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Masculinities and the Paedophile: Discursive Strategies in Irish Newspapers

Representations of the Paedophile in Irish Newspapers 2003-2005

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ABSTRACT

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Masculinities and the Paedophile: Discursive Strategies in Irish Newspapers

Key Words: Paedophile, Ireland, ‘Other’, Critical Discourse Analysis, Newspapers, Masculinities, Hegemonic, Deviant

This study examines the ways in which men who relate sexually to children, identified in the press as paedophiles, are represented in four leading newspapers in the Republic of Ireland in the period from 2003-2005. Utilising a qualitative research methodology namely critical discourse analysis, a social constructionist approach and informed by post-structural perspectives, this research examines the ways in which the masculinities of the man represented as ‘the paedophile’ are constructed. This research demonstrates how the normative is reinforced through the delegitimation of the masculinities of these men. The discursive regimes and cultural scenarios drawn upon in representations of ‘the paedophile’ reflect degrees of deviation from hegemonic masculinity in an always already ‘deviant’ group of men. Inactive heterosexuality and homosexuality are not hegemonic masculine practices, and the masculinity of supposedly, celibate clergymen and homosexual men is discursively subordinated. A consideration of the material dimensions of these discourses, illustrates how the media representation of men who relate sexually to children, confirms the normative contours of society and strategically excludes hegemonic masculinity and the wider society from association with adult male sexual interaction with children.
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PART A

Chapter 1 – Introduction

Chapter 2 – Types of Knowledge; Types of Truth

Chapter 3 - Men and Masculinities

Chapter 4 – Adult Male Sexual Interaction with Children
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Research suggests that the majority of adults who relate sexually to children are men. Scientific and popular discourses perpetuate the view that sexual relations with children are the behaviours of an atypical minority of men. With an examination of approaches to studying men and masculinities, and perspectives on man-child sexual interaction, this study uses a critical discourse analytical approach to examine the ways in which the masculinities of men, identified in the press as paedophiles, are represented in newspapers. Media sites are locations for cultural re/production, and the public derives much of its information about social issues from those sources. In this research study I intend to explore the ways in which the masculinities of men who relate sexually to children are represented in media discourses.

This research emerges out of my interest in explanations for adult sexual involvement with children and public perceptions of that phenomenon. In this chapter, I will outline the background to, and aims and objectives of, this research study. I then conclude the chapter by providing an overview of the thesis structure.

Background to the Study

In this study, I note the main theoretical perspectives on the phenomenon of adult (man)-child sexual interaction. These tend to locate that as problem behaviour within an individual and/or a problem within society. Public information on adult sexual interaction with children is largely gleaned from media sources; and as such the media can be seen to inform and construct popular discourse.

For this research four leading mainstream Irish newspapers are reviewed to find out how men reported as relating sexually to children are represented. Research consistently shows that the vast majority of adults who come to judicial, clinical and public attention are men. It is also
clear that women become sexually involved with children in a variety of contexts. However, socially women are usually seen as asexual nurturers. Their sexual involvement with children may be seen within a different framework to that of men, and perhaps under-reported to authorities. The social role of women facilitates their proximity to children, for example as a babysitter or child care worker, and they usually occupy the function of principal parental figure (Faller, 1995; Sarajidan, 1996). Gender stereotypes contribute to maintaining the myth that only men relate in a sexual way to children. This research study focuses on men’s sexual involvement with children.

Historically men - as gendered people, have been absent as ‘objects’ of study. In the arena of sexual interaction with children, the presence of men cannot be denied. Yet apart from feminist and pro-feminist theorising, any critique of men’s practices and masculinity as implicated in sexual interaction with children is limited. Normative men and hegemonic masculinity, as positions of privilege, need critical interrogation. This thesis places news reports of ‘paedophiles’ in the context of both what is known about men’s sexual interaction with children and also more general theorising about men and masculinities.

Definitional issues and uses of terminology will be dealt with in the following chapters, but it is clear that terms such as ‘paedophilia’ and the ‘paedophile’ are consistently used in press reporting. In order to arrive at an understanding of public perceptions mediated through press coverage, and to critically analyse media discourses, it was necessary to systematically review the newspapers for the terms paedophilia and paedophile. Where these search terms returned articles about the men involved, these were analysed to examine the ways these men – as men, and their masculine practices – are portrayed in mainstream media discourse.

An analysis of what is ‘unsaid’ is as revealing as the study of what is expressed in text. The paedophiles are portrayed as criminal, ill, not human and certainly as not men. In addition, the
text in the newspaper reports gesture to a variety of underlying meanings, opinions and ideologies. These need to be looked at in their social, political and cultural context.

**First Attempts**

My initial research question sought to consider the perception of gender identity and the perceived impacts of it on the lived experiences of some men who related sexually to children. I felt that this would allow for an exploration of possible relationships between the social construction of gender, a man’s perception of his gender identity and his sexual behaviour with children.

To conceptualise the relationship between gender and articulated sexuality, it is important to appreciate how people who relate sexually to children construct and make sense of their particular world, and the ways in which they interpret their own lives and their social environment. I proposed to use retrospective case histories and interviews with men who had been sexually involved with children. Life histories tap the continuous ‘lived experience’ of individuals, and life history methodology necessitates a close evaluation of the meaning of social life for those who enact it, revealing their experiences, practices and social world (Messerschmidt, 2000a, 2000b).

I proposed to examine men’s conceptions of their masculinity at various pivotal moments in their lives – for example: childhood, adolescence; at school, in employment/unemployment; family events, sexual experiences and to allow each person to express what he considers to have been pivotal points for him, over and above the more standard themes. A life history methodology affords the opportunity to examine in more detail the ways in which men in our culture experience gender at any one time. The proposed primary subjects of my research were men who were in or have been ‘in treatment’ for sexual involvement with children. I recognise that men who are in treatment cannot be representative of all men who relate sexually to
children and young people. They must be a sub-set and also are already being treated to alter their behaviour and thinking. The main benefit of addressing men within a treatment framework is the opportunity to access information and knowledge difficult to source outside of that environment.

The foregoing is what I had attempted to do when I began to study masculinities, and adult male sexual involvement with children. Despite positive and ultimately advanced discussions, over many months, with a leading treatment provider in Ireland, my opportunity to speak with men and collate their life history material was denied. Alternative treatment facilities run by the Irish Health Service and the Irish Prison Service were not open to facilitate my research. I also attempted to gain access to men in treatment in England, via HM Prison Service and community facilities, which also proved to be unsuccessful.

There are, no doubt countless reasons which may explain the denial of access to me and my work. Among those proffered were: the potential negative impact on the treatment dynamic from an outsider or her questions; the incomprehension as to what gender is, and how and why it is of relevance to ‘child sex abusers’; the small nature of the research arena and treatment milieu in Ireland, and thus the smaller likelihood of facilitating research from a critical, interdisciplinary perspective the result of which may be of dubious benefit to the treatment framework and practitioners working within it. I also think that some of the reticence to engage is in part due to a scientific hegemony in this area – as treatment providers did not appear amenable to a critical social scientific approach or more especially a gendered analysis in relation to men behaving sexually with children.

Using a non-normative masculine practice - sexual contact with children - in order to try to conceptualise the relationship among agency, gender, and sexuality, it is critical to appreciate how men who interact sexually with children construct and make sense of their particular world, and to comprehend the ways in which they interpret their own lives and their social environment.
Understanding changing positions through the life course, I sought to approach this as a research question with men who had been involved sexually with children. As it turned out this was not a possibility at that time. As the gatekeepers of knowledge—psychiatrists, psychologists, and child protection workers were protective of their cohort. It may also be an example of a subset of professionals not open to cross-disciplinary inquiry in the context of the problematization of gender. I wanted to start and finish a research study looking at men who interact sexually with children and the concept of masculinities. I explored the possibility of contacting representatives from paedophile groups through advertising and the internet in an attempt to explore the sense of masculinity of those who had expressed a preference for sexual relations with non-adults. I also set about researching the discourses of masculinity present in paedophilia websites. These two possible research avenues presented another series of challenging ethical issues and it was decided to proceed with those projects at another time.

Accepting the realities of access to data, time frameworks and so forth, an analysis of the discourses from newspaper coverage of the ‘paedophile’ provided a way to examine the dominant cultural perceptions of the masculine practices of these men through media representation. In the case of a review of newspapers, there were fewer ethical considerations in the sense that I would be accessing publicly available material.

**Methodology**

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is the approach taken in this research to analyse the text and discourses in newspaper representations of men who relate sexually to children. I believe this methodological approach allows the associations between text, discourse and an extra-discursive context to be made visible.

The choice of CDA is useful in the context of this research as it highlights the role of the media in the production and circulation of dominant discourses. I consider that the ways in which men
who relate sexually to children are constructed and represented have social and political relevance. Media representations contribute to the social construction of these men and influence the way the Irish public thinks about and responds to them and the issues involved.

Hook (2001) confirms that it is necessary to consolidate findings of textual analysis with reference to extra-textual factors such as history and materiality. This research moves from the text in the newspapers, through a critical analysis of the discourses of which they are a part, to consider their extra-discursive dimensions.

Control of knowledge crucially shapes our interpretation of the world, as well as our discourse and actions. Consequently it is especially relevant to critically analyse those forms of discourse e.g. media discourses and scholarly discourses, that essentially construct such knowledge. Articles from four leading Irish newspapers were reviewed for this study: The Irish Independent, The Irish Times, The Sunday Independent and The Sunday World newspapers, from 2003 to 2005.

**Aims**

The aim of this study is to critically analyse the representation of men who relate sexually to children in newspaper discourses. It seeks to expose the role of discourse in the re/production of a cultural consensus on some issues. One function of dominant discourse is to manufacture consensus, acceptance and legitimacy of that dominance (Herman and Chomsky, 1988). We shall see later that the dominant discourses in the media largely reflect medical and legal perspectives, and marginalise issues of gender and power relations, inherent in adult male sexual interaction with children.

Personal interactions and relationships take place through a lens of social meanings. The analysis of gender is important for understanding the interface of social structure, social
practices, and the individual. Gender is a key variable in understanding sexual behaviour – consensual and non-consensual. Gender, the concept of masculinity and masculinities, and the relationships between gender and male sexual interaction with children are important areas of study.

This study will show how the paedophile is ‘othered’ and distanced from normal society. In addition, it illustrates how this ‘othering’ is achieved through subordinating the masculine practices of these men. As constructors of public discourse, the media, have a role in the discursive management of the public mind (van Dijk, 1993), so that homosexual men and clergymen are perceived as sexually threatening to children. A critical analysis of media discourses suggest that the representations of men who relate sexually to children confirm the normative contours of society; while removing hegemonic masculinity and the wider society from any association with adult male sexual involvement with children. These discourses strategically exclude masculinity and heterosexuality from cultural interrogation.

**This Study**

Four leading Irish newspapers for the years 2003 to 2005 were reviewed, to critically explore how men who interact sexually with children are represented therein. In particular this research sought to examine the ways in which the masculinities of the men reported as ‘paedophiles’ are depicted. The social construction of gender brings with it culturally and politically dominant expectations. The discursive framework within which the paedophile is identified and positioned in society and the discursive resources which are drawn upon to depict his masculine practices are examined. I argue here, that the discursive resources are drawn from a society-wide version of hegemonic masculinity, which provides a cultural framework for what it means to be, and act as a man, in a heteronormative context.
Some of the literature I consulted during the course of this research stated at the outset that researching or writing about man-child sexual interaction (or whatever term was preferred)—child abuser, child sex offender, child molester, paedophile and so forth—especially from the perspective of the adult man involved, did not mean the author condoned adult sexual involvement with children. It seems as if any interrogation of this topic aside from a medical or forensic perspective is liable to be seen as approving of, if not at least neutral to, such behaviour. The proposed subjects of this study and their sexual activities made for a difficult research task. The difficulties were most insurmountable in terms of getting to speak with or hear from men who relate sexually to children and young people.

