

Flintoff, A. (2015). Playing the 'Race' card? Black and minority ethnic students' experiences of

    physical education teacher education. *Sport, Education and Society*, *20*(2), 190–211.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/13573322.2012.745397

Flintoff, A., & Dowling, F. (2019). 'I just treat them all the same, really': Teachers, whiteness and

    (anti) racism in physical education. *Sport, Education and Society*, *24*(2), 121–133.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/13573322.2017.1332583

Flores, A. R. (2015). Attitudes toward transgender rights: Perceived knowledge and secondary

    interpersonal contact. *Politics, Groups, and Identities*, *3*(3), 398–416.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/21565503.2015.1050414

Foley, J. T., Pineiro, C., Miller, D., & Foley, M. L. (2016). Including transgender students in

    school physical education. *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance*, *87*(3), 5–

    8. https://doi.org/10.1080/07303084.2016.1131544

Fontanari, A. M. V., Vilanova, F., Schneider, M. A., Chinazzo, I., Soll, B. M., Schwarz, K., Lobato,

    M. I. R., & Brandelli Costa, A. (2020). Gender affirmation is associated with transgender

    and gender nonbinary youth mental health improvement. *LGBT Health*, *7*(5), 237–247.

    https://doi.org/10.1089/lgbt.2019.0046

Foucault, M. (1988). *Technologies of the self: A seminar with Michel Foucault* (L. H. Martin, H. Gutman, & P. H. Hutton, Eds.). University of Massachusetts Press.

Foucault, M. (1991). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison* (Reprint). Penguin Books.

Fournier, M. (2014). Lines of flight. *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly*, *1*(1–2), 121–122. https://doi.org/10.1215/23289252-2399785

Fox, N. J., & Alldred, P. (2015). New materialist social inquiry: Designs, methods and the research-assemblage. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, *18*(4), 399–414. https://doi.org/10.1080/13645579.2014.921458

Fox, N. J., & Alldred, P. (2020). Re-assembling climate change policy: Materialism, posthumanism, and the policy assemblage. *The British Journal of Sociology*, *71*(2), 269–283. https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-4446.12734

Fox, N. J., & Alldred, P. (2023). Applied research, diffractive methodology, and the research-assemblage: Challenges and opportunities. *Sociological Research Online*, *28*(1), 93-109. https://doi.org/10.1177/13607804211029978

Frank, S. E., & Dellaria, J. (2020). Navigating the binary: A visual narrative of trans and genderqueer menstruation. In C. Bobel, I. T. Winkler, B. Fahs, K. A. Hasson, E. A. Kissling, & T.-A. Roberts (Eds.), *The Palgrave handbook of critical menstruation studies* (pp. 69–76). Springer Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-0614-7_7

Friesen, P., Gelinas, L., Kirby, A., Strauss, D. H., & Bierer, B. E. (2023). IRBs and the protection-inclusion dilemma: Finding a balance. *The American Journal of Bioethics*, *23*(6), 75–88. https://doi.org/10.1080/15265161.2022.2063434

Frohard-Dourlent, H. (2018). "The student drives the car, right?": Trans students and narratives of decision-making in schools. *Sex Education*, *18*(4), 328–344. https://doi.org/10.1080/14681811.2017.1393745

Fuentes-Miguel, J., Pérez-Samaniego, V., López-Cañada, E., Pereira-García, S., & Devís-Devís, J. (2023). From inclusion to queer-trans pedagogy in school and physical education: A narrative ethnography of trans generosity. *Sport, Education and Society*, *28*(9), 1132–1145. https://doi.org/10.1080/13573322.2022.2073437

Galupo, M. P., Krum, T. E., Hagen, D. B., Gonzalez, K. A., & Bauerband, L. A. (2014). Disclosure of transgender identity and status in the context of friendship. *Journal of LGBT Issues in Counseling*, *8*(1), 25–42. https://doi.org/10.1080/15538605.2014.853638

Gamble, C. N., Hanan, J. S., & Nail, T. (2019). What is new materialism? *Angelaki*, *24*(6), 111–134. https://doi.org/10.1080/0969725X.2019.1684704

Gard, M. (2006). More art than science? Boys, masculinities and physical education research. In D. Kirk, D. Macdonald, & M. O'Sullivan (Eds.), *Handbook of physical education*. SAGE Publications Ltd. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781848608009

Garrett, R. (2004). Gendered bodies and physical identities. In J. Evans, B. Davies, & J. Wright (Eds.), *Body knowledge and control: Studies in the sociology of physical education and health* (pp. 140–156). Routledge.

Gatenby, B., & Humphries, M. (2000). Feminist participatory action research. *Women's Studies International Forum*, *23*(1), 89–105. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0277-5395(99)00095-3

Geerts, E., & Van der Tuin, I. (2021). Almanac: Diffraction & reading diffractively. *Matter: Journal of New Materialist Research*, *2*(1), 173–177. https://doi.org/10.1344/jnmr.v2i1.33380

Gelinas, L., Strauss, D. H., Chen, Y., Ahmed, H. R., Kirby, A., Friesen, P., & Bierer, B. E. (2023). Protecting the vulnerable and including the under-represented: IRB practices and attitudes. *Journal of Empirical Research on Human Research Ethics*, *18*(1–2), 58–68. https://doi.org/10.1177/15562646221138450

Gender Identity Clinic. (2023). *Waiting times*. GIC. https://gic.nhs.uk/appointments/waiting-times/

Gender Identity Development Service. (2020). *Referrals to GIDS, 2015-16 to 2019-20*. GIDS. https://gids.nhs.uk/number-referral

Gender Recognition Act 2004, c.7. https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/7/contents

Gendered Intelligence. (2023, December 19). *Schools Guidance Released*. Gendered Intelligence. https://genderedintelligence.co.uk/news/11-schools-guidance-released

Gentleman, A. (2024, April 9). *Cass review set to confirm shift in NHS care for children with gender dysphoria.* The Guardian. https://www.theguardian.com/society/2024/apr/09/cass-review-nhs-children-gender-dysphoria

Gibbons, S. L., Temple, V. A., & Humbert, L. M. (2011). Enhancing girls' participation in physical education: A framework for action. *Physical & Health Education Journal*, *77*(3), 16–23.

Giraud, E. H. (2019). *What comes after entanglement?: Activism, anthropocentrism, and an ethics of exclusion*. Duke University Press.

Gleaves, J., & Lehrbach, T. (2016). Beyond fairness: The ethics of inclusion for transgender and intersex athletes. *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport*, *43*(2), 311–326. https://doi.org/10.1080/00948705.2016.1157485

Gough, B., Weyman, N., Alderson, J., Butler, G., & Stoner, M. (2008). 'They did not have a word': The parental quest to locate a 'true sex' for their intersex children. *Psychology & Health*, *23*(4), 493–507. https://doi.org/10.1080/14768320601176170

Gray, E. M. (2013). Coming out as a lesbian, gay or bisexual teacher: Negotiating private and professional worlds. *Sex Education*, *13*(6), 702–714. https://doi.org/10.1080/14681811.2013.807789

Green, J. (2006). *Becoming a visible man* (Reprinted). Vanderbilt University Press.

Greey, A. D. (2023). 'It's just safer when I don't go there': Trans people's locker room

    membership and participation in physical activity. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *70*(8),

    1609–1631. https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2022.2038968

Greytak, E. A., Kosciw, J. G., & Diaz, E. M. (2009). *Harsh realities: the experiences of*

    transgender youth in our nation's schools. GLSEN.

    https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED505687.pdf

Griggs, G., & Fleet, M. (2021). Most people hate physical education and most drop out of

    physical activity: In search of credible curriculum alternatives. *Education Sciences*,

    11(11), 701. https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci11110701

Gülgöz, S., DeMeules, M., Gelman, S. A., & Olson, K. R. (2019). Gender essentialism in

    transgender and cisgender children. *PLOS ONE*, *14*(11), Article e0224321.

    https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0224321

Gullion, J. S. (2018). *Diffractive ethnography: Social sciences and the ontological turn*.

    Routledge.

Gunn, H. (2020). *The experience of misgendering among trans and gender diverse people*

    [Doctoral thesis, University of Massachusetts].

    https://www.proquest.com/docview/2447222123?pq-

    origsite=gscholar&fromopenview=true

Hafford-Letchfield, T., Cocker, C., Rutter, D., Tinarwo, M., McCormack, K., & Manning, R.

    (2019). What do we know about transgender parenting?: Findings from a systematic

review. *Health & Social Care in the Community*, *27*, 1111–1125.

https://doi.org/10.1111/hsc.12759

Hamilton, B., Brown, A., Montagner-Moraes, S., Comeras-Chueca, C., Bush, P. G., Guppy, F.

    M., & Pitsiladis, Y. P. (2024). Strength, power and aerobic capacity of transgender

    athletes: A cross-sectional study. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, *58*(11), 586-597.

    https://doi.org/10.1136/bjsports-2023-108029

Hancock, T. S., & Fontanella-Nothom, O. (2020). Becoming with/in flux: Pedagogies of

    sustainment (POSt). *Qualitative Inquiry*, *26*(1), 81–88.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800419874827

Hannant, D. (2023, February 9). *Woman's concern after 'naked man' seen in Sportspark's*

    female changing rooms. Eastern Daily Press.

    https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/23309722.naked-man-reported-female-change-room-

    uea-sportspark/

Haraway, D. (1988). Situated knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege

    of partial perspective. *Feminist Studies*, *14*(3), 575. https://doi.org/10.2307/3178066

Haraway, D. J. (1997). *Modest‗Witness@Second‗Millennium.FemaleMan‗Meets‗OncoMouse:*

    Feminism and technoscience. Routledge.

Hargie, O. D., Mitchell, D. H., & Somerville, I. J. (2017). 'People have a knack of making you feel

    excluded if they catch on to your difference': Transgender experiences of exclusion in

sport. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, *52*(2), 223–239.

https://doi.org/10.1177/1012690215583283

Hargreaves, J. (1994). *Sporting females: Critical issues in the history and sociology of women's sports.* Routledge.

Harper, J. (2022). Transgender athletes and international sports policy. *Law and Contemporary Problems, 85(1),* 151-165. https://scholarship.law.duke.edu/lcp/vol85/iss1/9

Harris, A., & Gray, E. M. (Eds.). (2014). *Queer teachers, identity and performativity*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Harvey, J., Emm-Collison, L., & Sebire, S. J. (2020). "I feel proper self-conscious all the time": A qualitative study of adolescent girls' views of menstruation and physical activity. *Wellcome Open Research*, *5*(279), 1-12.

https://doi.org/10.12688/wellcomeopenres.16391.1

Hatchel, T., & Marx, R. (2018). Understanding intersectionality and resiliency among transgender adolescents: Exploring pathways among peer victimization, school belonging, and drug use. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *15*(6), 1289. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph15061289

Hatchel, T., Valido, A., De Pedro, K. T., Huang, Y., & Espelage, D. L. (2019). Minority stress among transgender adolescents: The role of peer victimization, school belonging, and ethnicity. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, *28*(9), 2467–2476.

https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-018-1168-3

Hausman, B. L. (2001). Recent Transgender Theory. *Feminist Studies*, *27*(2), 465–490.

   https://doi.org/10.2307/3178770

Hayfield, N., & Huxley, C. (2015). Insider and outsider perspectives: Reflections on researcher

   identities in research with lesbian and bisexual women. *Qualitative Research in*

   Psychology, *12*(2), 91–106. https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2014.918224

Heath, S., Charles, V., Crow, G., & Wiles, R. (2007). Informed consent, gatekeepers and go-

   betweens: Negotiating consent in child and youth-orientated institutions. *British*

   Educational Research Journal, *33*(3), 403–417.

   https://doi.org/10.1080/01411920701243651

Henderson, H. (2020, July 25). *Hidden pride*. Norwich Castle.

   https://norwichcastle.wordpress.com/2020/07/25/hidden-pride-discovering-the-history-

   of-the-lgbt-community-in-norwich/

Hennink, M. M., Hutter, I., & Bailey, A. (2011). *Qualitative research methods*. SAGE.

Herold, F. (2020). 'There is new wording, but there is no real change in what we deliver':

   Implementing the new National Curriculum for Physical Education in England. *European*

   Physical Education Review, *26*(4), 920–937. https://doi.org/10.1177/1356336X19892649

Herrick, S. S. C., & Duncan, L. R. (2020). Locker-room experiences among LGBTQ+ adults.

   Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology, *42*(3), 227–239.

   https://doi.org/10.1123/jsep.2019-0133

Herrick, S. S. C., & Duncan, L. R. (2023). A systematic scoping review of physical education

experiences from the perspective of LGBTQ+ students. *Sport, Education and Society*,

28(9), 1099–1117. https://doi.org/10.1080/13573322.2022.2071253

Hesse-Biber, S., & Leavy, P. (2007). *Feminist research practice*. SAGE Publications, Inc.

https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412984270

Hesse, M. (2019, May 2). *We celebrated Michael Phelps's genetic differences. Why punish

Caster Semenya for hers?* The Washington Post.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/we-celebrated-michael-phelpss-genetic-

differences-why-punish-caster-semenya-for-hers/2019/05/02/93d08c8c-6c2b-11e9-

be3a-33217240a539_story.html

Hill Collins, P. (2010). The new politics of community. *American Sociological Review*, *75*(1), 7–

30. https://doi.org/10.1177/0003122410363293

Hillier, A., Kroehle, K., Edwards, H., & Graves, G. (2020). Risk, resilience, resistance and

situated agency of trans high school students. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, *17*(4), 384–407.

https://doi.org/10.1080/19361653.2019.1668326

Hills, L. A., & Croston, A. (2012). 'It should be better all together': Exploring strategies for

'undoing' gender in coeducational physical education. *Sport, Education and Society*,

17(5), 591–605. https://doi.org/10.1080/13573322.2011.553215

Hines, S. (2007). *Transforming gender: Transgender practices of identity, intimacy and care*.

Policy press.

Hines, S. (2018). *Is gender fluid? A primer for the 21st century*. Thames & Hudson.

Hines, S. (2020). Sex wars and (trans) gender panics: Identity and body politics in

contemporary UK feminism. *The Sociological Review*, *68*(4), 699–717.

https://doi.org/10.1177/0038026120934684

Holland, S. K. (2021). *Physical education and extracurricular activity participation of autistic,*

neurodivergent, disabled trans adults [Doctoral thesis, Old Dominion University].

https://doi.org/10.25777/4GVS-4C23

hooks, bell. (1989). *Talking back: Thinking feminist, thinking black*. South End Press.

Hope, A. (2018). Creep: The growing surveillance of students' online activities. *Education and*

Society, *36*(1), 55–72. https://doi.org/10.7459/es/36.1.05

Horton, C. (2022). Institutional cisnormativity and educational injustice: Trans children's

experiences in primary and early secondary education in the UK. *British Journal of*

Educational Psychology, *93*(1), 73–90. https://doi.org/10.1111/bjep.12540

Horton, C. (2024). The Cass Review: Cis-supremacy in the UK's approach to healthcare for

trans children. *International Journal of Transgender Health*, 1–25.

https://doi.org/10.1080/26895269.2024.2328249

Horton, C., & Carlile, A. (2022). "We just think of her as one of the girls": Applying a trans

inclusion staged model to the experiences of trans children and youth in UK primary and

secondary schools. *Teachers College Record: The Voice of Scholarship in Education*, *124*(8), 168–191. https://doi.org/10.1177/01614681221123383

Hotine, E. (2021). Biology, society and sex: Deconstructing anti-trans rhetoric and trans-exclusionary radical feminism. *Journal of the Nuffield Department of Surgical Sciences*, *2*(3), 1–5. https://journal.nds.ox.ac.uk/index.php/JNDS/article/view/176

Hughes, D. (2023, June 9). *Biological sex is 'fundamentally important' – Rishi Sunak.* The Independent. https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/rishi-sunak-prime-minister-equalities-and-human-rights-commission-jk-rowling-mps-b2354939.html

Hunte, B. (2022, February 22). *Guidance supporting trans kids scrapped by EHRC after government interference.* Vice. https://www.vice.com/en/article/g5q8am/ehrc-trans-students-guidance-scrapped

Huttunen, A., Hirvonen, N., & Kähkönen, L. (2020). Uncomfortable in my own skin – emerging, early-stage identity-related information needs of transgender people. *Journal of Documentation*, *76*(3), 709–729. https://doi.org/10.1108/JD-09-2019-0193

Hyde, J. S. (2005). The gender similarities hypothesis. *American Psychologist*, *60*(6), 581–592. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.60.6.581

Hyde, J. S., Bigler, R. S., Joel, D., Tate, C. C., & Van Anders, S. M. (2019). The future of sex and gender in psychology: Five challenges to the gender binary. *American Psychologist*, *74*(2), 171–193. https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000307

International Amateur Athletic Federation. (2006). *IAAF policy on gender verification.* International Association of Athletics Federation.