A challenge of this research has been to ‘incorporate’ the different terminology used by authors and researchers to describe these men. Most are working from a particular theoretical perspective in relation to adult male sexual interaction with children, and the ‘offence’ and the ‘abuse’ frameworks are used often. Being aware of the possible multiple definitions and representations of man-child sexual interaction and men who relate sexually with children, the newspapers were searched using the terms ‘paedophile’ and ‘paedophilia’. It is also important to recognise that the terms and sets of terms such as “masculinity” and “men who relate sexually to children”, are open to theoretical critique. They may be seen as ambiguous concepts in themselves, as indeed concepts of ‘relating sexually to children’ and ‘child’ are open to interpretation.

**Rationale for this Research**

This study accepts that men who interact sexually with children are not necessarily a mentally-ill subset of all men, but rather are located in a similar social, cultural and gendered environment to most men. The rationale for this study comes from the apparent non-interrogation of gender in adult sexual involvement with children, and particularly the masculinities of men who relate sexually with children. Despite theoretical and political developments in the studies of sexuality, gender and masculinities, and the recognition of men as more than the non-gendered
representatives of humanity, I believe that in the arena of men’s sexual involvement with children, the men continue to remain unnamed as gendered subjects. The gender of those men and the implication of gender relations in their sexual relations with children are not problematised.

This research explores some of the different ways in which gender, men and masculinities are rendered meaningful; a variety of explanations for adult male sexual interaction with children; and the dominant discursive strategies used in the representation of men who relate sexually to children. Both material and discursive aspects need to be analysed in relation to these constructions. It is clear from the news reports reviewed that there are blanket assumptions about these men and a number of behaviours are subsumed within the category of paedophilia. As such, the circulating discourses are both exclusionary and homogenizing.

Other research has shown the figure of the paedophile is un-gendered in his depiction. It is implicit that ‘the paedophile’ is a man, but this is rarely stated, and never investigated in the newspaper reports. The present study confirms this, while in addition, it shows that within the analytic framework of hegemonic masculinity, references to the subordinate masculinity of the man who relates sexually to children, distances him from other men. There is a particular emphasis on cases of ‘paedophile priests’ and men sexually involved with boys. This appears to indicate that the media focuses on men who are at some level ‘not real men’, because of the ambivalence or hostility that celibacy and homosexuality often inspire. In other words, a discourse of hegemonic masculinity plays a fundamental part in representations of men who sexually interact with children. This discourse is all the more powerful because it removes from discussion what could be a crucial hypothesis: that the masculinity of most men who are sexually involved with children, may in fact be a normative one.
Theoretical approaches used in this Research

A variety of theoretical perspectives and frameworks from which adult male-child sexual activities are explained, are outlined in the following chapters. All are open to critique and I have attempted to describe the perspectives from within their own paradigm and utilise the terms used from that theoretical orientation. Terms such as ‘child sexual abuser’, ‘child sex offender’, ‘child molester’, ‘paedophile’ all emanate from particular frames of meaning. In an attempt to stand outside these particular discourses, I have tried to use terminology such as ‘adult-child sexual interaction’, ‘man-child sexual interaction’ and ‘men who are involved/relate sexually to children’; which in the context of this research topic may be considered neutral, and thus itself assuming a perspective, in what is a morally loaded arena. The combined appeal of childhood, sexuality, violence, and moral indignation constructs a potent social issue. It is difficult in such a morally loaded arena to draw attention to the diversity of ‘child abuse’ experiences, and to the complex human motives and plays of power which are involved (Levett, 1995).

Social constructionism informs the theoretical perspectives guiding the methodology and analysis for this research. Social constructionism is a modernist position in terms of its continuing engagement with identity as a basis for politics, and may be seen as more materially specific than a strictly postmodern analysis. Nevertheless, social constructionism shares with postmodernist perspectives a stress upon the social as constructed and the way mind and actions are contingent on specific cultural norms and therefore changeable. There is a refusal of any simple recourse to biological, inevitable, universal or natural explanations (DeLamater and Hyde, 1998). Social constructionism stems from, and is influenced, by diverse disciplines and intellectual traditions (Burr, 1995; Pearce, 1995). Rather than an overarching explanatory theory, social constructionism stems from an epistemological position; it is an approach to sociology, psychology and other bodies of knowledge, which focuses on meaning and power. Burr (1995) identifies some basic assumptions of the social constructionist position, including:
• A critical stance towards taken-for-granted knowledge

• Recognising categories of understanding are situational, as the categories in language used to classify things are historically and culturally specific and emerge from the social interaction within a group of people at a particular time and in a particular place.

• Knowledge is sustained by social process; how reality is understood at a given moment is determined by the conventions of communication and discourses dominant at that time.

• Knowledge and social action are interconnected as reality is socially constructed by interconnected patterns of communication behaviour. Within a social group or culture, reality is defined not so much by individual acts, but by complex and organized patterns of ongoing actions.

In this study, gender and masculinity are taken as socially constructed, shaped by social, political, economic and interpersonal influences and modifiable. This research also places an emphasis on discourse as the vehicle through which the self and the world are articulated, and on how different discourses enable different versions of selves and reality to be built. This study illustrates how the masculinities of the men reported as interacting sexually with children are discursively constructed.

Masculinity does not exist as an ontological given but comes into being through social action. Connell (1995, 2002) suggests that diverse masculine identities have differing amounts of social acceptability and power. A particular version of hegemonic masculinity is presented in the newspapers reviewed for this research, with traditional gender role markers evident throughout. I acknowledge pro-feminist critical studies of masculinity which foreground gender and issues of power relations. I believe it is important to acknowledge both the discursive and material aspects of gender relations and their constitution and representation in culturally dominant
discourses. Accepting the plurality of masculinities and lived experiences, it is interesting to note the traditional version of masculinity that is propagated in Irish newspapers discourse.

Foucault (1981) urges us to link discourse to material practices. From the construction of the ‘paedophile’ in western media, culture and society, it seems ‘Otherness’ is invoked to create a distance between what are considered deviant sexual behaviours and so-called ‘normality’. This has the effect of deferring an interrogation of the fact that much man-child sexual contact takes place among ‘ordinary’ people and those known to the child, rather than at the hands of a stranger, and a marginalized sexually perverted caricature. This research demonstrates that these ‘othered’ men are distanced, via their masculine social position and status, from the traditional or hegemonic version of masculinity that is culturally significant.

This research shows that there is an anomaly evident in the media discourses. The man represented as a paedophile is un-gendered in as much as the fact of him being a man is not discussed. On the other hand, as part of an ‘othering’ process, and distancing from normative society and masculinity, the masculinity of the man represented as a paedophile is delegitimated. Socially dominant masculinities propel the marginalisation or delegitimation of alternatives (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005: p846). The press can present stories about paedophiles and paedophilia – topics which are enormously culturally distressing, in ways that ultimately do not distress. Cultural assumptions in relation to institutions such as family, normative constructions of heterosexuality and masculinity are left undisturbed. There are few if any discussions about possible linkages, associations or implications between men who relate sexually with children, and other men and women and social practices.
**Structure of Thesis**

The thesis is divided into 3 parts.

**Part A**

After this Introduction, Chapter 2 addresses ‘Ways of Knowing, Types of Truth’, and considers general issues relating to the creation and legitimation of scientific and social scientific research and knowledge. There is a discussion of men and masculinities in Chapter 3, with an overview of the ways in which gender, men and masculinity/ies have been theorized over time. Chapter 4 contains a review of the literature in relation to explanations for adult male sexual interaction with children.

**Chapter 2 – Types of Knowledge; Types of Truth**, this looks at the broad philosophical markers in the epistemology of knowledge, the ways something comes to be accepted as knowledge, how that knowledge is derived and who helps to create it. In the context of sex and sexuality, the distinction most commonly made is the perception that sexuality is a ‘biological’ or a ‘social’ phenomenon (Harding, J., 1998). As a natural biological phenomenon outside of culture and society, one’s sexuality is thought to be made up of fixed and inherent drives, and that nature and these drives dictate our sexual identities (Weeks, 1995). Sexuality is thus viewed as an instinctual, driving and potentially overwhelming force, which exerts an influence both on the individual and on culture. Constructionists posit that sexuality may also be viewed a social phenomenon has no inherent essence but must be understood as a configuration of cultural meanings. These cultural meanings are themselves, generated matrices of social and power relations (Gagnon and Parker, 1995; Segal, 1994; Weeks, 1995).

The dominant epistemologies of modernity have defined themselves around ideals of objectivity and value-neutrality. By using logical and objective methods of science, it is suggested that a
reality, a truth, an objective world independent of our thinking can be discovered (Becvar and Becvar, 2003), encouraging a quest for ‘the truth’ and ‘the reality’. Furthermore the process of discovering an objective and absolute reality is not believed to be influenced by the observer. There have been enormous advances in knowledge due to scientific endeavour however there is the belief that this is the only kind of knowledge that is worth anything. Critiques of dominance of the scientific perspective emanate from different perspectives, although common among them is a questioning of science’s claims to arrive at universalising laws for human action, through objective and value-free research. Social constructionist approaches see that the idea of an objectively knowable truth does not exist.

Most of the research literature on adult child sexual interaction is largely based on modernist approaches, using scientific criteria and rationale. A psycho-medical view is generally accepted, and ‘illness’ separates the man who relates sexually to children, from society and all other men. Much knowledge about adults relating sexually with children is derived from clinical studies and official crime statistics. These have an underlying dependency on ‘scientific’ methods and knowledge, to establish fact and arrive at truth. Medical and legal perspectives are prominent in media discourses on the subject. Foucault (1980) posited that knowledge is never neutral and is inextricably linked with power.

Chapter 3 - Men and Masculinities

Research literature, clinical studies; criminal statistics, court cases, victim statements; and media reports all suggest that the majority of adults who interact sexually to children and come to public attention are men. There is a discussion of men and masculinities in Chapter 3 with an overview of the ways in which gender, men and masculinity/ies have been theorized over time. Reviewing literature on men and masculinities, the perspectives of hegemonic and marginalised masculinities (e.g. Connell 1995) provided a framework through which to examine the men
represented as paedophiles in media discourses. There are multiple versions of how to be a man in any particular society, masculinities inflect and are inflected by other dimensions of social identity, and the relations between them are a crucial part of the makeup of gender relations in general. The patrolling of the boundaries of masculinity incorporates as much an intra-gender as an inter-gender dimension. Critical study of men and masculinities are useful because of their ideological and discursive elements. Hearn (1998) urges that such critical studies should be developed with an awareness of the political context and the complexity of relations of power.

During the 1990s the study of ‘masculinities’ assumed an increasing visibility, prominence and political significance, both within and beyond the social sciences (Collier 2002). The term hegemonic masculinity was first introduced into the feminist and pro-feminist debate by Carrigan, Connell and Lee (1985) and has been subsequently developed by Connell (e.g. 1987, 1995, and 2002) and reformulated by Connell and Messerschmidt (2005). By transferring Gramsci’s concept of hegemony (1971) originally used in the context of class relations into the area of gender relations, Connell contributes a valuable insight as to how to incorporate power into an analysis of masculinity. In every setting, there will be a hierarchy of masculinities, and each will generally have its own dominant form of masculinity, one that gains ascendancy over and above others. The weaknesses and limitations of the notion of hegemonic masculinity have been raised by a number of writers (e.g. Donaldson, 1993; Edley and Wetherell, 1995; Whitehead, 1999; Hearn, 2004), who suggest that there may be need to critically examine the concept as an analytic tool. Some suggest the concept of masculinity is flawed because it essentializes the character of men, or imposes a false unity on a fluid and contradictory reality (Petersen 1998, 2003; Collier 1998). Connell argued that “‘hegemonic masculinity’ is not a fixed character type, but rather, the masculinity that occupies the hegemonic position in a given pattern of gender relations, a position always contestable” (1995: p76). I continue to find many of Connell’s arguments in relation to hegemonic masculinity persuasive, and in this research useful as an analytical device to conceptualize masculine hierarchies. ‘Hegemonic’ masculinity
does not define itself by its content, but by its relations with other categories (Swain, 2006: p343).

Chapter 4 – Adult Male Sexual Interaction with Children

In Western societies, sexual interaction between adult men and children is predominantly viewed as an unnatural practice, with legal, medical, psychological and social consequences for the adults and young people involved. Most theories as to why man-child sexual contact occurs treat it as an obvious pathology that needs to be explained by problems in the individual or the society. Chapter 4 contains a review of the literature in relation to explanations for adult male sexual interaction with children. In order to understand social attitudes, values or ideas in relation to adult male sexual interaction with children, it is necessary to consider them within a range of sexual phenomena as defined by both culture and time. The axis of age is obviously central to discussions in relation to sexual interaction between adults and children. In this chapter the concept of childhood is explored, how its demarcation changes with place and time and its investment with innocence.

What constitutes sexual deviation and sexual offences can be and have been studied from a variety of viewpoints using a number of different methods and theoretical frameworks. Terms such as ‘child sex abuser’, ‘child sex offender’, ‘paedophile’, ‘molester’ are often used interchangeably and are themselves dependent on and conditioned by cultural and legal norms. Since relatively little is known about the distribution of various forms of sexual behaviour in society at large, standards tend to be drawn almost exclusively from ideological norms. The theoretical dimensions and frameworks for understanding adult male-child sexual interaction outlined in chapter 4 may each have important dimensions to contribute to an overall understanding of and explanation for men’s sexual interaction with children.
PART B

The use of Critical Discourse Analysis as a research perspective and methodological approach is considered in Chapter 5. The media as a site of cultural re/construction is addressed in Chapter 6, followed by a review of how the paedophile is represented in the media. An overview of the social, economic and political context in Ireland is presented in Chapter 7.

**Chapter 5 – Discourse Analysis**

The making of a ‘social reality’ can be found in media discourse. The analytical approach taken in this study draws on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), and the work of Foucault to analyse how discourses constitute particular phenomena with political, social, and personal consequences. Li (1990) reminds us that a discourse is a complex of social practices and statements about these practices which have the power to shape people’s consciousness, and the social production of what counts as knowledge and truth. Foucault (1980) argues that certain knowledge comes to be seen as truth and fact, and becomes the dominant discourses in any culture.

Institutions and the mass media play a major role in supporting and reproducing dominant ideologies. At present the public derive most information about men who relate sexually with children from media sources. The media both circulate and construct dominant discourses. Medical perspectives and legal definitions have exerted a powerful influence on public perceptions of men who relate sexually to children. These have been crucial in shaping the social construction of ‘the paedophile’ conveyed through the media. The framers of the news influence how the public views various events and personalities. Foucault demands that one does not reduce the analysis of discourse merely to the “markings of a textuality”, but that one fixes it also in the materiality of its effects and practices. Discourse must be seen in its relation to power; while if the power of discourse is insufficiently engaged, it is more a project of reading the text than engaging the discourse (Hook, 2001: p526). The media discourses
surrounding men who relate sexually to children are constituted from representations of culturally significant masculine practices, stereotyping and conceptions of deviance.

Chapter 6 – The Media; the Paedophile in the Media

As part of large cultural systems, media sites are a central medium of popular culture actively producing and promoting the dominant fictions of normative and non-normative masculine identities and masculinities. Through the selection and placement of news stories the public learn about the importance of specific issues. Newspapers are a medium through which the public derives information about what are considered to be important issues in a given society. A considerable body of research explores how the news media, in particular, can influence social perceptions of reality (e.g. Eveland, 2002). While Critcher (2003) suggests that as the media constructs the public agenda, so it influences policy agendas. Chapter Six takes a look at the media, how it is constructed and produced and its effects on popular culture. A number of research studies have explored the nature and extent of press coverage of paedophilia and the findings from some of these are presented.

Media representations of social issues influence public attitudes as the media are the main source of information about them (Goddard and Saunders, 2001). The ways in which an issue is represented and the discourses present in that representation are of concern in this study. Media representations have tended to focus largely on the dangerous and destructive ‘paedophile’, which defines the phenomenon as one of managing a dangerous external threat residing within the personalities of individuals - those named as ‘paedophiles’ in particular. One must bear in mind that rather than merely a direct transfer of facts to the public, the news and what counts as newsworthy, is itself a social construction.

Chapter 7 - Ireland in Context

Chapter Seven presents an overview of Irish society and the ways in which adult sexual involvement with children has come to public attention. Goode et al. (2003) found that in
Ireland, the vast majority (95%) of people report the media as their main source of knowledge about ‘child sex abuse’. Recent years have been remarkable for the explosion of news stories, press reports, television programmes on that subject. Instances of clergymen being involved sexually with children are widely reported. A number of televised documentaries in the late 1990s and early 2000s (e.g. States of Fear, RTE1 (1999); Suing the Pope, RTE1 (2002); Cardinal Secrets, RTE1 (2002)) highlighted how clergy who had been involved sexually with children were sent for ‘treatment’ to be cured, and were moved by church authorities to different pastoral positions. The media allowed the experiences of several people who as children were subject to sexual abuse by clergymen and members of religious orders to be made public. Ferguson and McKinnon (2001) find that the press has a role in broadly supporting and reproducing normative assumptions about men and gender relations (p43). The Catholic Church operated a number of industrial or residential schools throughout the country up to 1970s. These schools catered for orphaned, abandoned, disabled and ‘delinquent’ children and young people. Many of these schools were run by religious orders but were funded by the State and subject to statutory inspection (Lalor, 2001). The Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse was established in 2000 to investigate abuse of children in these institutions. The Report of the Commission - the ‘Ryan Report' has just been published (20th May 2009). It has revealed widespread abuse of children – physical, emotional, sexual and neglect, in institutions in this State and run by religious orders. A number of Reports from investigations into the sexual involvement with children by clergymen in Catholic Dioceses around the country have been or are soon to be published. Developments such as these bring the issue of adult sexual involvement with children starkly into the public domain again. However as this thesis will show, there have been consistent scandals and ‘panics’ over time, in Ireland and in other countries. Understandably the current public focus is on clergymen and members of religious communities and the children that were in their care. However, if what has happened in the past repeats itself, one can only surmise that in the wake of this latest ‘Ryan Report’, the debate about men who relate sexually to children will have a narrow remit and locate such deviant behaviour in the celibate clergy.
While yet again, wider issues such as sexual involvement with children within the family and incorporating a wider heteronormative dimensions will be limited.

Beginning with membership of the ‘European community’, Ireland has experienced massive social and economic changes and more especially over the last 25 years. Public awareness of men’s sexual involvement with children has increased through media coverage. The implication of some clergy and members of religious communities in these revelations has impacted on the position and authority of the Catholic Church in Ireland. In the absence of traditional forms of secular authority and modernising influences, the dismantling of church power in society resulted in somewhat of a vacuum in terms of ‘moral’ leadership and guidance. Against this backdrop, press discourses in relation to men who interact sexually with children reinforce normative contours of society. It prohibits wider discussion of men’s sexual interaction with children, and that phenomenon remains outside the cultural frame of reference.

PART C

The findings from a review of the newspapers and the media discourses present are outlined and discussed in Chapter 8. I reflect on what this study tells us newspaper representations about men who relate sexually to children, media discourse and its possible impact on Irish attitudes and opinion. The research findings are linked with their extra-discursive dimensions. Chapter 9 comprises a concluding discussion.

Chapter 8 – Analysis of Findings and Discussion

Chapter Eight draws together some of the main themes in the research literature and links them to the current study with a presentation of this study’s research findings. This is followed by a discussion of the ways in which the media discourses relate to wider social and cultural processes and structures.
There is a constant need for masculinising affirmations, to preserve a critical distance among different men; and the dominant discourses in the newspapers maintain this distance. Hegemonic masculinity, heterosexuality and a heteronormative society are upheld as unproblematic entities. The findings from this research illustrate how the representation of the paedophile in the news media is crucial to maintaining a critical distance between him and other men. It reveals the cultural dominance of narrowly defined expectations of masculinity. The theoretical complexities and nuances evident in the research literature on men and masculinities are non-existent in the news articles reviewed. The conceptual willingness to tolerate a plurality of masculinities and femininities has advanced, however as Nye (2005: p1955) remarks “in crises, whether real or invented, societies tend to revert reflexively to what appear to be stable gender norms…”. Discourse is an instrument of power and this research directs the analysis of the discursive through the extra-discursive.

Chapter 9 – Conclusion

Chapter Nine consists of a concluding discussion and considers how this research study has addressed its initial aims and objectives. In addition to the psychological and physical aspects of adult male sexual involvement with children, as a phenomenon it must also be seen within a network of social relations.

This research demonstrates that against the backdrop of the considerable public power that men have as a group, and the powerlessness they may have at an individual level, the meaning of a man’s sexual involvement with children is culturally constructed. Further the portrayal of men who relate sexually to children, in media discourses, assists in the construction and maintenance of hegemonic masculinity. Hall (1997) remarks that representation implies the active work of selecting and presenting, of structuring and shaping; and not merely the transmitting of already-existing meaning, but the more active labour of making things mean. The media representation of adult male sexual involvement with children defines and produces relationships of power between men. Concepts and debates become discourses and have their own materiality and there
are multiple cultural discourses constituting normative and marginalised masculinity. The findings from this research show how cultural discourses are circulated through the media and essentialist characterizations are reproduced in the discourses surrounding the practices and sexuality of men. It also shows that ‘scientific’ discourse is accepted as ‘real’ knowledge and truth in popular discourses. Foucault (1978, 1980) argues that discourse constructs, defines and produces the objects of our knowledge. It governs the way that a topic can be meaningfully talked about and reasoned about. Dominant discourses are created and circulated by those with power interests and who have access to a means of communication. Currently the dominant discourses in our culture construct men who sexually interact with children as sick, evil individuals.
CHAPTER 2: WAYS OF KNOWING, TYPES OF TRUTH

Understanding that knowledge is sourced from within an ideological complex is important for any research project. The different ways being ‘human’, ‘gendered’, and ‘sexual’ are constructed informs and shapes the different approaches to studying adult male sexual interaction with children, masculinities and men. Questions arise from how the ‘self’ is conceived and constructed, and how the process of ‘knowing’ is characterised.

What is taken to be scientific fact and truth informs popular and media discourse in relation to men who relate sexually to children. It is important to explore what constitutes scientific and social scientific knowledge and how these influence the definition, diagnosis and description of some men’s sexual interaction with children. Today ‘child sexual abuse’ is recognised as a widespread social problem which can cause significant physical, psychological and emotional harm. There are a variety of different ways of defining that phenomenon and differing explanations for those behaviours.

Among other relations, age, sex, gender and sexuality need to be considered in a study of adult male sexual involvement with children. Any study is inflected by different epistemological positions and theoretical perspectives. It is important to note that understandings of being, whereby historically and culturally contingent phenomena are naturalised as inevitable, are underpinned by ideology.

In the *Postmodern Condition* (1984) Lyotard (cited in Sim, 2001, pp15-17) asks “who decides what knowledge is?” and “what proof is there that my proof is true?” Reflecting on how social phenomena get defined as problems needs exploration of itself. In addition one needs to be aware of the questions that get asked and not asked about the social problems. One has to consider the legitimacy of forms of theory; who is entitled to generate theory; and how theory is
judged. Drawing on the work of Foucault, Ball (1990) remarks that it is not only “what can be said and thought, but also who can speak, when, where and with what authority” (p17).

A discourse organises and structures the way in which a particular topic, object, or process is to be talked about (Kress, 1985). Discourses that are viewed as ‘legitimate’ and ‘true’ achieve that status by valuing some statements and devaluing others. Discourse analysis in general, and critical discourse analysis more specifically, will be discussed in Chapter 5. The man who relates sexually to a child is constructed in a variety of discourses including clinical, legal, popular media, pro-paedophilia activism and sexual freedom movements. These discourses embody meaning and social relationship; they constitute both subjectivity and power relations.

Epistemological and ideological standpoints carry implications about how the world and social reality is viewed and how it is to be studied. Sociologists of knowledge characterize epistemologies as strategies for justifying beliefs. Familiar justificatory beliefs include appeals to the authority of God, of tradition, of ‘common sense’, of observation, and of reason (Harding, 1986, 1987). The view of knowledge as ‘hard’, objective and tangible, demands of researchers an observer role and the use of scientific methods, incorporating a positivist epistemology. Yet as we shall see in this chapter, the supposedly neutral and objective activity of finding out ‘facts’ is saturated with subjective investments, as is the idea that a correct view of the world can be obtained through the exercise of independent inquiry. Epistemological assumptions concern the very bases of knowledge, its nature and form, how beliefs are legitimated as knowledge, and how it can be acquired and communicated to others.