International Amateur Athletic Federation. (2011). *IAAF to introduce eligibility rules for females with hyperandrogenism.* World Athletics. https://www.worldathletics.org/news/news/iaaf-to-introduce-eligibility-rules-for-femal

Introna, L. D. (2013). Epilogue: Performativity and the becoming of sociomaterial assemblages. In F.-X. De Vaujany & N. Mitev (Eds.), *Materiality and space* (pp. 330–342). Palgrave Macmillan UK. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137304094_17

Ivinson, G., & Renold, E. (2013). Valleys' girls: Re-theorising bodies and agency in a semi-rural post-industrial locale. *Gender and Education*, *25*(6), 704–721. https://doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2013.827372

J.L. Flexner, V. Rawlings & L. Riley (2021). Introduction: walking many paths towards a community-led paradigm. In V. Rawlings, J. Flexner & L. Riley (Eds.), *Community-Led Research: Walking new pathways together* (pp. 1-8). Sydney University Press.

Jackson, A. Y. (2010). Deleuze and the girl. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *23*(5), 579–587. https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2010.500630

Jacques, J. (2015). *Trans: A memoir*. Verso Books.

Jadva, V., Guasp, A., Bradlow, J. H., Bower-Brown, S., & Foley, S. (2021). Predictors of self-harm and suicide in LGBT youth: The role of gender, socio-economic status, bullying

and school experience. *Journal of Public Health*, *45*(1), 102-108.

https://doi.org/10.1093/pubmed/fdab383

Jagger, G. (2015). The new materialism and sexual difference. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, *40*(2), 321–342. https://doi.org/10.1086/678190

Jennings, T., & Macgillivray, I. K. (2011). A content analysis of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender topics in multicultural education textbooks. *Teaching Education*, *22*(1), 39–62. https://doi.org/10.1080/10476210.2010.538474

Johns, O. (2011). New year honour for gender counsellor: Barbara Ross OBE. *Gendys Journal*, *53*. http://www.gender.org.uk/gendys/2011/ross.htm

Johnson, B., & Sullivan, A. (2016). Understanding and challenging dominant discourses about student behaviour at school. In A. Sullivan, B. Johnson, & B. Lucas (Eds.), *Challenging dominant views on student behaviour at school* (pp. 27–43). Springer Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-0628-9_3

Johnston, L. D., Delva, J., & O'Malley, P. M. (2007). Sports participation and physical education in American secondary schools. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, *33*(4S), S195–S208. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amepre.2007.07.015

Jones, B. A., Arcelus, J., Bouman, W. P., & Haycraft, E. (2017). Barriers and facilitators of physical activity and sport participation among young transgender adults who are medically transitioning. *International Journal of Transgenderism*, *18*(2), 227–238. https://doi.org/10.1080/15532739.2017.1293581

Jones, T., Smith, E., Ward, R., Dixon, J., Hillier, L., & Mitchell, A. (2016). School experiences of transgender and gender diverse students in Australia. *Sex Education*, *16*(2), 156–171. https://doi.org/10.1080/14681811.2015.1080678

Jordan-Young, R. M., & Karkazis, K. (2019). *Testosterone: An unauthorized biography*. Harvard University Press.

Joy, P., Zahavich, J. B. L., & Kirk, S. F. L. (2021). Gendered bodies and physical education (PE) participation: Exploring the experiences of adolescent students and PE teachers in Nova Scotia. *Journal of Gender Studies*, *30*(6), 663–675. https://doi.org/10.1080/09589236.2021.1937080

Just Like Us. (2022, February 28). *Majority of teachers want more guidance on supporting trans pupils, new research finds.* Just Like Us. https://www.justlikeus.org/blog/2022/02/28/teachers-want-guidance-support-transgender-pupils-research/

Karkazis, K., & Jordan-Young, R. M. (2019). The powers of testosterone: obscuring race and regional bias in the regulation of women athletes. *Freiburger Zeitschrift Für GeschlechterStudien*, *25*(1), 83–120. https://doi.org/10.3224/fzg.v25i1.05

Katz-Wise, S. L., Rosario, M., & Tsappis, M. (2016). Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth and family acceptance. *Pediatric Clinics of North America*, *63*(6), 1011–1025. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pcl.2016.07.005

Kearns, L.-L., Mitton-Kükner, J., & Tompkins, J. (2017). Transphobia and cisgender privilege: Pre-service teachers recognizing and challenging gender rigidity in schools. *Canadian Journal of Education / Revue Canadienne de l'éducation*, *40*(1), 1–27. https://www.jstor.org/stable/90002337

Keating, X. D., Zhou, K., Liu, J., Shangguan, R., Fan, Y., & Harrison, L. (2017). Research on preservice physical education teachers' and preservice elementary teachers' physical education identities: A systematic review. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education*, *36*(2), 162–172. https://doi.org/10.1123/jtpe.2016-0128

Kennedy, E., & Davis, M. (1996). Constructing an ethnohistory of the Buffalo lesbian community: Reflexivity, dialogue and politics. In E. Lewin & W. Leap (Eds.), *Out of the field: Reflections of lesbian and gay anthropologists.* (pp. 171–199). University of Illinois Press.

Kennedy, E., Spinner, L., Lane, C., Stynes, H., Ranieri, V., Carmichael, P., Omar, R., Vickerstaff, V., Hunter, R., Wright, T., Senior, R., Butler, G., Baron-Cohen, S., Young, B., & King, M. (2021). Longitudinal outcomes of gender identity in children (LOGIC): Protocol for a prospective longitudinal cohort study of children referred to the UK gender identity development service. *BMJ Open*, *11*(9), 1-8. https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2020-045628

Kessel, A. (2016). *Eat sweat play: How sport can change our lives*. Macmillan.

Kettley-Linsell, H. (2022). *Challenging the gender binary in UK physical education: Student,*

    teacher and parent perspectives [Doctoral thesis, Loughborough University].

    https://doi.org/10.26174/thesis.lboro.20110487.v1

Khyatt, D. (2006). What's to fear: Calling homophobia into question. *McGill Journal of*

    Education, *41*(2), 133–144.

Killermann, S. (2012). *What does the asterisk in "trans*" stand for?* It's Pronounced

    Metrosexual. https://www.itspronouncedmetrosexual.com/2012/05/what-does-the-

    asterisk-in-trans-stand-for/

Kim, J. (2011). Influence of teacher preparation programmes on preservice teachers' attitudes

    toward inclusion. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, *15*(3), 355–377.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/13603110903030097

Kinchin, I. M., & Gravett, K. (2020). Concept mapping in the age of Deleuze: Fresh Perspectives

    and new challenges. *Education Sciences*, *10*(3), 82.

    https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci10030082

Kirby, P. (2004). *A guide to actively involving young people in research: For researchers,*

    research commissioners and managers. INVOLVE Support Unit.

    https://www.invo.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/InvolvingYoungPeople2004.pdf

Kirk, D. (1992). *Defining physical education: The social construction of a school subject in*

    postwar Britain. Falmer.

Kirk, D. (2002). Physical education: A gendered history. In D. Penney (Ed.), *Gender and physical education: Contemporary issues and future directions* (pp. 24–38). Routledge.

Kirk, D. (2010). *Physical education futures*. Routledge.

Kirk, D., Macdonald, D. & O'Sullivan, M. (2006). *The handbook of physical education.* SAGE.

Kitchen, J., & Bellini, C. (2012). Addressing lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) issues in teacher education: Teacher candidates' perceptions. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, *58*(3), 444-460. https://doi.org/10.11575/AJER.V58I3.55632

Kosciw, J. G., Clark, C. M., Truong, N. L., & Zongrone, A. D. (2020). *The 2019 national school climate survey: The experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer youth in our nation's schools*. GLSEN. https://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/2021-04/NSCS19-FullReport-032421-Web_0.pdf

Krane, V., Calow, E., & Panunti, B. (2022). Female testosterone: Contested terrain. *Kinesiology Review*, *11*(1), 54–63. https://doi.org/10.1123/kr.2021-0062

Krasteva, G. (2022, March 13). *Teachers 'crying out' for help supporting trans students as they don't know how.* Metro. https://metro.co.uk/2022/03/13/teachers-crying-out-for-help-supporting-transgender-school-students-16245647/

Kulick, A., Wernick, L. J., Espinoza, M. A. V., Newman, T. J., & Dessel, A. B. (2019). Three strikes and you're out: Culture, facilities, and participation among LGBTQ youth in

sports. *Sport, Education and Society*, *24*(9), 939–953.

https://doi.org/10.1080/13573322.2018.1532406

Landi, D. (2019). *LGBTQ youth, physical education, and sexuality education:* [Doctoral thesis,

University of Auckland].

https://researchspace.auckland.ac.nz/bitstream/handle/2292/47621/whole.pdf?sequenc

e=2

Landi, D., Flory, S. B., Safron, C., & Marttinen, R. (2020). LGBTQ research in physical

education: A rising tide?. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*, *25*(3), 259–273.

https://doi.org/10.1080/17408989.2020.1741534

Larsson, H., Fagrell, B., & Redelius, K. (2009). Queering physical education. Between

benevolence towards girls and a tribute to masculinity. *Physical Education & Sport

Pedagogy*, *14*(1), 1–17. https://doi.org/10.1080/17408980701345832

Lavietes, M. (2023, June 7). *Pride flag burned outside a City Hall in Arizona*. NBC News.

https://www.nbcnews.com/nbc-out/out-politics-and-policy/pride-flag-burned-city-hall-

arizona-rcna88112

Leahy, D., & Harrison, L. (2004). Health and physical education and the production of the 'at

risk self'. In J. Evans, B. Davies, & J. Wright (Eds.), *Body knowledge and control: Studies

in the sociology of physical education and health* (1st Ed., pp. 130–139). Routledge.

Lee, C. (2021). Inclusive relationships, sex and health education: Why the moral panic?

Management in Education, *37*(2), 107-112. https://doi.org/10.1177/08920206211016453

Lee, C. (2023, December 19). *Trans guidance for schools: The voices of young people are missing*. The Conversation. http://theconversation.com/trans-guidance-for-schools-the-voices-of-young-people-are-missing-207663

Leeder, T. M., Russell, K., Beaumont, L. C., & Ferguson, L. (2023). "The whole trip I basically had to hide": A Goffmanian analysis of Erin Parisi and negotiating the gendered mountaineering space. In J. Hall, E. Boocock, & Z. Avner (Eds.), *Gender, politics and change in mountaineering* (pp. 89–106). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-29945-2_6

Lenz Taguchi, H. (2013). Images of thinking in feminist materialisms: Ontological divergences and the production of researcher subjectivities. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *26*(6), 706–716. https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2013.788759

Leonard, N. (2020). The arts and new materialism: A call to stewardship through mercy, grace, and hope. *Humanities*, *9*(3), 84. https://doi.org/10.3390/h9030084

LGBT Youth Scotland. (2022). *Life in Scotland for LGBT young people.* LGBT Youth Scotland. https://www.lgbtyouth.org.uk/media/2712/life-in-scotland-for-lgbt-young-people-2022-e-use.pdf

Linville, D. (2014, October 17-18). *When words inflict harm: Documenting sexuality and gender identity microaggressions in schools for LGBTQQ youth* [Paper [presentation]. Georgia Educational Research Association Conference, Macon, GA, United States. https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/gera/2014/2014/47

lisahunter. (2019). What a queer space is HPE, or is it yet? Queer theory, sexualities and

pedagogy. *Sport, Education and Society*, *24*(1), 1–12.

https://doi.org/10.1080/13573322.2017.1302416

Literat, I. (2013). "a pencil for your thoughts": Participatory drawing as a visual research

method with children and youth. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *12*(1), 84–

98. https://doi.org/10.1177/160940691301200143

Locantore, D. C., & Wasarhaley, N. E. (2020). Mentally ill, HIV-positive, or sexual predator?

Determining myths perceived as representative of transgender people. *Group

Processes & Intergroup Relations*, *23*(3), 378–401.

https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430219835032

Long, R., Roberts, N., & Danechi, S. (2023). *Physical education, physical activity and sport in

English schools* (Research Briefing 06836). House of Commons Library.

https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN06836/SN06836.pdf

Longman, J. (2016, August 19). *Understanding the controversy over Caster Semenya*. The

New York Times. https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/20/sports/caster-semenya-800-

meters.html

Love, H. (2014). Queer. *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly*, *1*(1–2), 172–176.

https://doi.org/10.1215/23289252-2399938

Lowik, A. J. (2021). "Just because I don't bleed, doesn't mean I don't go through it": Expanding

knowledge on trans and non-binary menstruators. *International Journal of Transgender

Health*, *22*(1–2), 113–125. https://doi.org/10.1080/15532739.2020.1819507

Lucas-Carr, C. B., & Krane, V. (2011). What is the T in LGBT? Supporting transgender athletes

through sport psychology. *The Sport Psychologist*, *25*(4), 532–548.

https://doi.org/10.1123/tsp.25.4.532

Lupton, D. (2019). Toward a more-than-human analysis of digital health: Inspirations from

feminist new materialism. *Qualitative Health Research*, *29*(14), 1998–2009.

https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732319833368

Macgillivray, I. K., & Jennings, T. (2008). A content analysis exploring lesbian, gay, bisexual,

and transgender topics in foundations of education textbooks. *Journal of Teacher

Education*, *59*(2), 170–188. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487107313160

Mackay, F. (2021). *Female masculinities and the gender wars: The politics of sex*. I.B. Tauris.

MacLure, M. (2013). The wonder of data. *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies*, *13*(4),

228–232. https://doi.org/10.1177/1532708613487863

MacLure, M. (2017). Qualitative methodology and the new materialisms: A little of Dionysus's

blood? In N. K. Denzin & M. D. Giardina (Eds.), *Qualitative inquiry in neoliberal times* (1st

ed., pp. 48-58). Routledge.

MacLure, M. (2021). Inquiry as divination. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *27*(5), 502–511. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800420939124

MacLure, M. (2023a). Transversal inquiry. In L. A. Mazzei & A. Y. Jackson, *Postfoundational approaches to qualitative inquiry* (1st ed., pp. 243–255). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003298519-24

MacLure, M. (2023b). Ambulant methods and rebel becomings: Reanimating language in post-qualitative inquiry. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *29*(1), 212–222. https://doi.org/10.1177/10778004221106756

Malleson, K. (2018). Equality law and the protected characteristics. *The Modern Law Review*, *81*(4), 598–621. https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2230.12353

Malnick, E. (2024, March 16). *Tories plan to amend Equality Act to protect single-sex spaces.* The Telegraph. https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2024/03/16/rishi-sunak-amend-equality-act-single-sex-spaces-sport/

Malone, K., & Kuby, C. R. (2021). Posthumanism. In K. Murris (Ed.), *A glossary for doing postqualitative, new materialist and critical posthumanist research across disciplines* (pp. 98-99). Taylor & Francis Group.

Markland, B., Sargeant, C., & Wright, S. (2023). Teachers' beliefs: How they shape the support offered to trans-spectrum young people. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *124*, Article 104019. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2023.104019

Marston, K. (2015). Beyond bullying: The limitations of homophobic and transphobic bullying interventions for affirming lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) equality in education. *Pastoral Care in Education*, *33*(3), 161–168. https://doi.org/10.1080/02643944.2015.1074266

Martino, W. (2012). 'Undoing' gender and disrupting hegemonic masculinity: Embracing a transgender social imaginary. In B. Down & J. Smyth (Eds.), *Critical voices in teacher education* (pp. 125–138). Springer Netherlands. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-3974-1_9

Martino, W., Kassen, J., & Omercajic, K. (2022). Supporting transgender students in schools: Beyond an individualist approach to trans inclusion in the education system. *Educational Review*, *74*(4), 753–772. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2020.1829559

Marx, R. A., Roberts, L. M., & Nixon, C. T. (2017). When care and concern are not enough: School personnel's development as allies for trans and gender non-conforming students. *Social Sciences*, *6*(1), Article 1. https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci6010011

Massumi, B. (1992). *A user's guide to capitalism and schizophrenia: Deviations from Deleuze and Guattari*. MIT Press.