This chapter considers the ways in which knowledge may be derived and used. It explores issues such as what counts as fact and knowledge, and the effects on research of claims to objectivity and truth. Ways of knowing about sex, gender and sexuality influence our understanding of sexual relations between adults and children, and these are considered here. To
conclude there is a general discussion bringing together the themes of this chapter and why they are important considerations for this research study.

**Enlightenment Thinking**

The Enlightenment is the loosely-labelled period of history in eighteenth and nineteenth century Western Europe when there was rapid development of knowledge in areas such as medicine, science and education. It was a time of intellectual development and change in philosophical thought (Zeitlin, 2001). Thinkers associated with the Enlightenment (e.g. Montesquieu, Rousseau) were influenced by 17th century philosophy (e.g. Descartes, Hobbes, Locke) and science. They had as a practical goal the creation of a better, more rational world (Ritzer, 2006). Enlightenment thinkers believed in the liberating possibilities of rational and scientific knowledge. Science was seen as the enlightened alternative to the religious dogma of earlier times (Burr, 2002). As traditional values and institutions were found to be irrational and inhibitive of human growth and development, a number of long-standing ideas and beliefs were overthrown and replaced. A mission of the practical and change oriented-philosophers of the Enlightenment was to overcome irrational systems – often traditional values and institutions - and provide rational solutions to society’s problem (Gergen and Gergen, 2000). The emphasis was on producing, grand, general, and abstract systems of ideas that made rational sense.

In Medieval Western Europe, knowledge of ‘the human condition’ had been located within the Christian theological framework and was revealed through scriptures and observation of religious ritual. Enlightenment scholars gave intelligibility to the idea that each individual is capable of observing the world for what it is, to think, evaluate, and then to choose one’s actions. The subject as a rational being was considered to be capable of studying and ‘knowing’ objects outside him. As rational thinkers developed notions of the autonomous individual, they also developed ways of theorising and studying the self and others (Cowburn, 2002, pp8-14). The era was characterized by the belief that people could comprehend and control the universe by
means of reason and empirical research (Seidman, 1983: pp36-7), and the model for this was science, with the subsequent application of the scientific method to social issues. Thus while Enlightenment thought may have liberated ‘knowledge’ from the theological arena, it grounded thought and knowledge in the processes and methods of the sciences, particularly mathematics and physics (Cowburn, 2002, p 15). A key feature of the scientific method is its rigour and objectivity and it was through this that human problems began to be studied and discussed.

The Scientific way of Knowing

The prestigious and successful sciences in the late 19th and early 20th centuries were those securely focused on the physical world and the physical processes of the organic world. Methods that had been successful in the physical and biological sciences were embraced as models for psychology (Wood Sherif, 1987). Sociologists such as Compte and Durkheim were pre-occupied with science, and many wanted to model sociology after the successful physical and biological sciences (Weber, 2000; Ritzer, 2006). The view was that because the physical world was dominated by natural laws, it was likely also that the social world was, and suggested the application of scientific methods to the discovery of social issues.

A debate developed between those who largely accepted the scientific model and those who thought that the distinctive characteristics of social life made a wholesale adoption of a scientific model difficult and unwise (Oldroyd, 1986). Compte believed it would be possible to establish the new science of society on the basis of the natural sciences. Compte’s position was to lead to a general doctrine of positivism. This was characterised by its claim that science provides us with the clearest possible ideal of knowledge, and asserts that genuine knowledge is based on sense experience which can only be advanced by means of observation and experiment – the empiricist tradition (Cohen et al., 2000: p8). If a distinctive feature of science is its empirical nature, another important characteristic is its set of procedures which show how findings are arrived at. These incorporate concepts such as objective and controlled conditions.
and repeatability. For empiricists the objects of reality are the focus of investigation and source of knowledge. As manifested in the ‘data’ of experiments, these objects dictate findings and inform theories.

Empiricism offers one particular approach to science however the epistemology of science has been so influential that the term empirical has become almost synonymous with scientific (Harding, 1987). Within science the chief intellectual alternative to empiricism has been rationalism. Historically rationalism is associated with people such as Descartes and Kant. Grounded in the scientific method, rationalists call attention to the ability to arrive at knowledge through reason, based on the assumption that the source of true knowledge is logical thinking or reasoning ability (Audi, 1999). Science achieved a special significance and authority in modern societies because it was seen to exemplify the right use of reason, to enable a rigorous and comprehensive commitment to the principles of objectivity, impartiality and independence (Flax, 1990).

However, it is important to note that science itself is based on a set of ideas and assumptions about what the world is like, and how it should be studied. Our understanding of science has changed as various philosophical views have become popular and replaced earlier ones. A framework for understanding science suggests that it is not as objective and free from cultural influences as many have thought. In The Structure of Scientific Revolutions (1962), Kuhn challenged commonly held assumptions about the way in which science changes over time, achieving its present state through slow and steady increments of knowledge. Kuhn saw the major changes come about as a result of findings that cannot be explained by the reigning paradigm precipitating a ‘crisis’ and then a ‘revolution’ (Kuhn, 1962). The reigning paradigm is overthrown as a new one takes the central position, and the stage is set for the cycle to repeat itself. The view of the world that each scientist has and shares with other scientists and laypeople influences the way in which science is done. This ‘worldview’ or paradigm leads scientists to think about their science in the way they do, even though they usually do not
recognise their view as a worldview (Kuhn, 1962). The way questions are formulated, the methods believed to be appropriate, and the sorts of explanations held to be acceptable are all influenced by the context in which the scientist lives and the wider culture. Harding (1991) notes that the conventional approach in natural science ignores that modern science has been constructed by and within power relations in society, not apart from them. Inextricably linked to the epistemological foundation of the ‘scientific’ approach is methodology. An important feature of the scientific methodology is its claims to ‘objectivity’, which construes the researcher abstracted from any social context. Writing specifically of psychology Nicolson (1995) points out that “… traditional academic experimental psychology employs reductionist methods, which set out to exclude both the social context and the structural/power relations between individuals as inherent ‘bias’” (p123).

**Critiques of traditional dominant epistemologies**

Opponents of the use of scientific method and positivism within social science come from a wide variety of schools and different epistemological viewpoints, however there tends to be a common rejection of the belief that human behaviour is governed by general, universal laws and characterised by underlying regularities. People are complex subjects for investigative methods that befit the natural sciences (Faulkner and Thomas, 2002). Alternative approaches suggest that people actively construct their social world and that there are multiple interpretations of, and perspectives on, events and situations.

Habermas (1972) asserts that the scientific mentality has been elevated to an almost unassailable position as being the only epistemology of the Western world, as all knowledge becomes equated with scientific knowledge. Science’s mechanistic and reductionist view of nature excludes notions of choice, freedom, individuality and moral responsibility. Habermas, (1972, 1974) and Horkheimer (1972) argued that ‘scientism’ silences an important debate about values, informed opinion, moral judgements and beliefs. There are limitations to voiding out emotional
and experiential sources of knowledge on both the personal level, and the institutionalized academic level (Seidler, 1997).

It is necessary to consider whether science is, as many people believe, a clearly defined method that always works to uncover truths. There is an assumption that science, and social sciences using ‘scientific’ rationale and methods, are objective and free from changing disciplinary influences of tradition, values and social forces. Some observers of science have challenged these views proposing that science is an activity, a way of approaching a problem, but not the only way. While in addition, the unacknowledged standpoint of scientific ‘objectivity’, which reproduces knowledge and a worldview, advances the interests of some groups and ignores or dismisses the experiences of others (Harding, 1991, Harraway, 2004; Nicholson, 1995; Hearn, 1998). The proliferation of critiques of the traditional notion of objectivity is brought together in the recognition of a ‘crisis of representation’, the contention that no system of signification is able to re-present the world in its full presence (Jones et al. 1995).

One way to determine who ‘counts’ to an elite is to learn whose arguments the elite attends to, and whose viewpoints they try to demolish (Wood Sherif, 1987). Feminist epistemologies have grown out of critical interrogation of the universalist assumptions of the theories of the Western philosophical tradition. They raised epistemological questions about the control and production of knowledge, and who benefits from it (Durham, 2003). Harding suggests one has to look at the sciences and their agendas, concepts, and consequences and where they are located within particular currents of politics (1991). Habermas (1972) contends that knowledge, and hence research knowledge serves different interests, which he argues are socially constructed and are ‘knowledge-constitutive’; because they shape and determine what counts as the objects and types of knowledge.

Among the principles of feminist research are the deconstruction of traditional commitments to objectivity and value-neutrality and the adoption of an approach to knowledge creation which
recognises that all theories come from some perspective. The salience of social arrangements of power and privilege in knowledge-creation and the means by which it is legitimated or discredited have been demonstrated. Critical studies of science and different feminist research programmes (e.g. Harding, 1986; Harraway, 2004) have demonstrated the ways in which science can be considered biased. Harding (1991) proposes that scientific knowledge stands as the regulative model of objective epistemic authority; and the experiences and values of non-males, non-white, and differently placed ‘knowers’ typically have to accommodate themselves to an idealised scientific and masculine norm, or risk being dismissed as inconsequential, aberrant, mere opinion. With a focus on practices of knowledge construction, the question “whose knowledge are we talking about?” is given a central analytical position. By elucidating the exclusionary assumptions that have enabled the epistemologies of the mainstream to establish their authority, Harraway (1988) contends that feminist theorising has effected shifts in the perceived tasks of epistemology, eschewing normative aims of determining what an ideal knower ought to do; feminist theorizing produces critical analyses of what historically and materially ‘situated knowers’ actually do.

The claim that both the world and ways of studying it are gendered suggests that gender skews many dimensions of research. The ‘scientific objectivity’ adopted by mainstream social science is critiqued as the unacknowledged ‘standpoint’ of white, middle class, heterosexual men (Harding 1991; Nicolson 1995; Hearn 1998). Criticism of the gendered nature of science includes recognition of the influence of socio-cultural factors on theories and measures. The ideals of reason, objectivity, and value-neutrality around which most mainstream theories of knowledge are constructed, like the knowledge they legitimate may be seen to tacitly validate affluent male experiences and values. For some, the gendering of the world and research conduct implies that rationality, logic and research methods themselves are inherently gendered and as are the received norms of objectivity. According to Parker (2003) feminist theorizing and research methodology has been one of the most powerful analytic resources for displaying the way culture constructs categories and subject positions that some assume to be pre-given,
universal and unchanging (p6). Feminist research has impacted on our understanding of knowledge as situated, as always constructed from particular social locations. Moving the ‘whose knowledge?’ question to a central place, thus demands revisions in conceptions of subjectivity. The detached, disinterested knowing subject, who is a neutral spectator on the world, is displaced. Questions of knowledge, and how what people know and see in the world, is affected by their particular location in the social structure.

Scholars such as Kuhn and Foucault marshalled evidence demonstrating the dependence of the conduct and products of research upon disciplinary matrices (Kuhn, 1962) and discursive practices (Foucault, 1972, 1978). Both argued that what are considered to be the norms of proper conduct are relative to disciplinary practices, that truth is indistinguishable from what counts as true, and that the possibilities of what can count as truth are laid down by those disciplinary practices (Jones et al., 1995). Foucault highlighted how discursive practices are embedded in wider systems of power to whose propagation they contribute. He suggested that this process is exemplified in the formation of criminology, demography and psychiatry in the early 19th century, as part of the growing ‘disciplining’ of social life.