Mazzei, L. A. (2014). Beyond an easy sense: A diffractive analysis. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *20*(6), 742–746. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800414530257

McBride, R.-S., & Neary, A. (2021). Trans and gender diverse youth resisting cisnormativity in

school. *Gender and Education*, *33*(8), 1090–1107.

https://doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2021.1884201

Mccaughey, C., & Fletcher, T. (2020). Pre-service teachers' experiences of learning to teach

LGBTQ students in health and physical education. *Revue phénEPS/PHEnex

Journal*, *11*(1), 1-18.

McConnell, F. (2024, April 11). *Hilary Cass's proposals are mostly common sense. She must

reject anti-trans bias with the same clarity.* The Guardian.

https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2024/apr/11/hilary-cass-trans-children-

review

McDonald, J. (2013). Coming out in the field: A queer reflexive account of shifting researcher

identity. *Management Learning*, *44*(2), 127–143.

https://doi.org/10.1177/1350507612473711

McGlashan, H., & Fitzpatrick, K. (2018). 'I use any pronouns, and I'm questioning everything

else': Transgender youth and the issue of gender pronouns. *Sex Education*, *18*(3), 239–

252. https://doi.org/10.1080/14681811.2017.1419949

McInroy, L. B., & Craig, S. L. (2015). Transgender representation in offline and online media:

LGBTQ youth perspectives. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*,

25(6), 606–617. https://doi.org/10.1080/10911359.2014.995392

McIntosh-Dalmedo, S., Lane, A. M., Nicholls, W., & Devonport, T. J. (2023). Investigating the

    effects of a physical education (PE) kit intervention on female adolescent body esteem.

    Children, *10*(6), Article 938. https://doi.org/10.3390/children10060938

McKechnie, D. G. J., O'Nions, E., Bailey, J., Hobbs, L., Gillespie, F., & Petersen, I. (2023).

    Transgender identity in young people and adults recorded in UK primary care electronic

    patient records: Retrospective, dynamic, cohort study. *BMJ Medicine*, *2*(1), Article

    e000499. https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjmed-2023-000499

McLaren, J. T., Bryant, S., & Brown, B. (2021). "See me! Recognize me!" An analysis of

    transgender media representation. *Communication Quarterly*, *69*(2), 172–191.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/01463373.2021.1901759

McLean, C. (2021). The Growth of the anti-transgender movement in the United Kingdom. The

    silent radicalization of the British electorate. *International Journal of Sociology*, *51*(6),

    473–482. https://doi.org/10.1080/00207659.2021.1939946

McLemore, K. A. (2015). Experiences with misgendering: Identity misclassification of

    transgender spectrum individuals. *Self and Identity*, *14*(1), 51–74.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/15298868.2014.950691

McLemore, K. A. (2018). A minority stress perspective on transgender individuals' experiences

    with misgendering. *Stigma and Health*, *3*(1), 53–64. https://doi.org/10.1037/sah0000070

Mermaids. (2023, June 15). *New NHS England guidelines restricting future access to puberty blockers: Our analysis*. Mermaids. https://mermaidsuk.org.uk/news/new-nhs-england-guidelines-restricting-future-access-to-puberty-blockers-our-analysis/

Mermaids. (2024, January 10). *What does the proposed trans schools guidance really say? A Mermaids Explainer*. Mermaids. https://mermaidsuk.org.uk/news/trans-schools-guidance-explainer/

Messner, M. A. (1988). Sports and male domination: The female athlete as contested ideological terrain. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, *5*(3), 197–211.

Messner, M. A. (2002). *Taking the field: Women, men, and sports*. University of Minnesota Press.

Messner, M. A., & Bozada-Deas, S. (2009). Separating the men from the moms: The making of adult gender segregation in youth sports. *Gender & Society*, *23*(1), 49–71. https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243208327363

Meyer, E. J., Quantz, M., Taylor, C., & Peter, T. (2019). Elementary teachers' experiences with LGBTQ-inclusive education: Addressing fears with knowledge to improve confidence and practices. *Theory Into Practice*, *58*(1), 6–17. https://doi.org/10.1080/00405841.2018.1536922

Meyer, E. J., Tilland-Stafford, A., & Airton, L. (2016). Transgender and gender-creative students in PK–12 schools: What we can learn from their teachers. *Teachers College Record: The*

Voice of Scholarship in Education, *118*(8), 1–50.

https://doi.org/10.1177/016146811611800806

Meyer, I. H. (2003). Prejudice, social stress, and mental health in lesbian, gay, and bisexual

populations: Conceptual issues and research evidence. *Psychological Bulletin*, *129*(5),

674–697. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.129.5.674

Miller, D. (2010). *Stuff*. Polity Press.

Miller, sj. (2016). Trans*+ing classrooms: The pedagogy of refusal as mediator for learning.

Social Sciences, *5*(3), Article 34. https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci5030034

Milton, J. (2022, May 28). *Attorney general Suella Braverman says schools have no obligation

to affirm trans pupils.* Pink News. https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2022/05/28/attorney-

general-suella-braverman-trans-schools/

Mirabella, M., Giovanardi, G., Fortunato, A., Senofonte, G., Lombardo, F., Lingiardi, V., &

Speranza, A. M. (2020). The body I live in. Perceptions and meanings of body

dissatisfaction in young transgender adults: A qualitative study. *Journal of Clinical

Medicine*, *9*(11), Article 3733. https://doi.org/10.3390/jcm9113733

Mol, A. (2008). I eat an apple. On theorizing subjectivities. *Subjectivity*, *22*(1), 28–37.

https://doi.org/10.1057/sub.2008.2

Monforte, J., & Smith, B. (2021). Conventional and postqualitative research: An invitation to

dialogue. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *27*(6), 650–660.

https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800420962469

Montiel-McCann, C. S. (2023). "It's like we are not human": Discourses of humanisation and

otherness in the representation of trans identity in British broadsheet newspapers.

Feminist Media Studies, *23*(6), 2962–2978.

https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2022.2097727

Moore, J. W. (2016). What is the sense of agency and why does it matter? *Frontiers in*

Psychology, *7*, Article 1272. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2016.01272

Morgan, W. J. (2006). Philosophy and physical education. In D. Kirk, D. Macdonald, & M.

O'Sullivan, *Handbook of physical education* (pp. 97–108). SAGE Publications Ltd.

https://doi.org/10.4135/9781848608009.n6

Moss, L., & Parry, J. (2023, May 19). *Teachers walk tightropes in face of no trans guidance.*

BBC News. https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-65473198

Ms R Taylor v. Jaguar Land Rover Ltd (2020) ET | 1304471/2018.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5f68b2ebe90e077f5ac3bb5a/Ms_R_Taylo

r_V_Jaguar_Land_Rover_Ltd_-_1304471_2018_-_judgment.pdf

Muchicko, M. M., Lepp, A., & Barkley, J. E. (2014). Peer victimization, social support and

leisure-time physical activity in transgender and cisgender individuals. *Leisure/Loisir*,

38(3–4), 295–308. https://doi.org/10.1080/14927713.2015.1048088

Müller, J., & Böhlke, N. (2021). Physical education from LGBTQ+ students' perspective. A

systematic review of qualitative studies. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*, 1–16.

https://doi.org/10.1080/17408989.2021.2014434

Muñoz-Plaza, C., Quinn, S. C., & Rounds, K. A. (2002). Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender

students: Perceived social support in the high school environment. *The High School

Journal*, *85*(4), 52–63. https://doi.org/10.1353/hsj.2002.0011

Munro, B. (2010). Caster Semenya: Gods and monsters. *Safundi*, *11*(4), 383–396.

https://doi.org/10.1080/17533171.2010.511782

Murphy, B., Dionigi, R. A., & Litchfield, C. (2014). Physical education and female participation: A

case study of teachers' perspectives and strategies. *Issues in Educational Research*,

24(3), 241–259. https://www.iier.org.au/iier24/murphy.pdf

Mustanski, B. (2011). Ethical and regulatory issues with conducting sexuality research with

LGBT adolescents: A call to action for a scientifically informed approach. *Archives of

Sexual Behavior*, *40*(4), 673–686. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-011-9745-1

Nagoshi, J. L., Nagoshi, C. T., & Brzuzy, S. (2013). *Gender and sexual identity: Transcending

feminist and queer theory*. Springer.

Namaste, V. K. (2000). *Invisible lives: The erasure of transsexual and transgendered people*.

University of Chicago Press.

National Education Union. (2023). *Education, the law and you*. National Education Union.

  https://neu.org.uk/sites/default/files/2023-

  07/NEU3002%20Lecture%20Notes%20Education%20the%20law%20and%20you%20W

  EB_3.pdf

National Union of Students. (2012). *Out in sport: LGBT+ students' experience of sport.* National

  Union of Students. https://www.nusconnect.org.uk/resources/out-in-sport-lgbt-students-

  experiences-of-sport-2012

Neary, A. (2013). Lesbian and gay teachers' experiences of 'coming out' in Irish schools.

  British Journal of Sociology of Education, *34*(4), 583–602.

  https://doi.org/10.1080/01425692.2012.722281

Neary, A., & McBride, R.-S. (2021). Beyond inclusion: Trans and gender diverse young

  people's experiences of PE and school sport. *Sport, Education and Society*, 1–14.

  https://doi.org/10.1080/13573322.2021.2017272

Newbury, P. (2013). *Disrupting the politics of etiquette*. Cisnormativity.

  https://cisnormativity.wordpress.com/2013/08/17/disrupting-thepolitics-of-etiquette/

Newman, C. E., Prankumar, S. K., Cover, R., Rasmussen, M. L., Marshall, D., & Aggleton, P.

  (2021). Inclusive health care for LGBTQ+ youth: Support, belonging, and inclusivity

  labour. *Critical Public Health*, *31*(4), 441–450.

  https://doi.org/10.1080/09581596.2020.1725443

Newman, C. E., Smith, A. K. J., Duck-Chong, E., Vivienne, S., Davies, C., Robinson, K. H., & Aggleton, P. (2021). Waiting to be seen: Social perspectives on trans health. *Health Sociology Review*, *30*(1), 1–8. https://doi.org/10.1080/14461242.2020.1868900

Newman, H. J. H., & Peel, E. (2022). 'An impossible dream'? Non-binary people's perceptions of legal gender status and reform in the UK. *Psychology & Sexuality*, *13*(5), 1381–1395. https://doi.org/10.1080/19419899.2022.2039753

NHS England. (2024a). *Independent review of gender identity services for children and young people: Final report*. NHS England. https://cass.independent-review.uk/home/publications/final-report/

NHS England. (2024b). *Puberty suppressing hormones (PSH) for children and young people who have gender incongruence / gender dysphoria*. NHS England. https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/clinical-commissioning-policy-gender-affirming-hormones-v2.pdf

Nicolazzo, Z. (2016). 'It's a hard line to walk': Black non-binary trans* collegians' perspectives on passing, realness, and trans*-normativity. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *29*(9), 1173–1188. https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2016.1201612

Nicolazzo, Z. (2021). Imagining a trans* epistemology: What liberation thinks like in postsecondary education. *Urban Education*, *56*(3), 511–536. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085917697203

Nixon, D., & Givens, N. (2004). 'Miss, you're so gay.' Queer stories from trainee teachers. *Sex Education*, *4*(3), 217–237. https://doi.org/10.1080/1468181042000243321

Norwich City Council. (2024). *Equality information report 2024*. Norwich City Council. https://www.norwich.gov.uk/downloads/file/9927/equality_information_report_2024

NSPCC. (2024a). *Safeguarding considerations for changing rooms: Schools briefing*. NSPCC. https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/media/xj4fcxsk/safeguarding-considerations-changing-rooms.pdf

NSPCC. (2024b). *Safeguarding LGBTQ+ children and young people*. NSPCC Learning. https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/lgbtq-children-young-people

Ntoumanis, N. (2001). A self-determination approach to the understanding of motivation in physical education. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, *71*(2), 225–242. https://doi.org/10.1348/000709901158497

Nxumalo, F., & Murris, K. (2021). Relationality. In K. Murris (Ed.), *A glossary for doing postqualitative, new materialist and critical posthumanist research across disciplines* (pp. 108-109). Taylor & Francis Group.

Nyong'o, T. (2010). The unforgivable transgression of being Caster Semenya. *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory*, *20*(1), 95–100. https://doi.org/10.1080/07407701003589501

Office for National Statistics. (2023a). *Gender identity, England and Wales: Census 2021*. Office

for National Statistics.

https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/genderidentity/b

ulletins/genderidentityenglandandwales/census2021

Office for National Statistics. (2023b). *Quality of Census 2021 gender identity data*. Office for

National Statistics.

https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/genderidentity/a

rticles/qualityofcensus2021genderidentitydata/2023-11-13#further-research-into-

gender-identity

Ofsted. (2022). *Research review series: PE*. Ofsted.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/research-review-series-pe/research-

review-series-pe#fnref:22

Omercajic, K., & Martino, W. (2020). Supporting transgender inclusion and gender diversity in

schools: A critical policy analysis. *Frontiers in Sociology*, *5*, Article 27.

https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2020.00027

Owusu-Sekyere, F., Rhind, D. J., & Hills, L. (2022). Safeguarding culture: Towards a new

approach to preventing child maltreatment in sport. *Sport Management Review*, *25*(2),

300–322. https://doi.org/10.1080/14413523.2021.1930951

Oyěwùmí, O. (1997). *The invention of women: Making an African sense of Western gender

discourses*. University of Minnesota Press.

Paechter, C. (2021). Implications for gender and education research arising out of changing ideas about gender. *Gender and Education*, *33*(5), 610–624. https://doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2020.1798361

Paechter, C., Toft, A., & Carlile, A. (2021). Non-binary young people and schools: Pedagogical insights from a small-scale interview study. *Pedagogy, Culture & Society*, *29*(5), 695–713. https://doi.org/10.1080/14681366.2021.1912160

Paluska, S. A., & Schwenk, T. L. (2000). Physical activity and mental health: Current concepts. *Sports Medicine*, *29*(3), 167–180. https://doi.org/10.2165/00007256-200029030-00003

Patel, S. (2021). Gaps in the protection of athletes gender rights in sport—A regulatory riddle. *The International Sports Law Journal*, *21*(4), 257–275. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40318-021-00182-2

Pattinson, E. M., Newman, H. J. H., & Kiemle-Gabbay, L. R. (2022). Challenges accessing physical activity from a transgender perspective: A systematic review. *Sport & Exercise Psychology Review*, *17*(2), 19–35. https://doi.org/10.53841/bpssepr.2022.17.2.19

Payne, E., & Smith, M. (2014). The big freak out: Educator fear in response to the presence of transgender elementary school students. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *61*(3), 399–418. https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2013.842430

Pearce, R. (2024, April 16). What's wrong with the Cass Review? A round-up of commentary and evidence. *Dr Ruth Pearce*. https://ruthpearce.net/2024/04/16/whats-wrong-with-the-cass-review-a-round-up-of-commentary-and-evidence/

Penney, D. (2002). *Gender and physical education: Contemporary issues and future directions*. Routledge.

Penney, D., & Evans, J. (2005). Policy, power and politics in physical education. In K. Green & K. Hardman (Eds.), *Physical education: Essential issues* (pp. 21–38). SAGE.

Penney, D., Jeanes, R., O'Connor, J., & Alfrey, L. (2018). Re-theorising inclusion and reframing inclusive practice in physical education. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, *22*(10), 1062–1077. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2017.1414888

Pereira-García, S., Devís-Devís, J., López-Cañada, E., Fuentes-Miguel, J., Sparkes, A. C., & Pérez-Samaniego, V. (2021). Exploring trans people's narratives of transition: Negotiation of gendered bodies in physical activity and sport. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *18*(18), Article 9854. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18189854

Pérez-Samaniego, V., Fuentes-Miguel, J., Pereira-García, S., & Devís-Devís, J. (2016). Abjection and alterity in the imagining of transgender in physical education and sport: A pedagogical approach in higher education. *Sport, Education and Society*, *21*(7), 985–1002. https://doi.org/10.1080/13573322.2014.981253

Perlman, D., & Webster, C. A. (2011). Supporting student autonomy in physical education. *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance*, *82*(5), 46–49. https://doi.org/10.1080/07303084.2011.10598628

Perry, S. (2023, June 20). *Police 'assessing' Laurence Fox Pride flag burning video*. PinkNews.

https://www.thepinknews.com/2023/06/20/laurence-fox-pride-flags-video-police/

Peter, E., & Friedland, J. (2017). Recognizing risk and vulnerability in research ethics:

Imagining the "what ifs?" *Journal of Empirical Research on Human Research Ethics*,

12(2), 107–116. https://doi.org/10.1177/1556264617696920

Pfister, G. (1990). The medical discourse on female physical culture in Germany in the 19th

and early 20th centuries. *Journal of Sport History*, *17*(2), 183–198.

Phipps, C., & Blackall, C. J. (2023). 'I wasn't allowed to join the boys': The ideology of cultural

cisgenderism in a UK school. *Pedagogy, Culture & Society*, *31*(5), 1097–1114.

https://doi.org/10.1080/14681366.2021.2000012

Pickles, J. (2019). Including and involving young people (under 18's) in hate research without

the consent of parents. *Qualitative Research*, *20*(1), 22–38.

https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794118816622

Piro, J. M. (2008). Foucault and the architecture of surveillance: Creating regimes of power in

schools, shrines, and society. *Educational Studies*, *44*(1), 30–46.

https://doi.org/10.1080/00131940802225036

Pocock, T., & Miyahara, M. (2018). Inclusion of students with disability in physical education: A

qualitative meta-analysis. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, *22*(7), 751–766.

https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2017.1412508

Pollitt, A. M., Ioverno, S., Russell, S. T., Li, G., & Grossman, A. H. (2021). Predictors and mental health benefits of chosen name use among transgender youth. *Youth & Society*, *53*(2), 320–341. https://doi.org/10.1177/0044118X19855898

Pollock, L., & Eyre, S. L. (2012). Growth into manhood: Identity development among female-to-male transgender youth. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, *14*(2), 209–222. https://doi.org/10.1080/13691058.2011.636072

Preciado, P. B. (2019). *An apartment on Uranus*. Fitzcarraldo Editions.

Pride Sports. (2016). *Sport, physical activity & LGBT: A study by Pride Sports for Sport England*. Pride Sports. https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/pride-sport-sport-physical-activity-and-lgbt-report-2016.pdf

Puchegger, R., & Bruce, T. (2021). Reconceptualizing teacher identity: Teachers' becoming in the dynamic complexity of teaching situations. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education*, *40*(2), 178–189. https://doi.org/10.1123/jtpe.2019-0100

Quinn, T., & Meiners, E. R. (2011). Teacher education, struggles for social justice, and the historic erasure of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer lives. In A. F. Ball & C. A. Tyson (Eds.), *Studying diversity in teacher education* (pp. 135–151). Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Rachev, R. (2016). Assemblages: Assembling the unassembled. *New Materialism*. https://newmaterialism.eu/almanac/a/assemblages.html

Räsänen, K., Pietarinen, J., Pyhältö, K., Soini, T., & Väisänen, P. (2020). Why leave the teaching

profession? A longitudinal approach to the prevalence and persistence of teacher

turnover intentions. *Social Psychology of Education*, *23*(4), 837–859.

https://doi.org/10.1007/s11218-020-09567-x

Rasmussen, M. L. (2006). *Becoming subjects: Sexualities and secondary schooling*. Routledge.

Raun, T. (2015). Video blogging as a vehicle of transformation: Exploring the intersection

between trans identity and information technology. *International Journal of Cultural

Studies*, *18*(3), 365–378. https://doi.org/10.1177/1367877913513696

Rawlings, V., & McDermott, E. (2021). Pushing back on 'risk': Co-designing research on self-

harm and suicide with queer young people. In V. Rawlings, J. L. Flexner, & L. Riley

(Eds.), *Community-led research* (pp. 165–186). Sydney University Press; JSTOR.

http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv1rcf2jj.12

Reichl, S. (2004). Flying the flag: The intricate semiotics of national identity. *European Journal

of English Studies*, *8*(2), 205–217. https://doi.org/10.1080/1382557042000294738

Rennolds, N. (2022). *Doing relationships in a more-than human learning environment: A

posthumanist inquiry* [Doctoral thesis, University of East Anglia].

https://ueaeprints.uea.ac.uk/id/eprint/92119/1/2022RennoldsNMPhD%20-%20Final.pdf

Renold, E. (2019). Ruler-skirt risings: Being crafty with how gender and sexuality education

research-activisms can come to matter. In T. Jones, L. Coll, L. van Leent, & Y. Taylor

(Eds.), *Uplifting gender and sexuality education research* (pp. 115–140). Springer

International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-24205-3_6

Renold, E., Ashton, M. R., & McGeeney, E. (2021). What if?: Becoming response-able with the

making and mattering of a new relationships and sexuality education curriculum.

Professional Development in Education, *47*(2–3), 538–555.

https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2021.1891956

Renold, E., Bragg, S., Ringrose, J., Milne, B., McGeeney, E., & Timperley, V. (2024). Attune,

animate and amplify: Creating youth voice assemblages in pARTicipatory sexuality

education research. *Children & Society*, Article 12862.

https://doi.org/10.1111/chso.12862

Renold, E., Ringrose, J., & Egan, R. D. (2015). *Children, sexuality and sexualization*. Palgrave

Macmillan.

Richards, L., & Morse, J. M. (2013). *Readme first for a user's guide to qualitative methods* (3rd

Ed.). SAGE.

Riggs, D. W., & Bartholomaeus, C. (2018). Cisgenderism and certitude. *TSQ: Transgender

Studies Quarterly*, *5*(1), 67–82. https://doi.org/10.1215/23289252-4291529

Riley, K., & Proctor, L. (2022). A physical education/environmental education nexus:

Transdisciplinary approaches to curriculum for a sense of belonging. *Australian Journal

of Environmental Education*, *38*(3–4), 267–278. https://doi.org/10.1017/aee.2021.29

Ringrose, J., & Renold, E. (2014). "F**k rape!": Exploring affective intensities in a feminist research assemblage. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *20*(6), 772–780. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800414530261

Rippon, G. (2019). *The gendered brain: The new neuroscience that shatters the myth of the female brain*. Vintage.

Roberts, S. P., Trewartha, G., England, M., Shaddick, G., & Stokes, K. A. (2013). Epidemiology of time-loss injuries in English community-level rugby union. *BMJ Open*, *3*(11), Article e003998. https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2013-003998

Robinson, D. B., & Randall, L. (Eds.). (2016). *Social justice in physical education: Critical reflections and pedagogies for change*. Canadian Scholars' Press.

Robinson, K. H., & Davies, C. (2014). Doing sexuality research with children: Ethics, theory, methods and practice. *Global Studies of Childhood*, *4*(4), 250–263. https://doi.org/10.2304/gsch.2014.4.4.250

Robinson, K. H., & Ferfolja, T. (2002). A reflection of resistance: Discourses of heterosexism and homophobia in teacher training classrooms. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services*, *14*(2), 55–64. https://doi.org/10.1300/J041v14n02_05

Robinson, K. H., & Ferfolja, T. (2008). Playing it up, playing it down, playing it safe: Queering teacher education. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *24*(4), 846–858. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2007.11.004

Robinson, K. H., Denson, N., Davies, C., Bansel, P., & Ovenden, G. (2014). *Growing up queer. Issues facing young Australians who are gender variant and sexuality diverse*. Young and Well Cooperative Research Centre. https://researchdirect.westernsydney.edu.au/islandora/object/uws:24414/datastream/PDF/view

Roffee, J. A., & Waling, A. (2017). Resolving ethical challenges when researching with minority and vulnerable populations: LGBTIQ victims of violence, harassment and bullying. *Research Ethics*, *13*(1), 4–22. https://doi.org/10.1177/1747016116658693

Roulston, K., & Choi, M. (2018). Qualitative interviews. In U. Flick, *The SAGE handbook of qualitative data collection* (pp. 233–249). SAGE Publications Ltd. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781526416070.n15

Rubin, J. D., Atwood, S., & Olson, K. R. (2020). Studying gender diversity. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, *24*(3), 163–165. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tics.2019.12.011

Rugby Football Union. (2018). *RFU rules and regulations 2018-2019.* Rugby Football Union. https://www.englandrugby.com/dxdam/aa/aa6c359d-2ae0-42f8-873f-8e8c66488904/RFUHandbook2018-19_English.pdf

Rugby Football Union. (2022). *England Rugby - Gender participation policy.* Rugby Football Union. https://www.englandrugby.com//dxdam/67/6769f624-1b7d-4def-821e-00cdf5f32d81/RFU%20GENDER%20PARTICIPATION%20POLICY%202022.pdf

Russell, K. (2021). 'I don't think my sexuality would come into teaching at all': Exploring the

   borderland discourse of Australian LGBTQ+ pre-service teachers. *Gender and*

   Education, *33*(5), 562–577. https://doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2020.1798360

Russell, K., Leeder, T. M., Ferguson, L., & Beaumont, L. C. (2022). The space between two

   closets: Erin Parisi mountaineering and changing the trans* narrative. *Sport, Education*

   and Society, 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1080/13573322.2022.2029738

Sanger, T. (2010). *Trans people's partnerships: Towards an ethics of intimacy*. Palgrave

   Macmillan.

Sanzo, K. (2018, April 25). New materialism(s). *Critical Posthumanism Network*.

   https://criticalposthumanism.net/new-materialisms/

Savin-Baden, M., & Major, C. H. (2013). *Qualitative research: The essential guide to theory and*

   practice. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Saxena, S., Van Ommeren, M., Tang, K. C., & Armstrong, T. P. (2005). Mental health benefits of

   physical activity. *Journal of Mental Health*, *14*(5), 445–451.

   https://doi.org/10.1080/09638230500270776

Scales, P. C., Benson, P. L., & Roehlkepartain, E. C. (2011). Adolescent thriving: The role of

   sparks, relationships, and empowerment. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *40*(3),

   263–277. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-010-9578-6

Scandurra, C., Picariello, S., Valerio, P., & Amodeo, A. L. (2017). Sexism, homophobia and

transphobia in a sample of Italian pre-service teachers: The role of socio-demographic

features. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, *43*(2), 245–261.

https://doi.org/10.1080/02607476.2017.1286794

Schneider, M. S., & Dimito, A. (2008). Educators' beliefs about raising lesbian, gay, bisexual,

and transgender issues in the schools: The experience in Ontario, Canada. *Journal of

LGBT Youth*, *5*(4), 49–71. https://doi.org/10.1080/19361650802223003

Schultz, J. (2011). Caster Semenya and the "question of too": Sex testing in elite women's

sport and the issue of advantage. *Quest*, *63*(2), 228–243.

https://doi.org/10.1080/00336297.2011.10483678

Schultz, J. (2022). Sex segregation in elite sport. In G. L. Witcomb & E. Peel, *Gender diversity

and sport* (1st ed., pp. 13–33). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003050568-2

Scottish Government. (2021). *Supporting transgender young people in schools: Guidance for

Scottish schools*. Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/supporting-

transgender-young-people-schools-guidance-scottish-schools/

Scout, N. F. N. (2016). Transgender health and well-being: Gains and opportunities in policy

and law. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, *86*(4), 378–383.

https://doi.org/10.1037/ort0000192

Scovel, S., Nelson, M., & Thorpe, H. (2023). Media framings of the transgender athlete as

"legitimate controversy": The case of Laurel Hubbard at the Tokyo Olympics.

Communication & Sport, *11*(5), 838–853. https://doi.org/10.1177/21674795221116884

Scraton, S. (2018). Feminism(s) and PE: 25 years of shaping up to womanhood. *Sport,*

Education and Society, *23*(7), 638–651. https://doi.org/10.1080/13573322.2018.1448263

Setty, E., & Dobson, E. (2023). Department for Education statutory guidance for relationships

and sex education in England: A rights-based approach? *Archives of Sexual Behavior*,

52(1), 79–93. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-022-02340-5

Sherman, R. (2002). The subjective experience of race and gender in qualitative research.

American Behavioral Scientist, *45*(8), 1247–1253.

https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764202045008008

Shomura, C. (2017). Exploring the promise of new materialisms. *Lateral*, *6*(1).

https://doi.org/10.25158/L6.1.10

Siebert, V. (2014). *Michael Phelps: The man who was built to be a swimmer.* The Telegraph.

https://www.telegraph.co.uk/sport/olympics/swimming/10768083/Michael-Phelps-The-

man-who-was-built-to-be-a-swimmer.html

Siedentop, D. (2002). Sport education: A retrospective. *Journal of Teaching in Physical*

Education, *21*(4), 409–418. https://doi.org/10.1123/jtpe.21.4.409

Simmons, Z. (2020). *Exploring teachers' experiences of working with transgender young people in Northern Ireland* [Doctoral thesis, Queen's University Belfast]. https://pureadmin.qub.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/215214824/Exploring_Teachers_Experiences_of_Working_with_Transgender_Young_People_in_Northern_Ireland.pdf

Skewes, L., Fine, C., & Haslam, N. (2018). Beyond Mars and Venus: The role of gender essentialism in support for gender inequality and backlash. *PLOS ONE*, *13*(7), e0200921. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0200921

Skillen, F., Byrne, H., Carrier, J., & James, G. (2022). 'The game of football is quite unsuitable for females and ought not to be encouraged': A comparative analysis of the 1921 English Football Association ban on women's football in Britain and Ireland. *Sport in History*, *42*(1), 49–75. https://doi.org/10.1080/17460263.2021.2025415

Skinner, B., Leavey, G., & Rothi, D. (2021). Managerialism and teacher professional identity: Impact on well-being among teachers in the UK. *Educational Review*, *73*(1), 1–16. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2018.1556205

Slesaransky-Poe, G., & García, A. M. (2009). Boys with gender variant behaviors and interests: From theory to practice. *Sex Education*, *9*(2), 201–210. https://doi.org/10.1080/14681810902829679

Slovin, L., & Semenec, P. (2019). Thinking/writing within and outside the IRB box: Ethical disruptions of data in qualitative research. *Reconceptualizing Educational Research Methodology*, *10*(1), 14–27.

Smith-Laing, T. (2017). *An analysis of Judith Butler's gender trouble*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Smith, D. E. (1974). Women's perspective as a radical critique of sociology. *Sociological Inquiry*, *44*(1), 7–13. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-682X.1974.tb00718.x

Smith, M. J., & Payne, E. (2016). Binaries and biology: Conversations with elementary education professionals after professional development on supporting transgender students. *The Educational Forum*, *80*(1), 34–47. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131725.2015.1102367

Sørlie, A. (2020). Transgender children's right to non-discrimination in schools: The case of changing-room facilities. *International Journal of Children's Rights*, *28*(2), 221–242. https://doi.org/10.1163/15718182-02802001

Sosu, E. M., Mtika, P., & Colucci-Gray, L. (2010). Does initial teacher education make a difference? The impact of teacher preparation on student teachers' attitudes towards educational inclusion. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, *36*(4), 389–405. https://doi.org/10.1080/02607476.2010.513847

Sowards, S. K., & Renegar, V. R. (2004). The rhetorical functions of consciousness-raising in third wave feminism. *Communication Studies*, *55*(4), 535–552. https://doi.org/10.1080/10510970409388637

Sport Council Equality Group. (2021). *Guidance for transgender inclusion in domestic sport.* The Sport's Councils Equality Group. https://movingtoinclusion.co.uk/wp-

content/uploads/2023/07/Guidance-For-Transgender-Inclusion-In-Domestic-Sport-2021.pdf

Sport England. (2015). *Under the skin: Understanding youth personalities to help young people get active.* Sport England. https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/youth-insight_under-the-skin.pdf

St. Pierre, E. A. (2018). Writing post qualitative inquiry. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *24*(9), 603–608. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800417734567

St. Pierre, E. A. (2019). Post qualitative inquiry in an ontology of immanence. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *25*(1), 3–16. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800418772634

Standiford, A. (2013). The secret struggle of the active girl: A qualitative synthesis of interpersonal factors that influence physical activity in adolescent girls. *Health Care for Women International*, *34*(10), 860–877. https://doi.org/10.1080/07399332.2013.794464

Stanton, N. B. (2022). Assemblage. In P. Ballamingie & D. Szanto (Eds.), *Showing theory to know theory*. Showing Theory Press. https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/showingtheory/chapter/assemblage/

Stark, W. (2016, August 15). Intra-action. *New Materialism*. https://newmaterialism.eu/almanac/i/intra-action.html

Stevens, C. (2023). *'I feel like I'm bearing the burden to change the whole planet.' Secondary school teachers' perspectives on implementing the new statutory 'Relationships and Sex*

Education' guidance. What are the challenges that remain, and how might they be overcome? [Doctoral thesis, University of Essex]. https://repository.essex.ac.uk/36149/2/Claudia%20Stevens%20thesis%20upload.pdf

Stidder, G. (2000). Does sex matter? Pupil perceptions of physical education in mixed and single sex secondary schools. *British Journal of Teaching Physical Education*, *31*(4), 46–48.