Warner (2004) asserts that the subject-object dichotomy presumed in many positivistic research methods eludes the constitutive nature of knowledge production (p334). According to Becvar and Becvar (2003) knowledge seen from a postmodern perspective is open and ambiguous, it is relative to a contextual framework and facts are replaced by perspectives. It has been posited that postmodernism is “a stance that one takes towards a theory and a way of looking at theory, rather than a theory itself” (Leary 1994: p435). Postmodernists deconstruct established notions by delineating ideologies, assumptions and values on which they rest. Postmodernists question modernist foundations believing that they tend to privilege some groups and downgrade the significance of others, and in giving some groups power they render others powerless (Jones et al., 1995). Modern knowledge is identified in Lyotard’s view (1984) with meta-narratives, while post-modern knowledge involves a rejection of grand theories and moves from over-
arching narratives to multiple perspectives. This way of thinking disputes the belief in an objective knowledge, which is instead seen as an expression of the language, values and beliefs of the particular contexts in which we exist.

Challenging traditionalist epistemologies post-modern approaches do not consider ‘knowing’ to be determined by either rational principles or empirical laws. They do not maintain the traditional distinction between subject and object that is so important to rationalism and empiricism. There is an implied shift in focus from the mind, as the centre of sensory experiences and reasoning processes, to the social world of practical activity (Slife, 1995).

Critiques of dominant social science epistemologies are supplemented by African-American and 3rd world post-colonial claims that social scientific and humanistic research remains predominantly white, Anglo-Saxon and First World (hooks, 1989). Writers making these claims maintain that traditional research does not uncover absolute truths, but only what can be seen and what serves a restricted set of viewpoints. In addition scholars from gay and lesbian studies denounce mainstream scholarship as inextricably heterosexual (e.g. Sedgwick, 1990; Abelove et al., 1993). The broadly categorised field of critical studies prioritizes ‘studying up’ – studying the powerful, their institutions, policies, and practices instead of focusing only on those whom the powerful govern (Harding and Norberg, 2005: p2011). By studying up, researchers can identify the conceptual practices of power and how they shape daily social relations.

Understanding how our lives are governed not primarily by individuals but more powerfully by institutions and conceptual schemes, which are seemingly far removed from our everyday lives, is crucial for designing effective projects of political relevance. An issue that arises with virtually all terminologies – modern, post-modern; first-wave, second-wave feminism; older/newer etc. is that they tend to imply a linear process whereby one paradigm succeeds another in chronological time. However, these approaches are better seen as representing tendencies in thought which may historically overlap and co-exist.
**Ways of Knowing: Sex and Sexuality**

Different ways of knowing the social world influences a variety of ways of understanding sex and sexuality. Phillips and Reay (2002) suggest that a historical approach demonstrates the particularity of sexuality as it is currently organised (p3). We might examine how sexuality’s instantiation within particular individuals varies over time, and how given interpretations and constructions of this relate to wider social beliefs.

Cavell (2001) speaks of Freud’s impact on understandings of sex and sexuality. Freud’s psychoanalytical accounts regarding the development of sexual behaviour stress that biological instincts are not exclusive determinants of sexuality. With the publication of *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* Freud (1905 in Richards, 1977) posited that the conscious mind is dominated by a basic need to function in society, and desires that conflict with cultural norms are suppressed. The unconscious mind becomes a “turbulent zone where diverse sexual drives have to be repressed so that the human subject maintains its identity” (Bristow, 1997: p64). The value-framework for the study of sexuality through the 19th and 20th centuries has been, and largely continues to be, that of medical science. The debate in the history of sexuality has most often been characterised as one between the ‘essentialists’ and the ‘social constructionists’.

Sayer (1997) notes that there are many ‘essentialisms’ and many critiques of essentialism, that arise in different contexts and relate to different topics. However he suggests that:

“..if there is anything common to all critiques of essentialism in social science, it is a concern to counter characterization of people, practices, and institutions and other social phenomena as having fixed identities which deterministically produce fixed, uniform outcomes. Whether they are talking about cultural identity, economic behaviour or gender and sexuality, anti-essentialists have argued
that people are not creatures of determinism, whether natural or
cultural, but are socially constructed and constructing” (p454)

Sexology and Essentialism

Sexology emerged in the mid-nineteenth century, with researchers “seeking to produce some
everlasting truth about the sexual capacity of human beings” (Bristow, 1997: p15). The
sexological tradition based its research on the fact that sexuality was what Segal (1994) has
called “an overpowering and instinctive force” (p75). Foucault (1978) notes, that in western
societies, discussion about sexual behaviour has taken the form of ‘confession’. Initially this
form of discourse was directed and controlled by the church but, Foucault contends that in the
mid-19th century it came to be dominated by ‘scientific’ investigators and particularly the
medical profession. Medicine asserts its authority by emphasising its scientific method, its
objectivity, and through being interested only in ‘the truth’. A new way of thinking about sex
does not completely replace a previous one, and different paradigms co-exist. However
biological determinism, deploying scientific method and based on essentialist premises has been
a dominant paradigm influencing perceptions of the body and sex and sexuality throughout the
20th Century.

The production of sexual knowledge in Europe was primarily concerned with providing
“transparent access to the indisputably natural state of sexuality” (Bristow, 1997: p18).
Sexology is a term used to describe a range of historically specific endeavours directed at the
‘scientific’ study of sex (Gagnon and Parker, 1995). These authors describe a ‘sexological
period’ dating approximately from 1890 to 1980, in which sex researchers and activists
attempted to bring sexuality under the remit of science. Sexologists were eager to reform
sexuality, and to oppose what were seen as repressive and restrictive doctrines and practices of
the Victorian Era (Gagnon and Parker, 1995). Sexological views were seen by radicals and
reformers of the time as liberating (Harding, J., 1998). A variety of methods were used in the
study of sexuality aimed at describing the diversity of existing sexual practices and preferences
and concentrating on the collection of empirical data. With aims to describe, classify and categorise sexual forms that exist in ‘nature’ (Weeks, 1986), this approach is typified in the late 19th century sexological work of Havelock Ellis (Sanday, 2003) and has been evident in many large surveys of sexual attitudes and behaviours conducted since then for example Kinsey (1948, 1953), Hite (1976, 1981), and Masters and Johnson (1966, 1970, 1974, 1979).

Weeks (1986) comments that in sexology “each perversion was investigated with dispassionate care and its causes were endlessly speculated upon. Was it degeneration or a harmless anomaly, congenital or acquired, the result of tainted hereditary or the effects of moral corruption, a product of psychic trauma or free and wilful choice?” (p66). Importantly, science, because of its claims to objectivity and impartiality, seemed to make the study of sex respectable. Foucault (1972) proposed that medical science provided an intellectual structure of justification for the attitudes and values of the dominant class in society. The sexological view subscribes to the idea that sex has an ultimately discernible essence, but acknowledged that social control and regulation of sex varied within and across different cultures.

Most theorists of the ‘sexological period’ believed that there were fundamental differences between the sexuality of men and women – differences that followed from the natural differences. Theories of sexuality were normatively dominated by notions of men’s sexuality and by heterosexual images and practice (Gagnon and Parker, 1995). Early sex researchers helped to affirm male domination as a biological necessity, while portraying “‘the sex act’ understood as heterosexual genital engagement as its exemplary moment” (Segal, 1994: p79). Writers such as von Krafft-Ebing and Ellis contributed to the new ‘sexual science’ and helped to define the norms of heterosexual desire (Petersen, 1998: p57). Harding (1998) comments that sexological discourse has been extremely influential in defining and explaining what is ‘sexual’. The definitions produced within this discourse have been key in determining our concepts of what is considered to be sexually normal and abnormal (Weeks, 1986). As part of a widespread critique of modernism with its progressive assumptions, the accuracy and implicit political
agenda of sexology was challenged. Sexology was challenged for its sexism and heterosexism and the privileging of scientific inquiry as the authoritative and best way to know ‘the truth’ (Whately, 1992).

**Sex and Sexuality as Constructed**

It is theoretically possible to deconstruct popular and scientific conceptions of sexuality. Posited as social constructions, sex and sexuality are seen as shaped by a range of ideas centred on normative assumptions. The view that we can understand sexuality through the cultural meanings which construct it, does not assume that biology is unimportant, or that individuals are simply blank sheets on which society writes its cultural images (Weeks, 1995).

Emphasising how sexual differentiations are constructed does not necessarily cast anatomical differences aside but rather posits that these differences are not essential to the understanding of how society operates around them. Theorists emphasize that certain physical characteristics are not of themselves the cause of the social differentiations that ensue from them. For example skin colour is not the cause of a particular social status, however the way in which society views and constructs skin colour, may be. A constructionist understanding of sexuality, questions the essentialist correspondence between sexuality and biology and the ‘natural’ expression of the urge to reproduce. The so-called ‘normal’ expressions of sexuality in most Western societies are centred on a specific form of active heterosexuality. Heterosexual intercourse is positioned as “‘real sex’ or the ‘best’ way to be sexual, and according to Saraga (1998) “it is seen as the most natural, therefore normal and morally superior” (p142).

The ‘naturalness’ of sexuality, gender roles, and sexual attitudes were undermined by radical movements such as the women’s movement, and the gay and lesbian movement. According to Gagnon and Parker (1995) “the recognition that gender was a larger frame through which sexuality in western societies should be interpreted” was a critical contribution of feminist
studies to sex research (p8). Feminist studies drew attention to the ‘facts’ that men did most of the research on sex. It demonstrated that the sexuality of men was taken to be the norm, that sexual practices of women and men were determined by inequalities in power and that the relation of gender to sexuality was not fixed. Lesbian and gay studies drew attention to variable and complex relations between identity and behaviour. They showed that categories like ‘homo’, ‘hetero’, ‘gay’, and so forth are social constructs which are ambiguously tied to behaviour (Gagnon and Parker, 1995, pp8-9).

In the history of the study of sexuality, diverse theoretical influences in the 1970s and 1980s included those from sociology, feminist theory and from such as the work of Foucault (Cocks, 2004: p657). Debates revolved around issues such as the self, its history and its relationship to power. Foucault asserted that sexuality is a type of social regulatory framework which is maintained through discourses of heteronormativity and patriarchy. The power of these discourses operates to essentialise and reproduce those adopting sexual roles or seeking sexual experiences that are not considered ‘good’ as deviant, unnatural, abnormal and immoral (McHoul and Grace, 1995).

In the *History of Sexuality* (1978) Foucault spoke about dominant discourses about sexuality at any particular place or time a discursive regime. His concept of a discursive regime represents a set of unwritten rules and shared assumptions, which regulate what, can be written, thought or acted upon. In his writings, Foucault charts the discursive regimes of sexuality at different times and through a variety of institutional spaces in which sexual discourses are articulated: hospitals, schools, courts, prison, clinics. He posited that each of these spaces is a site of power and knowledge where certain ‘professionals’ seek to construct ideas of what constitutes ‘good’ sexuality (McHoul and Grace, 1995).

Historically and culturally variable social practices (e.g. legal, biomedical, religious, economic) and relations (e.g. class, race, sex) help to generate categories and concepts which organise
sexuality and define ‘grids of intolerance’. According to Weeks what constitutes tolerance and intolerance, is based on definitions of what is considered healthy/unhealthy, normal/abnormal, and appropriate/inappropriate in sexual life (Weeks, 1985: p7). Rather than assessing aetiologies of sexuality for any purported truth value, Brickell (2005) urges us to ask how these function as narratives or accounts, what preconditions mould them, and what political functions are served by them. In this way, we might theorise in detail the essentialisms that surround gender and sexuality, rather than merely identify them. Nye (1999) remarks that if there is some unchanging substratum of human sexual nature that has persisted through time, it might permit us to make judgements on some of the controversial sex and gender arrangements in modern society, within a deterministic frame of reference with legal discriminations and protections (p6). Whereas if it could be demonstrated that all sexual ‘essentials’ may be historically deconstructed into more or less unique phenomena, that take their meanings and significance from their social and historical context, then it is more difficult to appeal to the ‘truth’ of history to privilege one set of contemporary sexual values or practices over another. Constructionist approaches to the study of sexuality are also concerned with power and politics, and the ways in which the construction of the sexual has the effect of privileging some sexual forms and denigrating others.