Stone, S. (2006). The empire strikes back: A posttranssexual manifesto. In S. Stryker & S. Whittle (Eds.), *The transgender studies reader* (pp. 221–235). Routledge.

Stonewall. (2017). *School Report: The experiences of lesbian, gay, bi and trans young people in Britain's schools in 2017*. Stonewall. https://www.stonewall.org.uk/system/files/the_school_report_2017.pdf

Stonewall. (2023, December 19). *'Not fit for purpose'—Stonewall's response to draft trans guidance for schools in England*. Stonewall. https://www.stonewall.org.uk/about-us/news/not-fit-purpose-stonewalls-response-draft-trans-guidance-schools-england

Storey, E. (2024a). *Norfolk library under investigation for trans exhibition as council leader apologises*. Norwich Evening News. https://www.eveningnews24.co.uk/news/24254042.norfolk-county-council-leader-apologises-trans-display/

Storey, E. (2024b). *Library staff rebel after council leader criticises 'self harm' trans exhibition*. Eastern Daily Press. https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/24259879.norwich-millennium-library-staff-rebel-trans-art-show/

Storr, R., Nicholas, L., Robinson, K., & Davies, C. (2022). ' *Game to play?* ': Barriers and facilitators to sexuality and gender diverse young people's participation in sport and physical activity. *Sport, Education and Society*, *27*(5), 604–617. https://doi.org/10.1080/13573322.2021.1897561

Straube, W. (2020). Visibility and screen politics after the transgender tipping point. *Screen Bodies*, *5*(1), 56–65. https://www.berghahnjournals.com/downloadpdf/journals/screen-bodies/5/1/screen050105.xml

Swanson, K., & Gettinger, M. (2016). Teachers' knowledge, attitudes, and supportive behaviors toward LGBT students: Relationship to Gay-Straight Alliances, antibullying policy, and teacher training. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, *13*(4), 326–351. https://doi.org/10.1080/19361653.2016.1185765

Syal, R. (2022, April 4). *Trans people can be excluded from single-sex services if 'justifiable', says EHRC.* The Guardian. https://www.theguardian.com/society/2022/apr/04/trans-people-can-be-excluded-single-sex-services-if-justifiable-says-ehrc

Sykes, H. J. (2011). *Queer bodies: Sexualities, genders, & fatness in physical education*. Peter Lang.

Szalacha, L. A. (2004). Educating teachers on LGBTQ issues: A review of research and
program evaluations. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Issues in Education*, *1*(4), 67–79.
https://doi.org/10.1300/J367v01n04_07

Tarr, J., Whittle, M., Wilson, J., & Hall, L. (2013). Safeguarding children and child protection
education for UK trainee teachers in higher education. *Child Abuse Review*, *22*(2), 108–
115. https://doi.org/10.1002/car.2275

Taylor, C. A. (2013). Objects, bodies and space: Gender and embodied practices of mattering
in the classroom. *Gender and Education*, *25*(6), 688–703.
https://doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2013.834864

Taylor, J., & Dwyer, A. (2015). Sexualities and sensitivities: Queer(y)ing the ethics of youth
research in the field. In S. Baker & B. Robards (Eds.), *Youth cultures and subcultures* (1st
ed., pp.258-269). Routledge.

Taylor, N., Wright, J., & O'Flynn, G. (2019). Embodied encounters with more-than-human
nature in health and physical education. *Sport, Education and Society*, *24*(9), 914–924.
https://doi.org/10.1080/13573322.2018.1519785

Tebbe, E. A., & Budge, S. L. (2016). research with trans communities: Applying a process-
oriented approach to methodological considerations and research recommendations.
The Counseling Psychologist, *44*(7), 996–1024.
https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000015609045

The National LGB&T Partnership. (2015). *Lesbian, gay, bisexual & trans people and physical activity: What you need to know*. The National LGB&T Partnership. https://nationallgbtpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/lgbt-people-and-physical-activity-what-you-need-to-know.pdf

The Trevor Project. (2021). *2021 National survey on LGBTQ youth mental health*. The Trevor Project. https://www.TheTrevorProject.org/survey-2021/

Thelwall, M., Devonport, T. J., Makita, M., Russell, K., & Ferguson, L. (2022). Academic LGBTQ+ terminology 1900-2021: Increasing variety, increasing inclusivity? *Journal of Homosexuality*, *70*(11), 2514–2538. https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2022.2070446

Thorjussen, I. M., & Sisjord, M. K. (2020). Inclusion and exclusion in multi-ethnic physical education: An intersectional perspective. *Curriculum Studies in Health and Physical Education*, *11*(1), 50–66. https://doi.org/10.1080/25742981.2019.1648187

Thorpe, H., Brice, J., & Clark, M. (2020). *Feminist new materialisms, sport and fitness: A lively entanglement*. Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-56581-7

Thurlow, C. (2022). From TERF to gender critical: A telling genealogy? *Sexualities*, *27*(4), 962-978. https://doi.org/10.1177/13634607221107827

Toledo, W., & Maher, B. (2021). On becoming an LGBTQ+-identifying teacher: A year-long study of two gay and lesbian preservice elementary teachers. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *68*(10), 1609–1638. https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2019.1702350

Tompkins, A. (2014). Asterisk. *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly*, *1*(1–2), 26–27.

    https://doi.org/10.1215/23289252-2399497

Tompkins, K. W. (2016). On the limits and promise of new materialist philosophy. *Lateral*, *5*(1).

    https://doi.org/10.25158/L5.1.8

Torres, C. R., Lopez Frias, F. J., & Patiño, M. J. M. (2022). Beyond physiology: Embodied

    experience, embodied advantage, and the inclusion of transgender athletes in

    competitive sport. *Sport, Ethics and Philosophy*, *16*(1), 33–49.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/17511321.2020.1856915

Trans Media Watch. (2024). *Trans Media Watch and TransActual—Written evidence*

    (FON0022). https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/128369/pdf/

Travers, A. (2006). Queering sport: Lesbian softball leagues and the transgender challenge.

    International Review for the Sociology of Sport, *41*(3–4), 431–446.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/1012690207078070

Travers, A. (2018a). Transgender kids and sport participation. In *Sex, Gender, and Sexuality in*

    Sport. Routledge.

Travers, A. (2018b). Transgender issues in sport and leisure. In L. Mansfield, J. Caudwell, B.

    Wheaton, & B. Watson (Eds.), *The Palgrave handbook of feminism and sport, leisure and*

    physical education (pp. 649–665). Palgrave Macmillan UK. https://doi.org/10.1057/978-

    1-137-53318-0_40

Travers, A., & Deri, J. (2011). Transgender inclusion and the changing face of lesbian softball

    leagues. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, *46*(4), 488–507.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/1012690210384661

Travers, A., Marchbank, J., Boulay, N., Jordan, S., & Reed, K. (2022). Talking back: Trans youth

    and resilience in action. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, *19*(1), 1–30.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/19361653.2020.1758275

Treacy, M., & Nohilly, M. (2020). Teacher education and child protection: Complying with

    requirements or putting children first? *Children and Youth Services Review*, *113*, Article

    105009. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2020.105009

Troncoso, S. C., Schudson, Z. C., & Gelman, S. A. (2022). Women versus females: Gender

    essentialism in everyday language. *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research*, *52*(3), 975–

    995. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10936-022-09917-0

Truman, S. (2019). Feminist new materialisms. In P. A. Atkinson, S. Delamont, M. A. Hardy, &

    M. Williams (Eds.), *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Research Methods.* Sage.

    http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781526421036

UK Sport. (2021). *Transgender inclusion in domestic sport guidance published*. UK Sport.

    https://www.uksport.gov.uk/news/2021/09/30/transgender-inclusion-in-domestic-sport

Ullman, J. (2016). Teacher positivity towards gender diversity: Exploring relationships and

    school outcomes for transgender and gender-diverse students. *Sex Education*, *17*(3),

    276–289. https://doi.org/10.1080/14681811.2016.1273104

Vaclavik, D., Sánchez, B., Buehler, K., Gray, T., & Rodriguez, E. (2017). How to support me in

    connected learning: Youth perspectives on adult supportive behavior and its benefits.

    Journal of Community Psychology, *45*(7), 906–921. https://doi.org/10.1002/jcop.21901

van Midde, M. R. (2016). *A new materialist approach to transmasculinity: Bodies, acts, and*

    objects [Masters thesis, Lund University].

    https://lup.lub.lu.se/luur/download?func=downloadFile&recordOId=8890736&fileOId=88

    90737

van Midde, M., Virtù, L. V., & Cielemęcka, O. (2018). Editorial – Trans materialities. *Graduate*

    Journal of Social Science, *14*(2), 4-9.

    https://gjss.org/sites/default/files/issues/editorials/gjss_vol_14-2_0_editorial.pdf

Vannini, P., & Taggart, J. (2015). *Off the grid: Re-assembling domestic life*. Routledge.

Vega, S., Crawford, H. G., & Van Pelt, J.-L. (2012). Safe schools for LGBTQI students: How do

    teachers view their role in promoting safe schools? *Equity & Excellence in Education*,

    45(2), 250–260. https://doi.org/10.1080/10665684.2012.671095

Velija, P., & Kumar, G. (2009). GCSE physical education and the embodiment of gender. *Sport,*

    Education and Society, *14*(4), 383–399. https://doi.org/10.1080/13573320903217083

Vertinsky, P. (2017). Gender matters in sport history. In R. Edelman & W. Wilson (Eds.), *The*

    Oxford handbook of sports history (pp. 445–460)*.* Oxford University Press.

    https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199858910.013.31

Vincent, B. W. (2018). Studying trans: Recommendations for ethical recruitment and

collaboration with transgender participants in academic research. *Psychology &

Sexuality*, *9*(2), 102–116. https://doi.org/10.1080/19419899.2018.1434558

Wadham, J., Robinson, A., Ruebain, D., & Uppal, S. (2016). *Blackstone's guide to the Equality

Act 2010* (Third edition). Oxford University Press.

Wahlert, L., & Fiester, A. (2012). Gender transports: Privileging the "natural" in gender testing

debates for intersex and transgender athletes. *The American Journal of Bioethics*, *12*(7),

19–21. https://doi.org/10.1080/15265161.2012.683750

Walker, M., & Zychowicz, N. (2023). Trans participation in rugby: An unlawful exclusion? *New

Law Journal*, 8014, 7–8. https://www.newlawjournal.co.uk/docs/default-

source/article_files/specialist-equality-walker-zychowicz9da2f217-2a80-45a5-9a0c-

4aa912370251.pdf?sfvrsn=e00ae364_1

Walseth, K., Engebretsen, B., & Elvebakk, L. (2018). Meaningful experiences in PE for all

students: An activist research approach. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*, *23*(3),

235–249. https://doi.org/10.1080/17408989.2018.1429590

Walton-Fisette, J. L., Philpot, R., Phillips, S., Flory, S. B., Hill, J., Sutherland, S., & Flemons, M.

(2018). Implicit and explicit pedagogical practices related to sociocultural issues and

social justice in physical education teacher education programs. *Physical Education and

Sport Pedagogy*, *23*(5), 497–509. https://doi.org/10.1080/17408989.2018.1470612

Welsh Government. (2021). *The Curriculum for Wales – Relationships and Sexuality Education Code*. Welsh Government. https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2022-01/curriculum-for-wales-relationships-sexuality-education-code.pdf

Welsh Government. (2023). *LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales: Themes, evidence and actions*. Welsh Government. https://www.gov.wales/lgbtq-action-plan-wales-themes-evidence-and-actions-html

West, A., & Wolfe, D. (2018). *Academies, the school system in England and a vision for the future*. LSE Academic Publishing. https://eprints.lse.ac.uk/88240/1/Academies%20Vision%20Report%202%20JUNE.pdf

Whigham, S., Hobson, M., Batten, J., & White, A. J. (2020). Reproduction in physical education, society and culture: The physical education curriculum and stratification of social class in England. *Sport, Education and Society*, *25*(5), 493–506. https://doi.org/10.1080/13573322.2019.1619545

White, A. J., Batten, J., Howarth, N. E., Magrath, R., Piggin, J., Millward, P., Parry, K. D., Lang, M., Bullingham, R., Pearce, A. J., Morales, L., Turner, G., Humphries, C. T., Hardwicke, J., Anderson, E., Kirkwood, G., & Pollock, A. (2022). Imposing compulsory rugby union on schoolchildren: An analysis of English state-funded secondary schools. *Frontiers in Sports and Active Living*, *4*, 1-7. https://doi.org/10.3389/fspor.2022.784103

Whitehead, M. (2020). Aims of physical education. In S. Capel, J. Cliffe, & J. Lawrence (Eds.),

    Learning to teach physical education in the secondary school (5th ed., pp. 20–35).

    Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429264436-2

Whittington, E. (2019). Co-producing and navigating consent in participatory research with

    young people. *Journal of Children's Services*, *14*(3), 205–216.

    https://doi.org/10.1108/JCS-02-2019-0007

Wijngaarden, V. (2022). Paulo's concept of Osotwa: A relational (life) world. In P. Ballamingie,

    Showing theory to know theory: Understanding social science concepts through

    illustrative vignettes. Showing Theory Press. https://doi.org/10.22215/stkt/wv19

Wilchins, R. A. (2004). *Queer theory, gender theory: An instant primer* (1. ed.,). Alyson Book.

Wilkinson, S. D., & Penney, D. (2023). A national survey of gendered grouping practices in

    secondary school physical education in England. *Physical Education and Sport*

    Pedagogy, 1–16. https://doi.org/10.1080/17408989.2023.2236642

Williamson, H. (2023, June 18). *Rishi Sunak mocks trans women in leaked video footage*.

    PinkNews. https://www.thepinknews.com/2023/06/18/rishi-sunak-mocks-trans-women-

    leaked-video/

Williamson, R., & Sandford, R. (2018). *'School is already difficult enough...': Examining*

    transgender issues in physical education. Loughborough University.

    https://hdl.handle.net/2134/35926

Wilson, B. E., & Reiner, W. G. (1998). Management of intersex: A shifting paradigm. *The Journal of Clinical Ethics*, *9*(4), 360–369. https://doi.org/10.1086/JCE199809404

Wilson, E., Haver, J., Torondel, B., Rubli, J., & Caruso, B. A. (2018). Dismantling menstrual taboos to overcome gender inequality. *The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health*, *2*(8), Article e17. https://doi.org/10.1016/S2352-4642(18)30209-8

Witcomb, G. L., & Peel, E. (2022). Introduction. In G. L. Witcomb & E. Peel, *Gender diversity and sport* (1st ed., pp. 1–12). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003050568-1

Wolfe, M. J. (2021). *Affect and the making of the schoolgirl: A new materialist perspective on gender inequity in schools* (1st ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429345647

Wolowic, J. M., Heston, L. V., Saewyc, E. M., Porta, C., & Eisenberg, M. E. (2017). Chasing the rainbow: Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer youth and pride semiotics. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, *19*(5), 557–571. https://doi.org/10.1080/13691058.2016.1251613

Women and Equalities Committee. (2016). *Transgender Equality: First report of session 2015–16* (HC 390; pp. 1–99). House of Commons. https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmselect/cmwomeq/390/390.pdf

World Athletics. (2023). *Eligibility regulations for transgender athletes.* World Athletics. https://worldathletics.org/download/download?filename=c50f2178-3759-4d1c-8fbc-370f6aef4370.pdf&urlslug=C3.5%20%E2%80%93%20Eligibility%20Regulations%20Transgender%20Athletes%20%E2%80%93%20effective%2031%20March%202023

World Health Organization. (2022). *Physical activity*. World Health Organization.

https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/physical-activity

World Rugby. (2021). *Transgender guidelines.* World Rugby. https://www.world.rugby/the-

game/player-welfare/guidelines/transgender

WPATH. (2020). *Statement regarding medical affirming treatment including puberty blockers*

for transgender adolescents (pp. 1–3). World Professional Association for Transgender

Health. https://auspath.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/FINAL-Statement-Regarding-

Informed-Consent-Court-Case_Dec-16-2020.docx.pdf

Wright, T. E., & Smith, N. J. (2015). A safer place? LGBT educators, school climate, and

implications for administrators. *The Educational Forum*, *79*(4), 394–407.

https://doi.org/10.1080/00131725.2015.1068901

Wyss, S. E. (2004). 'This was my hell': The violence experienced by gender non-conforming

youth in US high schools. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *17*(5),

709–730. https://doi.org/10.1080/0951839042000253676

Youth Sport Trust. (2021) *Equality, diversity and inclusion*. Youth Sport Trust.

https://www.youthsporttrust.org/about/equality-diversity-and-inclusion

Youth Sport Trust. (2022). *PE and school sport in England: The annual report 2022*. Youth

Sport.

https://www.youthsporttrust.org/media/q2vh2gm4/yst_pe_school_sport_report_2022.pdf

Zeiler, K., & Wickström, A. (2009). Why do 'we' perform surgery on newborn intersexed

children?: The phenomenology of the parental experience of having a child with intersex

anatomies. *Feminist Theory*, *10*(3), 359–377.

https://doi.org/10.1177/1464700109343258

Gender diverse youth participant interview schedule

Focus area	Example questions/probes
Introduction	What's your age, school year, school? Can you talk about your identity and/or transitioning process? *What steps did you take? How did your school respond?*
Views towards sport, PA & PE	What are your views towards sport and PA? Would you describe yourself as sporty? *Expand...* What about PE? Do you enjoy it? Let's talk about your art – why did you create this? [Referring to arts-based task participants were asked to carry out]
PE context	Can you describe what your PE lessons look like *e.g. are they split by gender, ability, or any other way?* What activities do you do? Are there activities that you're not able to do? *Why?* What are your changing rooms & uniforms like? Have you observed or experienced negative behaviour/discrimination in PE? *Who from? Does anyone challenge this behaviour?*
Teacher attitudes and practices	Do you think your PE teachers consider gender diverse needs in their class? What behaviours/practices by the teacher support/deny this? *(E.g. Gendered language? Not challenging transphobic comments?)* Do you feel you're treated the same way as other pupils? Why? Do your PE teachers challenge transphobic or homophobic behaviour? Do you think your PE teachers favour certain types of students? What do they look like? Behave like?
Improving the PE setting	How could PE be improved to be more inclusive for gender diverse youth? Do your PE teachers support you in PE? *How? How could they do better?* Are there things that your school, teachers or students do well in PE to make you or other students engage in PE, feel included, enjoy lessons more? Do you think more education is required about gender diverse experiences and gender diversity in schools?
	Is there anything else that you'd like to mention or discuss in relation to this topic?

PE Teacher interview schedule

Focus area	Example questions/probes
Introduction	What is your teaching background? Years of teaching?
Class structure	Single-sex/mixed classes – how are your classes structured? *Why? What's informing these decisions? (E.g. issues around safety? School policies?)* What kinds of sports and activities do you offer? Is there choice? What are your views on mixed PE lessons? What kind of qualities do you emphasize/encourage in your lessons? *E.g. performance, competition, enjoyment, participation*
Equal opportunities	In PE generally, do you think that students are getting equal opportunities to engage? *Why do you think this is?* Do you think lessons/class structures cater to some student better than others? *Who and why?*
Attitudes towards gender diversity	*[Define 'gender diversity' first: understanding that gender is diverse, not confined within a binary framework of boy/girl - expressions outside of this binary e.g. trans, non-binary, fluid, non-conforming]* Could you tell me about your understanding and/or experience of gender diversity generally? How does this relate to what you see in school? Is it something you are seeing more of? Have you witnessed transphobia or other discriminative behaviour/language in lessons in relation to gender diverse identities? *How do you respond? What informs how you respond?*
Teaching gender diverse students	Have you had experience (as far as you are aware) of teaching students with diverse gender identities? *How did this go?* How do you respond to it in PE? How do other students respond to it in PE? *Witnessed any discriminative behaviours etc in PE?* Do you have ideas/advice on how you might create an inclusive PE environment for gender diverse students? *How would this look?* Do you know of policies within your school specific to trans students? Have you got any specific ones written for PE?
Training and education around LGBTQ+ inclusion	What is your understanding around equality legislation within education? *E.g. Equality Act - how might that be interpreted in PE?* What kind of training or education have you had around gender diverse students, supporting and including them? *How does that manifest within your lessons?* Do you feel you need more support and education on this?
	Is there anything else that you'd like to mention or discuss in relation to this topic?

APPENDIX B – YOUNG PERSON INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM

Hello! I'm Lois, and I'm a university   I'm doing a research study to find out

You can decide if you want to take part in the study or not. You don't have to   it's up to you.

If you decide you want to be in the study and then you change your mind later, that's ok. All you need to do is tell me that you don't want to be in the study anymore. If you have any

–
Once it's done, you can send a picture of it

Are there any risks involved in being in the study?
The interview should be an opportunity for you to talk openly about an important topic in a safe and confidential environment. Due to the nature of the research area, it is possible that some topics may come up that could cause upset, for example if you have had a difficult experience at school. Rest assured you'll never be asked to continue talking about things you're not comfortable with and if you become upset, we can take a break, move onto something else, or stop altogether. There are also a range of resources attached to this sheet for advice and support, should you require them.

Are there any benefits to taking part in the study?
Taking part in this project will allow you to share your thoughts and experiences on an important topic, and your contribution will help to raise awareness of the key issues in PE and how schools and teachers can work to create a more inclusive PE environment. It should be an enjoyable and beneficial experience where you can talk confidentially about important matters.

What will happen to information about me that is collected during the study?
All of the information that I have about you from the study will be stored in a safe place and I will look after it very carefully. I will write about things that we talked about in our interview and some of this work might be published or used in educational videos. But I won't say your name in any of this work and no one will know that you were in the study. The artwork that you make may also be published and viewed by other people too but your name will be kept anonymous and any personal details blurred out.

I won't tell anyone else what you say to me, unless something comes up which concerns me about your safety or someone else's. I may then pass this information onto your school or LGBT+ youth group.

By providing your consent, you are agreeing to me collecting information about you for the purposes of this research study. Your information will only be used for the purposes outlined in this Participant Information Statement, unless you consent otherwise. Data management will follow the 2018 General Data Protection Regulation Act and the University of East Anglia Research Data Management Policy (2019).

What if I would like further information about the study?
When you have read this information, I will be available to discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more at any stage during the study, please feel free to contact me via email to lois.ferguson@uea.ac.uk

Will I be told the results of the study?
Yes, you have a right to receive feedback about the study. You have the option of reading the whole interview. Please tick the relevant box in the form below if you would like to do this. To make sure you are happy with the interview and the things we discussed, you will be emailed a 1 page summary of the interview within 1 month of our meeting. If you aren't happy with the summary or think something I've said in it is incorrect, please let me know. You can also receive an overall summary of the study if you like – just tick the relevant box in the form below if you'd like to receive this and a link will be emailed to you that takes you to a UEA webpage publishing this summary.

What if I am not happy with the study or the people doing the study?
If you are not happy with how I am doing the study or have any complaints or concerns, then you or the person who looks after you can:

Email me at: Lois.ferguson@uea.ac.uk
If you would like to speak to someone else you can contact my supervisor:
Kate Russell, kate.russell@uea.ac.uk, +44 (0)1603 59 2924

If you are concerned about the way this study is being conducted or you wish to make a complaint to someone independent from the study, please contact the Head of the School of Education and Lifelong Learning, Professor Yann Lebeau at Y.Lebeau@uea.ac.uk.

How do I know that this study has been approved to take place?
To protect your safety, rights, wellbeing and dignity, all research in the University of East Anglia is reviewed by a Research Ethics Body. This research was approved by the EDU S-REC (School of Education and Lifelong Learning Research Ethics Subcommittee).

What is the general data protection information I need to be informed about?
According to data protection legislation, I am required to inform you that the legal basis for processing your data as listed in Article 6(1) of the UK GDPR is because this allows us to process personal data when it is necessary to perform our public tasks as a University.
In addition to the specific information provided above about why your personal data is required and how it will be used, there is also some general information which needs to be provided   for   you:

- ☐ The data controller is the University of East Anglia.
- ☐ For further information, you can contact the University's Data Protection Officer at dataprotection@uea.ac.uk
- ☐ You can also find out more about your data protection rights at the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).
- ☐ If you are unhappy with how your personal data has been used, please contact the University's Data Protection Officer at dataprotection@uea.ac.uk in the first instance.

OK, I want to take part – what do I do next?
You will need to fill in one copy of the consent form and return this to me via email to lois.ferguson@uea.ac.uk. Please keep the letter, information sheet and the 2nd copy of the consent form for your information.

This information sheet is for you to keep

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM (1ˢᵗ Copy to Researcher)

You should only say 'yes' to being in the study if you know what it is about and you want to be in it. If you don't want to be in the study, don't sign the form.

I, Click or tap here to enter text.[PRINT NAME IN CAPITALS], am happy to be in this research study.

In saying yes to being in the study, I am saying that:
- ✓ I know what the study is about.
- ✓ I know what I will be asked to do.
- ✓ Someone has talked to me about the study.
- ✓ My questions have been answered.
- ✓ I know that I don't have to be in the study if I don't want to.
- ✓ I know that I can pull out of the study at any time if I don't want to do it anymore.
- ✓ I know that I don't have to answer any questions that I don't want to answer.
- ✓ I know that the researchers won't tell anyone what I say when we talk to each other, unless I talk about something which affects my safety
- ✓ I know that my information may be seen by others but it won't include my name or other personal details

I consent to:

- **Providing some arts-based material made by me** ☐
- **Having audio recorded during the interview** ☐
- **Reading a summary of the interview to make sure I'm happy with it** ☐

(please click on tick boxes to fill in)

Please tick here if you would like to read the full interview ☐
Please tick here if you would like to receive the overall results of the study ☐
(these will be sent to you via email)

Signature (please type your name):
Click or tap here to enter text.

PRINT name (please type your name in capitals):
Click or tap here to enter text.

Date:
Click or tap here to enter text.

Helpful contacts for advice and support

Norfolk LGBT+ Project
Registered local charity supporting LGBT+ people's health and wellbeing.
Phone: 01603 219299
Whatsapp: +44 7526 635616
Email: info@norfolklgbtproject.org.uk
https://norfolklgbtproject.org.uk/

Mindline Trans+:
An emotional and mental health support helpline for anyone identifying as transgender, non-binary, genderfluid. We are also here to support family members, friends, colleagues and carers.
Helpline: 0300 330 5468 (Open Mondays & Fridays 8pm-midnight)
https://mindlinetrans.org.uk/

Switchboard LGBT+ helpline:
A welcoming, confidential and non-judgemental helpline that will listen to you and provide support and advice. All volunteers identify as LGBT+. Live chat available on their website.
Phone: 0300 330 0630 (Open every day, 10am to 10pm)
Email: chris@switchboard.lgbt
https://switchboard.lgbt/how-we-can-help

Mermaids:
Registered charity supporting gender diverse young people and their families in the UK
Email: info@mermaidsuk.org.uk
Phone: 0808 801 0400 (Open Monday to Friday, 9am to 9pm)
Crisis support: text MERMAIDS to 85258 for free 24/7 crisis support all across the UK

Young Minds:
Mental health support for young people.

Crisis support: Text YM to 85258 for free 24/7 crisis support all across the UK
https://youngminds.org.uk/

Gendered Intelligence:
Registered charity that works to increase understandings of gender diversity and improve the lives of trans people.
Phone: 0330 3559 678 (Open Mon, Tues & Thurs 2pm – 7pm, Weds & Fri 10am – 3pm)
Text/Whatsapp: 07592 650 496
Email: supportline@genderedintelligence.co.uk

APPENDIX C – PARENT/CARER INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM

Lois Ferguson (she/her)
Postgraduate Researcher
30.11.22

Faculty of Social Sciences
School of Education and Lifelong Learning

University of East Anglia
Norwich Research Park
Norwich NR4 7TJ
United Kingdom

Email: lois.ferguson@uea.ac.uk
Web: www.uea.ac.uk

Trans, Non-Binary & Gender Questioning Youth Experiences of Physical Education
PARENTAL/CARER INFORMATION STATEMENT

(1)   What is this study about?
Your young person is invited to take part in an activity to help inform a research study about the experiences of trans, non-binary and gender questioning youth in Physical Education (PE) in the UK. There is limited evidence on how the PE environment is experienced by this group, but previous research suggests that this subject is one which can be exclusionary and discriminative towards this group. The aims of the research are therefore, to gain insight on these experiences and provide recommendations to schools, educators and policy-makers on how to create a more supportive and inclusive PE setting for this group.

Your young person has been invited to participate in this study because they identify as trans, non-binary or are questioning their gender, are aged between 11-15 years old, participate (or have participated) in PE in a UK secondary school, and would like to participate in the activity. This Participant Information Statement tells you about the research study. Knowing what is involved will help you decide if you want to let your young person take part in the research. Please read this sheet carefully and ask questions about anything that you don't understand or want to know more about.

Participation in this research study is voluntary. By giving your consent you are telling me that you:
- Understand what you have read.
- Agree for your young person to take part in the research study as outlined below.
- Agree to the use of your young person's personal information as described.
- You have received a copy of this Parental Information Statement to keep.

(2)   Who is running the study?
The study is being carried out by the following researchers:
Lois Ferguson, Postgraduate Researcher in Education at the University of East Anglia
Lois volunteers at the Norfolk LGBT+ Project as a Youth Support Worker for the BLAH youth groups

Kate Russell, Primary Supervisor and Associate Professor in Physical Education at the University of East Anglia

(3)   What will the study involve?
Your young person will be asked to participate in two activities; an arts-based activity of their choice (e.g. drawing, painting, collaging) that allows them to express their thoughts and feelings towards PE, and a one-to-one interview with the lead researcher Lois to talk about their experiences of PE and how schools could work to create a more inclusive PE environment. The interview can be in-person or online and will be audio-recorded. No video

1

323

the purposes outlined in this Participant Information Statement, unless you consent otherwise. Data management will follow the 2018 General Data Protection Regulation Act and the University of East Anglia Research Data Management Policy (2019).

Your young person's information will be stored securely and your young person's identity/information will be kept strictly confidential, except as required by law. Study findings may be published, but your young person will **not** be identified in these publications if you and your young person decide to participate in this study. In this instance, data will be stored for a period of 10 years and then destroyed.

(9)   What if we would like further information about the study?
When you have read this information, Lois Ferguson will be available to discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more at any stage during the study, please feel free to contact Lois Ferguson, Postgraduate Researcher, lois.ferguson@uea.ac.uk,   07957993820   or   Kate   Russell,   Primary   Supervisor, kate.russell@uea.ac.uk

(10)   Will I be told the results of the study?
You have a right to receive feedback about the study. A link to this summary can be emailed to you once the study is complete. Please tick the relevant box in the form below if you would like receive this summary.

(11)   What if we have a complaint or any concerns about the study?
The ethical aspects of this study have been approved under the regulations of the University of East Anglia's School of Education and Lifelong Learning Research Ethics Committee.
If there is a problem please let me know. You can contact me via the University at the following address:

Lois Ferguson
School of Education and Lifelong Learning
University of East Anglia
NORWICH NR4 7TJ
Lois.ferguson@uea.ac.uk

If you would like to speak to someone else you can contact my supervisor:
Kate Russell, kate.russell@uea.ac.uk, +44 (0)1603 59 2924

If you (or your young person) are concerned about the way this study is being conducted or you wish to make a complaint to someone independent from the study, please contact the Head of the School of Education and Lifelong Learning, Professor Yann Lebeau at Y.Lebeau@uea.ac.uk.

(12)   OK, I'm happy for my young person to take part – what do I do next?
You need to fill in one copy of this consent form and return this, along with your young person's completed consent form, to me via email to lois.ferguson@uea.ac.uk. Please keep the letter, information sheet and the 2nd copy of the consent form for your information.

This information sheet is for you to keep

3

will be recorded. We can work together to find a safe and private place to meet if your young person would like to meet in-person.

(4)   How much of my young person's time will the study take?
The arts-based activity can last for as long as your young person likes. They have complete freedom to create what they want - it could be a 5 minute pencil drawing or a 2 hour multi-coloured painting. Once it's done, they can send a picture of it to me via email and then we can arrange an interview. The interview will last no longer than 1 hour and will be arranged for a day and time that is most convenient for your young person.