The concepts of power and discourse were prominently developed by Foucault (1978) who asserted that sexuality is a “dense transfer point for relations of power” (p103). Informed by postmodernism, Butler’s (e.g. 1990) theoretical approach collapsed the binaries of the sex/gender distinction that had informed feminist thought since the 1960s. For gender theorists such as Butler both sex and gender cannot be taken as being static and created with no intervention from culture. Through an application of postructuralism to sexuality, queer theory extends the conceptualisation of sexual identity as socially constructed (Cameron, 2005). It articulates the view of subject positions as provisional, contingent, multiple and unstable (Jagose, 1996). Such ideas formed the basis for queer theory and ideas such as the separateness of masculinity from male bodies and femininity from female bodies. Queer theorists argue that
recognising the social construction of how society views and regulates sexuality is only part of how sexuality needs to be re-theorised. They note that social constructionist approaches rarely question or critique categories of ‘heterosexual’, ‘gay’, ‘lesbian’ themselves, only the legitimacy and meaning of such categories within society (Jagose, 1996). Drawing on the work of Butler (e.g. 1993, 1999), queer theorists interrogate sexual categories and the notion of being able to draw coherent boundaries around sexual identities. Here it is argued that sexual identity is never fixed, but it is always in a process of becoming. For Butler, sexuality is a product of socialisation and a dynamic project of the self, and that sexual identities are established and maintained through repeated, stylised and embodied performances in space. Downing (2004) suggests that the assumption of ‘natural’ sex and of sexuality itself, and the refusal to attribute the source of norms to local and contingent cultural factors, is a denial of the relative status of historical processes.

Queer theory resists categorical statements about essences in human subjects (Seidman, 1996; Turner, 2000), hence biological, psychological or social categories do not provide legitimate foundations from which the sexual self can be categorized. Bodies of knowledge such as scientific, legal and moral discourses that produce fixed identities and behaviours are not attempts to understand the sexual self, but to impose constraints upon it. Queer theorists seek to expose the historical developments of such discourses, revealing the interests and prejudices of those who make that knowledge. However some have criticized the way in which queer theory can represent subjects and their social contexts and dissolve knowledge into discourse, thereby not addressing the social and material terms of power (Kirsch, 2000).

**Male Sexuality**

Many writers comment that sex and sexuality play an important role in the lives of men and in perceived masculine status (e.g. Tiefer, 2004; Frosh et al., 2002; Flood 2008). Sexuality is seen as an important practice for the accomplishment of gender, the reproduction of masculinities
and experiences of power. Of course there are many ways to theorise sexuality, and men, such as the essentialist, constructionist and queer perspectives referred to in this chapter. There are different accounts of the processes which construct male sexuality, ranging from the biological male ‘sex drive’ discourse to radical feminist readings of male sexuality as little more than an organization of force relations to oppress women.

Petersen (1998) reminds us that Darwinism was important in laying the foundations for the development of a ‘male sex drive discourse’ that began to emerge from the 1860s. The key principle of the discourse is that men’s sexuality is directly produced by a biological drive, which functions in the reproduction of the species (Holloway, 1984). The sex drive discourse has had a profound and enduring influence on thinking about sexuality and gender, at least in much of the Western world, and has been manifest in much contemporary research and policy (Petersen, 1998). In relation to male sexuality, it is suggested that biological - hormonal, neurological and anatomical - factors are major explanatory variables Viewing biology as determining other aspects of human experience, Quinsey (2003) reports that sexually dimorphic, anatomical features are associated with what he terms “the different sexual psychologies of men and women” (p106). From this perspective researchers argue that heterosexual men prefer young adult females as sexual partners; they have an interest in new sexual partners and more sexual encounters than women do (Hamida et al., 1998; Silverthorne and Quinsey, 2000, Quinsey, 2003). The ultimate explanation for these features turns on the observation that the principal limiting factor on male reproductive success in ancestral environments was the number of a man’s sexual partners. Whereas, the main limiting factor on female reproductive success, was the resources a woman could obtain to raise the offspring she had, not the number of her sexual partners (Quinsey, 2003: p106). Bailey et al., (1997) argue that homosexual men are similar to heterosexual women in so far as they prefer masculine-appearing male partners, but they nevertheless display a typically male courtship pattern. Bailey et al. (1994) suggest that homosexual men are as interested in partner variety as heterosexual men, and they succeed in
having more partners than heterosexual men, as the latter have to compromise with the preferred
courtship pattern of women.

Of course viewing male sexuality as something pre-determined is a way of avoiding
examination of the processes through which it becomes constructed. Dominant forms of ‘normal
male sexuality’ – characterised as power, aggression, penis-orientation, separation of sex from
loving emotion, objectification and supposed ‘uncontrollability’ (Coveney et al., 1984) - have
been described and critiqued as highly problematic. For writers such as Weeks (1991) in
consideration of homosexuality, and Sandfort et al. (1990, 1991) man-boy relationships, such
phenomena are considered as part of a history of sexuality in which cultural forces shape and
reshape them. The diversity of sexual behaviour must be challenging to those who assume that
their own society’s moral standards are somehow laws of nature. Issues surrounding sex, gender
and sexuality will be discussed further in Chapter Three.

Discussion

Modernity which began intellectually with the Enlightenment, attempted to describe the world
in rational, empirical and objective terms. It is assumed that there is a truth to be uncovered, a
way of obtaining answers to the questions posed by the natural and human worlds. From a
different perspective, post-modernism dispenses with the underlying certainties that reason
promised - as reason itself is seen as a particular historical form. There is considerable tension
between the search for universal and timeless laws of sex and sexuality and an approach that
seeks to explain these concepts and behaviour as a product of changing historical and social
circumstances.

Different epistemological approaches have played an important role in the methodological
debates within the history of sexuality. Essentialism and social constructionism are often
conflated with the so-called ‘nature/nurture’ debate. The debate has been concerned with just
how much bodies, sex differences, sexual practices, and the gender arrangements of society can
be explained on constructionist principles, or whether there is an ‘essential’ and unchanging
sexual nature that persists in spite of cultural and linguistic changes. However, essentialism and
constructionism are not single political or theoretical positions; each is an umbrella term which
spans research agendas, perspectives and methodologies.

“Ideas about sexuality are complex and hybrid: they do not belong to
one paradigm or another but circulate and are borrowed and
modified, whether consciously or unconsciously, by different
researchers/activists”


With a focus on reproduction and sexual health the ‘scientific study’ of sex and sexuality can be
traced back to the classical Greek period in the Western world. Nye (1999) contends that sex
and sexual morality have been subjects of historical writing for centuries, but as a serious field
of academic study, the history of sexuality is relatively short. It has grown out of interest in
gender studies, the history of the body, and from philosophers and lesbian, gay and feminist
theorists who have found it useful to explain social arrangements – including norms governing
sex and reproduction – as cultural products amenable to change. In Ireland the field of sexual
morality and of sexuality, had been constructed and dominated by the Catholic Church through
the last two centuries, a domination which only began to challenged in the 1980s (Inglis, 1998).

The ways in which sex and sexuality have been studied in the West, as Harding (1998) reminds
us is also the history of discourses of sexuality. Analysis of discourse is one way of working
beyond the limits of specific disciplines to discover how particular ideas come about and their
effects and to think about other ways in which sex might be constructed and for what purposes.
A focus on, sexuality as discourse, requires that the political discourses of particular collectives
e.g. essentialist, functionalist, gay, feminist, profeminist, queer and so forth, be scrutinized to
reveal the ways in which they construct sexual identities in specific historical and cultural circumstances. This provides an effective means of deconstructing powerful ideas and theories such as those of ‘science’ and those of political ‘identity politics’.

There are a variety of belief-forming practices. The way in which knowledge is put to work and valorised makes for a vital component in the workings of a successful discourse. Science is widely considered the paradigmatic knowledge-producing enterprise. The strongest discourses are those that have attempted to ground themselves on the natural and the scientific i.e. on the level of the various correlates of the ‘true’ and reasonable (Hook, 2001: p524). In the context of adult sexual involvement with children, it’s theorizing and treatment, science and in particular medicine, has been unchallenged as the privileged arbiter of the truth. In relation to discussion of men’s sexual involvement with children, scientific medical views are considered authoritative and inform popular opinion and attitudes. Such discourses dominate the mainstream press. Further discussion of this, and examples from Irish press reports of the paedophile, will follow in later chapters.

Foucault (1980) asserts that a discourse produces knowledge of ‘the other’, through different practices of representation, which is implicated in the operation of power. From the newspapers that I reviewed for this study, criminality and pathology are alternately ascribed to men reported as relating sexually to children. The man’s behaviour depicted in the reports, defines who he is. He is positioned in the category of ‘the paedophile’, as the paedophile becomes a culturally palpable and totalizing identity category (Angelides, 2005).

Discourses not only provide an inclusive framework for understanding, but also exclude items, experiences, and voices (Purvis and Hunt, 1993: p485). This is also clearly seen in reports of the paedophile in Irish newspapers. I found that there to be little or no discussion of the wider subject of man-child sexual interaction, nor of any linkages between that phenomenon and existing social practices or gender relations.
Hearn (1998) has pointed out that the worldview of a socially and economically dominant group of men asserts its hegemonic power through scientific discourse and this worldview masquerades as the objective truth. Feminist analysis reminds us that the ‘objective’ account always comes from a particular position. These issues are particularly important when considering the nature of scientific discourse in relation to men who relate sexually to children. It may be that the interests of most men are served by the creation of a classified group of sex ‘offenders’, ‘abusers’, ‘molesters’, ‘paedophiles’, the study of whom conveniently deflects attention from problematic aspects of men’s practices and the wider social context of adult male sexual interaction with children.

The scientific method with its claims to objectivity and truth production, gives power to one group to categorise and treat other groups in society. Whilst part of the power of the medicalised discourses is to identify and control a ‘deviant’ population, another effect of the discourse is to support and reinforce the dominant culture “to ensure the physical vigour and the moral cleanliness of the social body” (Foucault, 1978; p54).

The attribution of fact and truth, to one knowledge form and knowledge maker over another, has important ramifications for any research endeavour. How sex and sexuality have been, and continue to be, studied and conceptualised are influenced by epistemological assumptions. Issues of nature and nurture, identity and subjectivity are construed within epistemological frameworks. How different ways of being sexual and gendered come to be seen as natural or deviant, pathological or decadent, derive from different so-called value-free or value-based perspectives. We will see in the following chapters how certain of these perspectives are emphasised in media discourse.

Explanations as to why some men relate sexually with children, derive from different ontological positions and epistemological perspectives. A number of explanations for adult male
sexual involvement with children are presented in Chapter 4. Just to note at this point, that from an essentialist, mainstream medical and psychological viewpoint, the man may be seen as sick, diseased, or as psychologically disturbed, thus locating the explanation for his behaviour within him as an individual. The social constructionist perspective claims that meaning is constructed by human beings as they engage with a world they are interpreting, and that meaning or truth cannot be described as simply ‘objective’ (Crotty, 1998). Sexual behaviour located outside an organic substrate is seen as malleable and changeable.

This research is based on the premise that there can be no one way of knowing the world in itself, and the world we see and experience, is mediated by our own particular worldview. Medical science is clearly a form of knowledge that sustains the power of a particular social group. Running through the scientific approach is an assumption of superior knowledge based on an objective scientific epistemology that ensures access to the truth about the social world (Cowburn, 2005: p219). To classify the paedophile is to know him; his pathology separates him from the morally rigorous social body. His crime is punishable, while his condition is declared as treatable or untreatable by expert objective, scientific opinion. This of course is but one way of seeing that man. Yet as this view dominates press discourse, it is also the perspective that informs public attitudes and opinion. That is not to say that people are completely receptive to media messages and fail to interpret or question information. However, the news media are one of the major constructors of public discourses and are often seen as the purveyors of truth.