(5)   Does my young person have to be in the study? Can they withdraw from the study once they've started?
Being in this study is completely voluntary and your young person does not have to take part. Your decision whether to let them participate will not affect your/their relationship with the researchers or anyone else at the University of East Anglia or any LGBT+ youth group that they attend now or in the future. If you decide to let your young person take part in the study and then change your mind later (or they no longer wish to take part), they are free to withdraw from the study up to the point at which the data has been analysed. After this point, it will not be possible to remove the data but all data will be anonymised. They can withdraw by emailing me at lois.ferguson@uea.ac.uk, and there is no need to provide a reason for withdrawing.

(6)   Are there any risks or costs associated with being in the study?
The interview should be an opportunity for your young person to talk openly about an important topic in a safe and confidential environment. Due to the nature of the research area, it is possible that some topics may come up that could cause upset, for example if they have had a difficult experience at school that they start talking about. Rest assured they will never be asked to continue talking about things they're not comfortable with and if they become upset, we can take a break, move onto something else, or stop altogether. Advice and support has been provided as part of this consent form, and on your young person's consent form, in the form of helplines, websites and other resources that may be useful to both your young person and yourself. If any safeguarding concerns should arise from the discussion, these will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer at your young person's school or youth group, depending on the nature of the concern.

(7)   Are there any benefits associated with being in the study?
The arts-based activity and interview will allow your young person to express their views and thoughts on a range of topics around PE in a supportive and affirming environment. Your young person will play an important role in providing insights on a particularly under-researched area and in doing so, will be helping to raise awareness of key issues in PE and how they can be improved. It is hoped that this research can create positive changes to PE that will benefit trans, non-binary and gender questioning youth all over the UK.

(8)   What will happen to information that is collected during the study?
The arts-based material, audio recording and interview transcript will all be stored in a password-protected folder on the lead researcher's computer and will not be accessible to anyone else but them and their supervisor. No personal information (e.g. names, schools, locations) will be shared and your young person will be given a pseudonym in any writing to protect their identity. The information will be used as part of a doctoral thesis on this research project, and could be used in journal publications, conference presentations and other outputs such as an educational video.

By providing your consent, you are agreeing to us collecting personal information about your young person for the purposes of this research study. Your information will only be used for

2

PARENT/CARER CONSENT FORM (1st Copy to Researcher)

I, Click or tap here to enter text.[PRINT PARENT'S/CARER'S NAME], consent to my young person
Click or tap here to enter text.[PRINT YOUNG PERSON'S NAME] participating in this research study.

In giving my consent I state that:
✓ I understand the purpose of the study, what my young person will be asked to do, and any risks/benefits involved.
✓ I have read the Information Statement and have been able to discuss my young person's involvement in the study with the researchers if I wished to do so.
✓ The researchers have answered any questions that I had about the study and I am happy with the answers.
✓ I understand that being in this study is completely voluntary and my young person does not have to take part. My decision whether to let them take part in the study will not affect our relationship with the researchers or anyone else at the University of East Anglia or any LGBT+ youth group now or in the future.
✓ I understand that my young person can withdraw from the study at any time.
✓ I understand that my young person may leave the interview at any time if they do not wish to continue.
✓ I understand that personal information about my young person that is collected over the course of this project will be stored securely and will only be used for purposes that I have agreed to. I understand that information about my young person will only be told to others with my permission, except as required by law.
✓ I understand that the results of this study may be published, and that publications will not contain my young person's name or any identifiable information about my young person.

I consent to:

- **My young person providing arts-based material** ☐
- **Having my young person audio recorded** ☐

Please tick here if you would like to receive the overall results of the study ☐
(these will be sent to you via email)

Signature:
Click or tap here to enter text.

PRINT name:
Click or tap here to enter text.

Date:
Click or tap here to enter text.

4

Helpful contacts for support and advice

Norfolk LGBT+ Project
Registered local charity supporting
LGBT+ people's health and wellbeing.
Phone: 01603 219299
Email: info@norfolklgbtproject.org.uk
https://norfolklgbtproject.org.uk/

Switchboard LGBT+ helpline:
A welcoming, confidential and non-
judgemental helpline that will listen to you
and provide advice. For LGBT+ people
and their families.
Phone: 0300 330 0630 (Open every day,
10am to 10pm)
Email: chris@switchboard.lgbt
Live chat available on their website
https://switchboard.lgbt/how-we-can-help

Mermaids:
Registered charity supporting gender
diverse young people and their families in
the UK
Email: info@mermaidsuk.org.uk
Phone: 0808 801 0400 (Monday to
Friday, 9am to 9pm)
https://mermaidsuk.org.uk/parents/

Young Minds:
Mental health support for young people
and their parents
Parent helpline: 0808 802 5544 (Monday
to Friday, 9:30am to 4pm)
https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/for-
parents/

Gendered Intelligence:
Registered charity that works to increase
understandings of gender diversity and
improve the lives of trans people.

Phone: 0330 3559 678 (Open Mon, Tues
& Thurs 2pm – 7pm, Weds & Fri 10am –
3pm)
http://genderedintelligence.co.uk/support/f
amilies

6

APPENDIX D – TEACHER INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM

Lois Ferguson
Postgraduate Researcher
27.10.22

Faculty of Social Sciences
School of Education and Lifelong
Learning

University of East Anglia
Norwich Research Park
Norwich NR4 7TJ
United Kingdom

Email: lois.ferguson@uea.ac.uk
Web: www.uea.ac.uk

Exploring gender diversity and inclusion in Physical Education

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

(1) What is this study about?
You are invited to take part in a research study about gender diversity and inclusion in Physical Education (PE) settings in the UK. There is very little research in the UK that provides insight on this topic and how PE teachers might create inclusive environments for students with diverse gender identities such as trans students. This project aims to gain insight on this in order to highlight key areas what sort of understanding PE teachers have of gender diversity and how they might facilitate inclusive PE environments for gender diverse students, as well as what training and support they may need to do so. The research will also involve speaking with a range of trans, non-binary and gender questioning youth to gain an understanding of their experiences of PE. You have been invited to participate in this study because you are a PE teacher at a UK secondary school. This Participant Information Sheet tells you about the research study. Knowing what is involved will help you decide if you want to take part in the study. Please read this sheet carefully and ask questions about anything that you don't understand or want to know more about.

Participation in this research study is voluntary. By giving consent to take part in this study you are telling us that you:

  - Understand what you have read.
  - Agree to take part in the research study as outlined below.
  - Agree to the use of your personal information as described.
  - You have received a copy of this Participant Information Sheet to keep.

(2) Who is running the study?
The study is being carried out by the following researcher(s): Miss Lois Ferguson. She is a Postgraduate Researcher at the University of East Anglia, and this study forms part of her PhD thesis.
This will take place under the supervision of Dr Kate Russell (kate.russell@uea.ac.uk, +44 (0)1603 59 2924).

(3) What will the study involve for me?
The study will involve a choice of an in-person or online audio-recorded interview with myself. No video will be recorded. This interview will be arranged via email for a date and time that is convenient for you, once the consent form has been returned. The interview itself will involve a range of open questions which focus on exploring your understanding of gender diversity, promoting inclusion in PE and any experiences of teaching gender diverse youth e.g. trans or non-binary students. It is an opportunity for you to confidentially share your views and experiences on an important topic and help me to learn where improvements could be made to encourage greater inclusion for this group.

You will have the opportunity to review information generated about you prior to publication.

(4)How much of my time will the study take?
I anticipate that the total time commitment for participating in this study will be no more than two hours. This includes time spent reading the information sheet and consent form, communication to arrange the interview, and the interview itself which is likely to last for approximately one hour.

(5) Do I have to be in the study? Can I withdraw from the study once I have started?
Being in this study is completely voluntary and you do not have to take part. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relationship with the researchers or anyone else at the University of East Anglia now or in the future.

If you decide to take part in the study, you can withdraw your consent up to the point that your data is fully anonymised. You can do this by emailing me at lois.ferguson@uea.ac.uk and asking to withdraw from the study

(6) What are the consequences if I withdraw from the study?
You are free to stop the interview at any time. Unless you say that you want me to keep them, any recordings will be erased and the information you have provided will not be included in the study results. You may also refuse to answer any questions that you do not wish to answer during the interview. If you decide at a later time to withdraw from the study your information will be removed from our records and will not be included in any results, up to the point that I have analysed and published the results.

(7) Are there any risks or costs associated with being in the study?
It is possible that some sensitive or difficult topics may come up during the discussion. For example, if we discuss a scenario where a student felt excluded. Rest assured you'll never be asked to continue talking about things you're not comfortable with and we can take a break, move onto something else, or stop altogether. This information sheet and consent form includes some additional resources for support and training in case this is helpful for you.

(8) Are there any benefits associated with being in the study?
Taking part in this project will allow you to share your thoughts and experiences on an important topic, and your contribution will help to raise awareness of the key issues in PE in relation to gender diversity and inclusion for gender diverse youth. It is hoped that this project will influence schools, educators and policymakers in the UK and beyond to consider gender diversity and inclusion in PE more thoroughly and therefore should encourage more inclusive behaviours and practices in PE. In turn, this should help to ensure that all kinds of students engage well with PE and develop more positive connections with sport and physical activity.

(9) What will happen to information provided by me and data collected during the study?
The interview will be audio-recorded and this recording will be transcribed verbatim by myself. Both the audio recording and the interview transcript will be stored in a password protected folder on my university-provided cloud storage. All personal details (e.g. name, location, school) will be changed to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. Data will be published as part of my PhD thesis and may also be included in publications, conference presentations and other disseminations such as an educational video.

Your personal data and information will only be used as outlined in this Participant Information Sheet, unless you consent otherwise. Data management will follow the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018) and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), and the University of East Anglia's Research Data Management Policy.

The information you provide will be stored securely and your identity will be kept strictly confidential, except as required by law. Study findings may be published, but you will not be identified in these publications if you decide to participate in this study.

(10) What if I would like further information about the study?
When you have read this information, I, Miss Lois Ferguson, (lois.ferguson@uea.ac.uk) will be available to discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have.

(11) Will I be told the results of the study?
You have a right to receive feedback about the overall results of this study.
You can tell us that you wish to receive feedback by ticking the relevant box on the consent form.
This feedback will be in the form of a one page lay summary of the study.
This feedback will be provided at the end of the study. It will be published on the UEA webpage for this project, the link to which will be emailed to you at the end of the study. To make sure you are happy with the interview and the things we discussed, you will be emailed a 1 page summary of the interview within 1 month of our meeting. If you aren't happy with the summary or think something I've said in it is incorrect, please let me know. You can also choose to read the full transcript of the interview if you wish – please choose this option in the consent form below if so.

(12) What if I have a complaint or any concerns about the study?
If there is a problem please let me know. You can contact me via the University of East Anglia at the following address:

Miss Lois Ferguson
School of Education and Lifelong Learning
University of East Anglia
NORWICH NR4 7TJ
lois.ferguson@uea.ac.uk

Alternatively, you can contact my supervisor Dr Kate Russell, kate.russell@uea.ac.uk, +44 (0)1603 59 2924.

If you are concerned about the way this study is being conducted or you wish to make a complaint to someone independent from the study, please contact the Head of School of Education and Lifelong Learning Yann Lebeau, Y.Lebeau@uea.ac.uk, +44 (0)1603 59 2754.

(13) How do I know that this study has been approved to take place?
To protect your safety, rights, wellbeing and dignity, all research in the University of East Anglia is reviewed by a Research Ethics Body. This research was approved by the EDU S-REC (School of Education and Lifelong Learning Research Ethics Subcommittee).

(14) What is the general data protection information I need to be informed about?
According to data protection legislation, I am required to inform you that the legal basis for processing your data as listed in Article 6(1) of the UK GDPR is because this allows us to process personal data when it is necessary to perform our public tasks as a University.

In addition to the specific information provided above about why your personal data is required and how it will be used, there is also some general information which needs to be provided for you:

  ☐ The data controller is the University of East Anglia.
  ☐ For further information, you can contact the University's Data Protection Officer at dataprotection@uea.ac.uk

- You can also find out more about your data protection rights at the [Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)](#).
- If you are unhappy with how your personal data has been used, please contact the University's Data Protection Officer at dataprotection@uea.ac.uk in the first instance.

(15) OK, I want to take part – what do I do next?
You need to fill in one copy of the consent form and return this to the lead researcher, Lois Ferguson, via email at lois.ferguson@uea.ac.uk. Please keep the letter, information sheet and the second copy of the consent form for your information.

(16) Further information
This information was last updated on 24 November 2021.

If there are changes to the information provided, you will be notified by email

This information sheet is for you to keep

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM (First Copy to Researcher)

I, Click or tap here to enter text. [PRINT NAME], **am** willing to participate in this research study.

In giving my consent I state that:

- I understand the purpose of the study, what I will be asked to do, and any risks/benefits involved.
- I have read the Participant Information Sheet, which I may keep, for my records, and have been able to discuss my involvement in the study with the researchers if I wished to do so.
- The researchers have answered any questions that I had about the study and I am happy with the answers.
- I understand that being in this study is completely voluntary and I do not have to take part. My decision whether to be in the study will not affect my relationship with the researchers or anyone else at the University of East Anglia now or in the future.
- I understand that I may stop the interview at any time if I do not wish to continue, and that unless I indicate otherwise any recordings will then be erased and the information provided will not be included in the study results. I also understand that I may refuse to answer any questions I don't wish to answer.
- I understand that the results of this study may be published but that any publications will not contain my name or any identifiable information about me.
- I understand that personal information about me that is collected over the course of this project will be stored securely and will only be used for purposes that I have agreed to. I understand that information about me will only be told to others with my permission, except as required by law.

I consent to:

Audio-recording   ☐
Reading a summary of the interview to make sure I'm happy with it   ☐

Would you like to read the full interview transcript? Please tick box if YES   ☐
Would you like to receive a summary of the study results? Please tick box if YES   ☐
(These would be sent to you via email)

Signature:
Click or tap here to enter text.

PRINT name:
Click or tap here to enter text.

Date:
Click or tap here to enter text.

ETH2122-0179

SUPPORT AND TRAINING RESOURCES

Below are a range of resources that you can explore and utilise if you are looking for ways to create a more engaging and inclusive environment for trans, non-binary or gender questioning young people. I encourage you to share these amongst your colleagues and sporting communities to help others in gaining confidence and awareness on how to create thoroughly enjoyable and inclusive PE and sport environments.

Gendered Intelligence

Gendered Intelligence (GI) is a registered UK charity which works to improve understandings around gender diversity and supports trans people in all areas of their lives. Their website is packed with resources for professionals within education settings that focus on including and engaging trans students, and they offer bespoke training programs for schools and colleges, including programs specifically for sport and PE contexts. The following links may be of interest to you or your colleagues:

https://genderedintelligence.co.uk/support/education-schools.html
- This page includes a free leaflet on 'Good Practice When Working With Young Trans and Non Binary People (including those questioning or exploring their gender identity)' which could be shared amongst staff

https://genderedintelligence.co.uk/sport.html
- This page provides a range of examples where GI has worked within different sporting contexts (including with school/college PE staff) to improve inclusion for trans and non-binary people
- If you feel your department could benefit from some support and guidance in this area, GI would be happy to provide training and advice specific to your particular context

Brighton and Hove City Council

Brighton and Hove City Council have created a detailed guide to support trans and non-binary young people in education settings. It has been subject to multiple consultations and reviews and has been informed by trans and non-binary young people. It has been designed around existing legislation such as the Equality Act 2010, Ofsted guidance and statutory guidance on safeguarding. The 'Trans Inclusion Schools Toolkit 2021' can be found and downloaded on the link below:

https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/families-children-and-learning/support-school/trans-inclusion-schools-toolkit-2021
- Section 6 of the toolkit provides specific guidance on PE and school sport contexts

Stonewall

Stonewall is a registered UK charity which supports and advocates for LGBTQ+ rights and inclusion in all aspects of society. They have an abundance of resources for education settings and provide training programmes for schools. The following page includes a free downloadable document that may be helpful if you would like to find ways of creating a more inclusive curriculum in PE:

https://www.stonewall.org.uk/resources/creating-lgbt-inclusive-secondary-curriculum
- Page 27-28 in the document provides a range of tips and ideas specific to the PE context that you could try out in your own practice

ETH2122-0179

Group Rules Agreement

Here at ▮▮▮▮▮ *we want everyone to feel comfortable and respected; this is your safe space to be w o you are. T ese are rules that have been founded by the groups and we ask that you read through them and follow them as best as you can so that everyone can be comfortable when attending our sessions, workshops and outings.*

<u>General Rules:</u>

- ☐ *Respect others and be friendly, treat others how you wish to be treated.*
- ☐ *Listen politely and don't ridicule what other people say, we all have our own opinions and can disagree, but you don't have to put anyone down for them.*
- ☐ *Please keep your voices at a level so everyone can hear each other when chatting as it can become noisy when everyone is chatting at once.*
- ☐ *Help those new to group, it can be scary on your first few times but it's easier if you feel welcomed.*
- ☐ *Keep the venue clean, tidy up after yourself and respect the furniture, there are other groups who use these places.*
- ☐ *Be mindful of your use of language.*
- ☐ *Be mindful of what you say and the jokes you use, you don't know who you may insult or upset.*
- ☐ *You are free to share as little or as much as you want, there is no pressure to talk but we do encourage you to join in*
- ☐ *Zero tolerance on; Alcohol, drugs, sexual misconduct, violence, weapons, harassment, and discrimination*
- ☐ *Please inform the volunteers in advance if you wish to bring a friend to the group who identifies as LGBT+ or email* ▮▮▮▮▮ *o let us know.*
- ☐ *Please put your mobiles on silent, if you need to ring someone then leave the room.*
- ☐ *ENJOY YOURSELF ☐ this group is for you and you will get back what you put in*

Confidentiality Rules:

- ☐ *Find out if someone is okay with being approached in public/outside of group BEFORE you approach them, else you may out them unknowingly.*
- ☐ *If you take photos or 'selfies' with others in, get permission before taking/posting on any social media.*
- ☐ *Do NOT tell other people who you have seen at any of the* ▮▮▮▮▮ *groups unless they have said this is okay, you don't know who may know them or who they are out to*
- ☐ *Information that people have said and disclosed in group is to stay in group*

PRINT NAME:

SIGNED: DATE:

Exploring gender diversity and inclusion in Physical Education

Are you a PE teacher in a UK secondary school?