In this study, media discourses, which are a crucial site of cultural reproduction are analysed; and a critical analysis of these discourses show how meaning and subjectivity are constructed and given power. The ways in which the paedophile is represented in the newspapers is discussed in Chapter 6. While in Chapter 8, the ways in which the paedophile, and his masculine practices, are portrayed in Irish newspapers, is explored. A critical analysis of these discourses will show their links to the social and political context in which both the media and their readers exist.
Summary

This chapter has considered some of the different epistemologies and research traditions. Questions about ways of knowing, research methodologies and what counts as ‘truth’ have extensive ramifications in any research project. Some of the approaches to understanding sex and sexuality from biological essentialism though social constructionism to a queer theory approach are discussed. What gets classified and categorised; the ‘causes’ of natural and human phenomena; the methods by which such phenomena are studied; the authority with which scientific and social scientific scholars speak, all have implications for this research.
CHAPTER 3: UNDERSTANDING MEN AND MASCULINITIES

In order to understand the meaning and usage of the terms masculinity and masculinities, it is necessary to first consider theoretical approaches to sex and gender. From this chapter we will see that the selection, weighting and privileging of particular traits as markers of sex and gender is culturally determined, and therefore, arbitrary. This chapter provides an overview of the theories around what has been termed the ‘gender-sex’ system (Rubin, 1975). It examines a variety of approaches to understanding men and masculinities, and it traces the development of the study of men - from its absence from theoretical analyses through to current critical studies of masculinities. Nearly all of the early research and theoretical debate specifically concerned with the study of gender focussed on women and femininity. Men were simply taken for granted in research studies; they were assumed to be the norm, and their behaviour was not explained in terms of gender.

With the beginning of studies focusing on men, and with the development of an array of perspectives which followed, a variety of ideas and terms became important critical tools. This chapter will survey different views of gender in general, and masculinities in particular, examining relevant concepts and terminology. This will be followed by a discussion of the theoretical approaches most suitable to the present study. These will be considered critically in order to establish the most appropriate framework for an analysis of the representations of men and masculinity in media portrayals of men who interact sexually with children.
Sex and Gender

Terms and Perspectives

Theorizing gender and masculinity/ies emanates from many academic disciplines and schools of thought. There are a variety of powerful ideologies inherent in the discussion of gender. Some commentators believe that a traditional gender dichotomy is a natural state and that it contributes to a ‘healthy’ society (Parsons, 1954). Rather than located in biology, psychoanalytical theories maintain that children come to realise their own sex and gendered identity through observations of, and relationships with, their male and female parents (Freud 1905). Various currents of thought derived from psychoanalysis complicate the ‘naturalization’ of sex and gender; for example, some consider gender an elaborate masquerade which must be incessantly performed (Riviere, 1929), while others focus on the crucial role of socialisation in shaping gender in infancy through the individual’s relation to a ‘referential object’ (Parsons, 1954; Chodorow, 1978).

From a social constructionist perspective gender is seen as a social practice. It has been claimed that the emergence of property dictated gendered behaviour in prehistoric times (Engels, 1884). De Beauvoir (1949) suggests that gendered behaviour must be painfully and laboriously indoctrinated and internalised. It has also been claimed that, even though gender varies across cultures to a remarkable extent, there is no known human culture without some form of gendered roles (Mead, 1935). Anthropological studies on the universal relevance of kinship systems (e.g. Lèvi-Strauss, 1949 cited in Korn, 1973) have been adapted by feminists to offer a structuralist understanding of gender (Rubin, 1975; Irigaray 1985). The very distinction between sex as biology, and gender as a cultural construction, has been problematised by those who maintain there can be no access to ideological ‘truths’ that lie outside cultural discourses.
Despite the importance of sex and gender in configuring social and individual experiences, critical analysis of these topics was rare until gender became a key concept in feminist analysis, with some scholars considering the study of masculinities as an intrinsic part of the feminist project (Sedgwick, 1985). Breaking the link between biological sex and the gender binary, in a poststructuralist context the notion of gender may be seen in itself as an unstable signifier. It is suggested, for example, that traits associated with femininity – or, implicitly, masculinity- were adopted by females or males without distinction (Cisoux, 1986); and it invited doubts on the very notions of woman and man, terms which implied certain assumptions on gender and sexuality (Wittig, 1992). Such ambiguities are being exploited in current research on gender studies (e.g. Butler 2004).

The theorist most prominently associated with analyzing the normative effects of dominant understandings of sex and gender is Judith Butler. Drawing on Foucault, but with an attention to the workings of gender, Butler (1990) argues that like sexuality, gender is not an essential truth derived from the body's materiality but rather a regulatory fiction: “gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being” (p33).

Over the following pages sex and gender are considered in turn from the perspective of essentialism, functionalism, and constructionism. Social constructionism represents the most significant critical lens available, therefore it will be considered in greater detail.

**Biology, Genes, Hormones**

Beyond the world of critical gender theory, research purporting to prove a fundamental biological basis to sex and gender differentials continues apace, attracting much media interest (Pinker, 2002; Halpern, 2000; Halpern and Wright, 1996). The intertwining of sex and gender has historically been supported by appealing to hormonal composition, and to perceived natural
attributes such as physical strength, aggressiveness, nurturing, weakness, and caring, which are then related to current social circumstances.

Biological theories of difference are largely concerned with male and female reproductive roles, often reducing gender relations and physical, emotional and intellectual characteristics to questions of genetics and reproductive fitness. It is asserted that different reproductive strategies produce different behaviour in males and females and also lead them to occupy different social roles (Wilson, 2000; Holcomb, 1993). According to this essentialist framework, in terms of sexual behaviour, men are likely to be promiscuous while women will be more circumspect in their pursuit of the best possible genetic partner (Lippa, 2005).

Sociobiology is based on the idea that some behaviours – social and individual, are at least partly inherited, and can be affected by natural selection (Wright, 1995). It is argued that male and female traits have their roots in chromosomal and hormonal expression, or in other natural characteristics that distinguish men from women. Biological determinists and socio-biologists highlight similarities in male and female behaviour among men and women, and across different environments.

Evolutionary psychology sees human nature and behaviour, like human physical characteristics, as a product of natural selection over time, and proposes that many male/female differences are ‘hard-wired’ natural occurrences (Baron-Cohen, 2003). There are suggestions that the sexes are differentiated by their occupational preferences while others differentiate male and female performances in many cognitive and motor tasks (Lippa, 2005). The fundamental premise is the same: that sex and gender are fixed, universal and inevitable.

Socio-biological approaches attempt to account for masculine nature and power with reference to biology and physiology, but cannot account for cultural differences or historically-determined redefinitions of masculinity. Leach (1994) contends that the sex role theory approach is superior
to that of sociobiology because it treats masculinity as social rather than natural, and examines its functions within a structure (e.g. the family). Rose and Rose (2001) suggest that biologically reductive explanations tend to reflect conservative values and forces, and assume that what appears ‘real’ in terms of human behaviour is what ought to be.

**Functionalism and Sex Role Theory**

In the 1950s, Talcott Parsons and his concept of ‘functionalism’ became a key tool in understanding how a society maintained some sense of order, equilibrium and consensus, despite conflicts over material resources (Robertson and Turner, 1991). Functionalism engages with a view of society as basically harmonious, with conflict being minimized as individuals come to learn the ‘normative standards of society’ (Lee and Newby, 1983).

Durkheim (1951) argued that socialization is the means by which the greater needs of society are transmitted through generations. For society to remain effective and orderly there is a functional prerequisite that dictates that the allocation of tasks and roles must go to those most suited to them. These roles reflect a particular culture’s norms or values, and are acquired through agents of socialization such as family, school, and the mass media (Mead, 1934; Parsons, 1954; Leach, 1994; Ritzer, 2006).

Functionalism attempted to justify and explain gender, and the inequalities that arise from it, by presenting them as naturally occurring phenomena and necessary for the smooth operation of the social system. In relation to the study of sex and gender, functionalist theory viewed the roles of men and women as naturally different but complimentary (Robertson and Turner, 1991).

Sex role theory emerges from functionalist perspectives, notions of natural biological differences and a gender dichotomy. According to Whitehead (2002) sex role theory gained prominence partly due to the impact of the social and economic transformations felt throughout
the West after the Second World War. These were seen to have profound consequences for men and women in respect of changing patterns of work, increases in divorce and unemployment, and the demise of traditional industries.

Following sex role theory, men are expected to fulfil the masculine role, which reflects agentic qualities; and women are expected to fulfil the feminine gender role that reflects communal qualities. Goffman (1959) suggested that as actors on the social stage, men and women benefit from the sense of belonging that accrues from the recognition that their role performance triggers membership of a given collective. Conversely, condemnation and censure accrue to individuals who act in ways that undermine the social order.

Brittan (1989) notes that in sex role theory “roles are added to biology to give us gender” (p21). The weaknesses of sex role theory were increasingly recognized. These included the absence of any theory of male power and a reliance on biological determinism (Kimmel, 1987; Pleck, 1981).

Connell remarks that:

“the underlying biological dichotomy seems to have persuaded many theorists that there is no power relationship here at all. The ‘female role’ and the ‘male role’ are tacitly treated as equal” (1987: p50-51).

By identifying social structure with biological difference, sex role theory reduces gender to two homogenous and complementary categories and underplays social inequality and power. It does not adequately provide an explanation for differences between and among women and men particularly. Nor does it account for those who do not conform to dominant stereotypes (Connell, 1987). Sex role theory de-politicises gender, making it a set of individual attributes and not an agent of social structure (Kimmel, 2000).
Gender related conflict was theorized by sex role theory as a tension between an individual and the expectations established by his/her perceived or allocated sex role – between individuals and an abstract set of expectations (Kimmel, 2000: p91). Sex role theory proved inadequate to explore the range in gendered identities, which requires adequate theorizing of the variations within the categories of men and women. Such theorizing makes it possible to see the relationships between and among men, or between and among women as structured relationships themselves. Given these limitations, writers influenced by feminism, as well as critical gender theorists of various tendencies, eventually disengaged from functionalist perspectives and ideas of sex roles.

**Sex and Gender as Constructs**

Freud’s theory of psychosexual development offered a challenge to assumptions of biological inevitability. Rather than focus on variation, as anthropologists did, Freud stressed the universality of sex differences, and such differences were produced – learned by children via interactions with their family and the larger society (Kimmel, 2000: p74). A good deal of sociological, cultural and feminist theory has sought to challenge biological determinism, through the conceptual division between sex and gender (Barker and Willis, 2003). Sex is taken to be the biology of the body, while gender refers to the cultural assumptions and practices that govern the social construction of men and women.

Gender viewed as a social construction is seen as situational, relational, and dynamic (Collier, 1998). Feminist theory since Simone de Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex* (1949) has been committed to the proposition that gender is socially constructed. Claiming that a woman is not born, but is made a woman, de Beauvoir asserted that there is a difference between the innate biological condition of being female and the achieved socio-cultural status of being a woman (Cameron, 2005, p485). This effectively formed the basis for the future explorations of how social forces shape expectations and behaviours of women.
A study by Garfinkel (1967) problematised the biological basis of sex. As an ethnomethodologist, he aimed at “capturing the socially situated work whereby Agnes [his subject, a transsexual], accomplished the task of passing as a ‘normal’ woman” (Rogers, 1992: p174). Garfinkel formulated his theory of gender as a ‘situated accomplishment’, an accomplishment in which: “membership in a sex category is sustained across a variety of practical circumstances and contingencies, at the same time preserving the sense that such membership is a natural, normal, moral fact of life” (Zimmerman, 1992: pp194-195). Ethnomethodologists and symbolic interactionists argue that the subject develops a sense of gendered selfhood through routine and managed interaction with others, and the construction of shared ‘communities of understanding’ about what gender ‘is’ and what it ‘means’ (Garfinkel, 1967: pp181-2). In this way the division between male and female is a practical accomplishment achieved within everyday social settings (Kessler and McKenna, 1978: p163).

In the article “The Traffic in Women” (1975) Gayle Rubin introduced the term ‘sex-gender system’, and defined it as “the set of arrangements upon which a society transforms biological sexuality into products of human activity and in which these transformed sexual needs are satisfied” (p159). Segal (1994) suggests that the distinction between biological ‘sex’ and socially constructed ‘gender’ poses a challenge to, and a rejection of, the mythologizing of women’s nature and place in the world. Within Anglo-American feminism gender became “a central explanatory and organizing category for accounts of the social, familial, and discursive construction of subjectivity” (Gatens, 1996, p4). It provided a theoretical justification for women’s right to equality, independently of presumed biological ‘natural’ sex differences (Chodorow, 1978; Oakley, 2005). Collier (1998) contends that gender inequality was negotiated alongside an implicit acceptance in the inherent biological factors that construct men and women as different (p15).
An analysis of gender as a social practice challenges the beliefs that biology determines how masculine or feminine a person is, and proposes that gender arises out of dynamic and changing social practices and is therefore historically and culturally variable. These processes create systems of ideas and practices about genders that vary across time and space.