Are you interested in sharing your thoughts on gender diversity and inclusion in PE?

A researcher at the University of East Anglia is conducting a study to explore what PE is like for young trans and gender diverse students and find out how to encourage greater inclusion for them. We'd like to hear from PE teachers on their thoughts on gender diversity and inclusion in PE. If you're interested in participating or would like some more information, please email Lois.Ferguson@uea.ac.uk

APPENDIX G – GUIDANCE DOCUMENT FOR YOUTH SUPPORT WORKERS

Guidelines for LGBT+ Youth Groups involved in research
Research project: Trans, non-binary and gender questioning youth (TNB&GQ) experiences of PE in UK secondary schools
Researcher: Lois Ferguson - University of East Anglia, Norwich

This document outlines the research project and proposed protocols for the above research project. It's essential that young people that would like to participate in this project have a clear and thorough understanding of what it entails, and these guidelines have been created to ensure that LGBT+ youth group staff can help to facilitate this process smoothly. Therefore, though these guidelines may include safeguarding information that you already know, they are being provided to be certain that there is a clear and consistent process for all to follow. This will help to ensure that young people themselves are clear on the project, what their participation entails, and where they can go for support if needed. These protocols apply to cases where a young person at your LGBT+ youth group would like to participate in the project but is unable to obtain parent/guardian consent. The term 'Youth Support Worker' has been used in this document, but the researcher understands that this role may differ between organisations. This refers to a member of staff or volunteer that attends and facilitates the LGBT+ youth groups and supports LGBT+ youth.

Background
This research project seeks to work with trans, non-binary and gender questioning (TNB&GQ) youth aged 13-18 years old, to explore their experiences of Physical Education (PE) in UK secondary schools. There is very little research in the UK in this area and consequently, little is known about these experiences. Preliminary studies, however, have found that PE is not a subject that is often comfortable and inclusive for this group, so work is required to gain further insight on this and identify key areas for improvement to ensure that TNB&GQ youth can engage positively in this subject and reap it's many benefits. TNB&GQ youth will be invited to take part in this project via a recruitment poster which will be shared by the associated LGBT+ youth group. The researcher anticipates that most young people will be able to obtain parent/guardian consent and so this requirement is stated clearly on the poster. However, the researcher understands that this is not the case for all young people and therefore, there is a footnote on the poster highlighting that these young people (under 16 years old) who cannot gain parent/guardian consent should contact the researcher to discuss this further. In these cases, it is hoped that the LGBT+ youth group will be able to provide some additional support and safeguarding with the young person and this is detailed below.

Your role
Your role is to assess a young person's ability to understand the research project and what their involvement entails, to confirm whether they can provide informed consent to participate in the project. As these young people do not have a parent or guardian to go through this process with, it's important that there is a responsible other who can gauge their competence and

understanding and provide support where needed. This will help to ensure that potential risks to participating are mitigated smoothly. It may be that some difficult or sensitive topics or experiences are discussed during the interview and they may require a supportive person to talk to after. It is hoped that you will be able to discuss the project and assess their competency prior to the interview, and also be available once the interview is complete to have an informal de-brief or check-in with the young person.

Step-by-step plan
1. Young person contacts researcher expressing their interest to get involved but cannot gain parent/guardian consent
2. Researcher contacts young person's associated LGBT+ youth group organiser to discuss
3. A Youth Support Worker at the LGBT+ youth group who knows the young person arranges to speak with them (perhaps during a youth group session but in a private space)
4. Youth Support Worker reads through Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form
5. The Youth Support Worker works through the Participant Information Sheet with the young person and assesses their competence to consent using the Gillick competence approach (outlined below)
6. Providing the Youth Support Worker believes the young person has Gillick competence, they allow the young person to fill in the consent form and then fill in a parent/guardian consent form themselves and return both forms to the researcher
7. The researcher arranges a time and date to meet with the young person to conduct the interview (if possible, a youth group space which is safe and familiar to the young person)
8. Following the interview, the young person and Youth Support Worker are encouraged to check-in with each other to discuss how the interview went – Youth Support Worker to provide support if required

Assessing Gillick competence in young people

To assess the young person's competency, please utilise the Gillick competency approach below when discussing the project with the young person.

Professionals need to consider several things when assessing a child's capacity to consent, including:

- *the child's age, maturity and mental capacity*

- *their understanding of the issue and what it involves - including advantages, disadvantages and potential long-term impact*

- *their understanding of the risks, implications and consequences that may arise from their decision*

□ *how well they understand any advice or information they have been given*

□ *their understanding of any alternative options, if available*

□ *their ability to explain a rationale around their reasoning and decision making.*

(NSPCC, 2020; https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-protection-system/gillick-competence-fraser-guidelines)

If you have any questions relating to the research project or your role, please do not hesitate to contact me at any time. I am happy to chat on the phone, email or video call if preferred:

Mobile: ████████████
Email: ████████████████

References:

https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-protection-system/gillick-competence-fraser-guidelines

APPENDIX H – SUPPORTING DOCUMENT FOR ETHICS COMMITTEE

Safeguarding protocols for trans, non-binary and gender questioning youth participants without parent/guardian consent

Research project: Trans, non-binary and gender questioning youth (TNB&GQ) experiences of PE in UK secondary schools

Background
This document outlines the procedures that the proposed research project will follow in cases where trans, non-binary and gender questioning youth participants are not able to gain parent/guardian consent. As discussed in the accompanying EDU Ethics Application, some TNB&GQ youth participants may be unable to gain parent/guardian consent without the risk of harm occurring to the individual. This is because not all TNB&GQ youth are 'out' to their parent/guardian about their gender identity, meaning that they have not to disclosed their gender identity to parents/guardians. Research has shown that TNB&GQ youth may face negativity upon disclosing their gender identity to parents/guardians (Grossman et al., 2005), and this is often a reason why TNB&GQ are hesitant to do so. Of those that do disclose, some may face hostility from their parent/guardian because of their gender identity. This has been witnessed first-hand by the researcher, and various scholars have highlighted this potentiality amongst LGBT+ youth (Bower-Brown et al., 2021; Pickles, 2019; Mustanksi, 2011), arguing that youth such as these should not be put in a position where consent is required from a parent/guardian. Furthermore, these scholars, and those researching other vulnerable youth populations (Whittington, 2019; Coyne, 2010) argue that parent/guardian consent should not be a blanket requirement as young people vary in competency and maturity and many are able to make an informed and comprehensive decision in understanding and consenting to participation in research. This application argues that TNB&GQ youth without support or acceptance from parents/guardians should not be excluded from the project on this premise, but that additional protocols should be in place to ensure their safety throughout their participation in the project.

These specific protocols have been informed by research by a range of scholars, but it is primarily the ethical frameworks created by Pickles (2019) and Whittington (2019) that shape them. Both researchers explored sensitive topics with vulnerable youth populations and collaborated with staff at organisations (an LGBT+ youth group and a youth sexual health charity, respectively) to facilitate and support the recruitment, consent and data collection processes with youth. They worked closely with staff to assess youth competency and utilised the Gillick competence approach to inform this process. Both researchers emphasized the importance of having staff on board as they provided an additional level of safeguarding and familiarity for youth throughout the research process.

Recruitment and informed consent
A recruitment poster (attached to application) will be shared to LGBT+ youth group organisers who will in turn, share these posters via their various communication channels (e.g. Instagram, Twitter, email newsletter etc). The recruitment poster contains a footnote outlining what TNB&GQ youth should do if they would like to participate in the project but feel unable to gain parent/guardian consent. They will be asked to contact the researcher, who will then liaise with the young person's associated LGBT+ youth group. LGBT+ youth

groups are a form of youth community service and Article 11 of the European Convention of Human Rights (1950) states that these are protected spaces for young people to meet without the requirement of parent/guardian consent. Therefore, they are likely to be a space where TNB&GQ youth with unsupportive or hostile home environments can feel safe and comfortable in the knowledge that they are accepted and supported by those at the group.

A Youth Support Worker (YSW) at the organisation will proceed to discuss the research project with the young person, and ensure they are competent to consent by utilising a Gillick competence approach (see **'Guidelines for YSW'** document for more information). YSW's tend to work closely with the young people at youth groups, facilitating activities and supporting individuals where required, so YSW should be familiar with the young person in question to ensure there is that level of closeness and support present. This should help in gauging their ability to consent and in recognising when the young person might need support during or after their involvement in the project. BERA (2018) states that a 'responsible other' has the "responsibility for the welfare and wellbeing of the participants" (p.15), and this is key role of a YSW at LGBT+ youth groups, so it seems appropriate that a YSW could act in loco parentis for young people without parent/guardian consent. Furthermore, YSWs are required by youth group organisations to follow a code of practice which, at the Norfolk LGBT+ Project, enforces mandatory reporting. YSWs are therefore an important part of a young person's care and protection as they are in charge of observing youth during their time with them and reporting any concerns. Given that the YSW would be spending time with a young person to discuss this research project, any concerns throughout this process would be reported as required by the organisation's safeguarding policy.

Following this initial step, and only if the YSW feels that the young person fully understands the project and their involvement in it, the YSW will fill in the parent/guardian consent form and the researcher will arrange the data collection stage with the young person. Due to this particular approach of recruitment and associated protocols, it will only be possible for TNB&GQ youth that attend LGBT+ youth groups to participate in the project without parental consent. If there are TNB&GQ recruited through snowball sampling that are not LGBT+ youth group attendees, parent/guardian consent will be required as they do not have this additional layer of support that the youth groups provide.

Data collection
The ethics application outlines that TNB&GQ youth participants will be offered the option of meeting in-person or virtually (i.e., online video call). These options have been offered so that young people have autonomy over how they'd like to be involved; some may feel more at ease in the comfort of their own home, whilst others may prefer the face-to-face interaction. However, for those without parent/guardian consent, these options must be limited. If a young person were to participate in the interview via an online video call from home, they are at risk of family members walking in or overhearing the interview. This could put them at an increased risk of harm as the family are not aware of their participation in the project and could react negatively. Therefore, in these particular cases, the researcher will liaise with the young person and YSW to ensure there is a public but private space to meet (such as the LGBT+ youth group space).

Additional support materials

As well as ensuring that adequate support and guidance is in place for TNB&GQ youth in the form a YSW, participants will also be provided with support materials. These will be included in the Participant Information Sheet and consist of a list of support services (e.g. trans youth charities, mental health support) that participants can go to for help and advice. Websites, live chat services and telephone helplines will be included to ensure access to all, and the services will include some organisations that are local to the individual so they can receive support in-person if they wish. Providing TNB&GQ youth with these materials helps to ensure that, following their involvement in the project, they have additional layer of support that they can access whenever they wish. Whilst the YSW's will be able to check-in with participants, this may only be possible during LGBT+ youth group sessions. Many of the charities and services in the support materials provided 24/7 support.

Who do these protocols apply to?
It is important to note that these additional safeguarding protocols for non-parental consent youth participants will only apply to TNB&GQ youth participants who are associated with an LGBT+ youth group that is happy to follow the guidelines outlined in the 'Guidelines for Youth Support Workers in PE Research Project' document. Norfolk LGBT+ Project has confirmed that they are able to facilitate these additional protocols. The Kite Trust is not able to facilitate these additional protocols. It is possible that through snowball sampling, TNB&GQ youth from other LGBT+ youth groups across the country (that the researcher has not connected with prior to this application) may also be able to participate without parental consent, providing their LGBT+ youth group agrees to follow these protocols. In this scenario, the young person will be asked to connect the researcher with a YSW worker at their LGBT+ youth group in order to begin the process outlined above.

Managing potential adverse outcomes
Whilst these protocols have been developed to avoid potential risk of harm to youth participants, there is a possibility that a parent or carer could find out about their young person's participation in the research and this could negatively impact on the participant. However, it's important to consider that parent/carer responses to their young person's participation in research are always unpredictable – even when parent/carer consent is obtained, it is possible that a parent/carer may change their mind or negatively respond to their young person's participation after it has taken place. In all cases (whether consent is obtained or not), if a parent/carer responds negatively to their young person's participation in the research (e.g. by making a complaint), the following will occur. The parent/carer concern or complaint will be acknowledged and responded to directly. It will be highlighted that the project has had full ethical approval, with the various safeguarding protocols explained to highlight how the young person's safety and care is at the centre of this project.

With regards to youth who are taking part without parent/carer consent, it is important to consider the likelihood of their parent/carer finding out. Steps are being taken to avoid the parent/carer knowing about the project (by bypassing consent) so it is unlikely that the young person would disclose anything, and through providing the option to meet in-person in a safe place (as opposed to at home where a parent/carer could walk in on the meeting), it is unlikely that a parent/carer would learn about the research. As discussed previously, youth groups are a space where parent/carer consent is not required, so it's likely that some participants are already attending these without the knowledge of their parent/carer and this is legal. This

research extends on this confidential aspect by providing youth with an opportunity to participate in something meaningful to them without the possibility of negative responses from a parent/carer.

During the interviews, if safeguarding concerns are raised about the home setting, these will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer at the participant's associated LGBT+ youth group. This is in line with the Norfolk LGBT+ Project's safeguarding policies, that highlight how potential concerns about a young person's home situation should be reported immediately.

References

Bower-Brown, S., Zadeh, S., & Jadva, V. (2021) Binary-trans, nonbinary and gender-questioning adolescents' experiences in UK schools, *Journal of LGBT Youth*, Ahead-of-print, pp. 1-19.

British Educational Research Association [BERA] (2018). *Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research*, fourth edition, London.

Coyne, I. (2010). Research with Children and Young People: The Issue of Parental (Proxy) Consent, *Children & Society, 24*(), pp. 227–237.
Daley, K. (2015). 'The wrongs of protection: Balancing protection and participation in research with marginalised youth', *Journal of Sociology, 51*(2), pp. 121–138.

European Convention on Human Rights (1950). *Convention for the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms*, Rome: Council of Europe

Grossman, A.H., D'Augelli, A.R., Howell, T.J., & Hubbard, S. (2005) Parent' Reactions to Transgender Youth' Gender Nonconforming Expression and Identity, Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services, 18:1, 3-16, DOI: 10.1300/J041v18n01_02

Mustanksi, B. (2011). Ethical and Regulatory Issues with Conducting Sexuality Research with LGBT Adolescents: A Call to Action for a Scientifically Informed Approach, *Archives of Sexual Behavior, 40*(4), 673–686.

Pickles, J. (2019). Including and involving young people (under 18's) in hate research without the consent of parents, *Qualitative Research, 20*(1), pp. 1-17.

Shephard, R.J. & Trudeau, F. (2005). The legacy of Physical Education: Influences on adult lifestyle, *Pediatric Exercise Science, 12*(1), pp. 34–50.

Whittington, E. (2019). Co-producing and navigating consent in participatory research with young people, *Journal of Children's Services,* 14(3), pp.205-216.