**Constructionism and the postmodern subject**

To claim that a person’s gender is constructed is not to claim that s/he lacks agency or active involvement in that process. Rather, as Cossins (2000) suggests, individuals must actively participate in the social practices of gender, in order to acquire it. The feminist movement largely changed perceptions of gender, while the gay and lesbian movements significantly altered conceptions of sex, as well as of moral standards perceived to be immutable, all of which could now be viewed as historically and politically determined constructions (Mirkin, 1999).

Feminists influenced by post-structuralist and post-modern thought have argued that both sex and gender are social and cultural constructions. From a diverse range of theoretical positions, gender has been reconceived as a ‘performative’ construction, that is, a socially contingent set of behaviours which only exist as they are being performed (Butler, 1993, 1999; Fuss, 1989). A body of explicitly feminist post-modern and post-structuralist scholarship has sought to rethink gender and concepts such as identity, subjectivity, and the ‘sexed body’ (Benhabib et al., 1995; Fuss, 1989; Weedon, 1988). This anti-essentialist stance suggests that femininity and masculinity, as discursive constructs, are ways of describing and disciplining human subjects. Biological sex is often implicitly assumed to provide grounding for gender, but for Butler sex is known only through the ideological filter of the discourse about gender, and thus sex and gender are both cultural constructs. According to this view, gender is not something that is acquired once and for all at an early stage of life, but an ongoing accomplishment produced by repeated actions. Butler suggests that behaving in ways that are identifiable as male or female, genders
individual bodies; in this way, sex and gender, understood as social processes or constructions rather than fixed categories, are actively constructed by the individual.

A focus on difference in gender research emanates from the influence of post-Enlightenment theories of sexual complementarity, which postulates that the minds and bodies of men and women are quite different in ways that make them complementary. The theoretical influences of postmodernism and post-structuralism and repudiation of fixed notions of difference engage more positively with issues of difference and diversity; as the emphasis shifts from ‘the difference’ to ‘differences’. For post-structuralists, the cultural variations that exist between men and women suggest that there is no universal cross-cultural category of ‘woman’ or ‘man’ that is shared by all. There are multiple modes of femininity and masculinity which are enacted not only by different women and men, but by the same person under different circumstances.

The post-modern view that identities of all kinds are not fixed and stable attributes of individuals, but are constructed in particular contexts through specific practices, shifts thinking from binary gender difference to thinking in terms of gender diversity. In Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity (1999), Butler rejects the naturalistic notions of inherent gendered essence, arguing that distinctions between male and female, homosexuality and heterosexuality are symbolic constructions which in turn create an illusion of their own stability. She suggests that gender and sexuality are relationally constituted: heterosexuality, with its attached gender norms, is constructed in opposition to its abject other, homosexuality.

Some critics have raised objections to what they see as poststructuralist abstractions. Jackson (1999) and Jackson and Scott (2000) suggest that a sociological analysis of gender and sexuality foregrounds social structures – particularly insofar as they support social inequality, and social interaction. Thus gender and sexuality can be seen as embedded in everyday interactions and practices, while they are also socially patterned and socially salient. Thus even though divisions such as those between male and female, or those between heterosexuality and homosexuality,
may not be ‘natural’, they are ‘real’ for the individuals who live them. According to this view, these are not only discursive constructs, as they condition the ways gender and sexuality is lived and experienced.

However, poststructuralists and feminists have become increasingly more concerned with embodiment and personal experience (Sedgwick, 2003, Butler 2004). This particular debate has been driven by arguments over political usefulness, and used as a platform from which various feminist currents have confronted others. ‘Abstractions’ do, however, affect daily life, as well as social structures. Femininity and masculinity, Barker and Willis (2003) contend, are a matter of how men and women are represented, and therefore are sites of continual political struggle over meaning (p282).

We can say that different masculinities and different femininities, as historical products of social practices, “are formed and transformed over time”, with the conceptions of ‘man’ and ‘woman’ being different at different periods of history (Connell, 1995: p81-82). Socially available meanings and discourses can be understood as resources or materials with which selves are constructed (Brickell, 2003, 2005). It seems clear that the privileging of discourse over material relations risks the potential erasure of some kind of stable subjectivity from which to develop a coherent political practice, and also that the materiality of social institutions needs attention. As such Connell (1987) reminds us that gender is not just the property of individuals, but is “also a property of collectives, institutions and historical processes” (p139). Whatever the standpoint, if we understand gender as constructed and susceptible to analysis from a variety of critical and theoretical vantage points, gender appears to be problematic, and intertwined with class, race, and sexuality in an active matrix, whilst also historically, socially and culturally contingent.
Masculinity/Masculinities

Studying Men: Defining and Theorising Masculinities

Critical theorizing of men and masculinity emerged as part of a wider growth in men’s studies (Connell, 1989; Brod, 1987; Brod and Kaufman, 1994; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Frank and Davidson, 2000). It built on earlier feminist research that makes visible the gendered nature of the social world, and places power relations at the centre of its analysis.

Men are structurally and interpersonally dominant in most spheres of life (Hearn, 1987), and masculinities are implicated in the everyday practices of men and women (Whitehead, 2002). Much thinking about men and masculinities has been influenced by social constructionist and feminist perspectives on gender. It has been shown that there are a variety of masculinities in different cultures and at different periods in history, inflected by other dimensions of social identity, which would be impossible if men were genetically programmed to behave in particular ways (Flood, 1995). There are multiple versions of how to be a man in any particular society, and the relations between them are a crucial part of the makeup of gender.

Understanding the political significance of masculinity involves an examination of how it is implicated in power interests. Some theories which have attempted to produce a political understanding of masculinity have had difficulty producing a coherent analysis of power relations within and between genders. Without engaging in the study of men and masculinities from a critical perspective, one might be tempted to see masculinity as biologically given, unassailable, singular, discrete and containing natural models of best practice (Sinha, 1999; Mosse, 1998).

Commentators influenced by feminism have noted that there is little obvious motivation for men to critique themselves either as individuals or as a gender group (Hearn, 1994). Hearn (2004)
remarks that some social scientific research does not seem to notice that men are gendered beings, socially constructed and reproduced, rather than ‘neutral’ adults or ‘citizens’. Kimmel (1990) suggests that sociology kept masculinity invisible, and rendered femininity problematic; as women were seen as a deviation from the norm (i.e. men) and their behaviour was worthy of explanation in terms of their gender.

Psychology, anthropology, history and sociology provide a complex of knowledge about masculinity. They variously consider it: a set of definable and measurable actions and attitudes, a cluster of innate qualities embedded in the psyche, or a complex set of behaviours with different meanings culturally and historically and regulated by interactions with other men, women and power relations in society.

Poststructuralist gender theory contends that there is no ‘true masculinity’, nor is there a set of pre-social, ‘natural’, or ‘innate’ qualities necessarily tied to being born with a penis. The existence of an emblematic Man is naively assumed whenever labels such as ‘male power’, ‘male violence’, ‘male authority’ and ‘male sexuality’ are applied. Connell (1987) reminds us that when an analysis of gender uses ‘internally undifferentiated categories’ it underplays the “turbulence and contradictoriness within the social process of gender” (p60).

Given these diverse accounts it is unsurprising that there is no widely accepted definition of masculinity (Imms, 2000). Work by Freud and Adler in psychoanalysis demonstrated that adult character was not pre-determined by the body but was constructed, through emotional attachment to others, in a turbulent process of growth (Connell, 1994). Psychoanalysis typically views gender and masculinity as the product of interplay between the conscious and unconscious, rather than being determined by nature. Anthropologists emphasised the importance of social structures and norms, as well as cultural differences, in the developmental process of individuals. In the early twentieth century ethnographers such as Mead (e.g. 1935) published detailed accounts of non-Western societies and cultures, in which men and women
were seen to behave in ways that were different from the patterns familiar in western society, yet intelligible and consistent in their own social context.

Studies of masculinity from a cross-cultural perspective highlighted its diverse representations and multiple meanings (Meigs, 1990). This demonstrated, according to Hearn (1996), the futility of providing reified theories of masculinity across time and place; implicitly questioning the existence of masculinity as ‘object’, these studies also suggested that the concept of ‘masculinity’ is an “ethnocentric or even Eurocentric notion” (p209). Historical and anthropological accounts have destabilised taken-for-granted normalising prescriptions about what it means to be a man, and have contributed to strands of thought within the social sciences, which increasingly support the recognition of men and masculinities as socially constructed and produced, varying over time and space (Featherstone et al., 2007: pp8-9).

Concepts such as the ‘male sex role’, ‘hegemonic masculinity’, and multiple masculinities have been and continue to be important in theorizing masculinity.

**Male Sex Role**

Approaches to the study of men and masculinities tend to follow the theoretical perspectives and developments in gender research more generally, and are influenced by dominant academic theories. As already mentioned in this chapter, during the 1950s and 1960s the concept of ‘sex roles’ came to the fore, and masculinity was understood as an internalised role or identity.

The study of men focused primarily on identifying the main constitutive elements of masculinity, characteristic of the hypothetical population of all men (e.g. western), and then quantifying the extent to which these elements are present in an individual man. These traits and attitudes were assumed to be natural and, therefore, independent from culture. Implicitly, masculinity was a single, coherent construct, and the ideal man was active, rational and strong
Masculinity was operationalized as “powerful, strenuous, active, steady, strong, and self-confident, with preference for machinery, athletics, working for self and external/public life” (Morawski, 1985, p212).

Brannon (1976) identified underlying principles that he believed defined the boundaries of the masculine role. These principles brought order to masculinity by elucidating the belief system that directs masculine prescriptions and proscriptions (Pleck, 1995; Pleck et al., 1993; Thompson and Pleck, 1995). Although Brannon (1976) identified several stereotypically masculine characters, masculine role theories are generally understood to support a single form of stereotypical masculinity. Individuals supposedly endorse and enact this masculinity and individual variation is rarely addressed.

Strength, power, and sexual competence were thought to form the basis of male roles, and psychologist Pleck (1981) suggests that because of the pressure of social expectations experienced by males, living up to a gender role is more problematic for boys than it is for girls. An ideal masculinity is seldom achieved, and the discrepancy between the attained and idealised versions of masculinity creates a gender role ‘strain’ (Pleck, 1995). Insufficient attainment of the ideal was predicted to lead to poor mental health, so men who were identified as feminine or otherwise ‘low’ in masculinity were identified as problematic. Similarly, other writers claimed that masculinity does not come without a price, and that it carries costs for both men and women (Levant and Pollack, 1995).

As a reaction against the women’s liberation movement, the so-called ‘men’s liberation movement’, grappled with the paradox of simultaneously acknowledging the costs of masculinity to men and men’s institutional privileges (Messner, 1998). According to Messner, the language of sex roles was the currency through which they negotiated this paradox. By the late 1970s, ‘men’s liberation’ groups began to disappear. Their conservative and moderate wings became an anti-feminist movement facilitated by the language of sex roles. Some
progressive men formed a pro-feminist movement premised on a language of gender relations and power.

Two of the main men’s rights movements in the United States, the Mythopoetic men’s movement and the Christian Promise Keepers asserted men’s responsibility to ‘retake’ their natural position of leadership within their communities (Messner, 1997). These groups were both conservative in outlook, and shared an aversion to what they saw as ‘feminization’ of men. This so-called feminization and associated men’s problems were variously blamed on modernization, feminism, gay liberation, sexual liberation and the breakdown in traditional family structures.

In the social sciences, the concept of a ‘male sex role’ was criticised for its ethnocentrism and lack of power perspective (Brittan, 1989; Kimmel, 1987), while a broader social constructionist perspective stressed issues of social power (Kaufman, 1987). Under the influence of the women’s movement and gay liberation movement, the ‘male role’ was subject to sharp criticism as oppressive and limiting. Despite being itself locked into the essentialist notion that men and women are fundamentally complementary, role research did however, begin to lay the groundwork for questioning a singular, unchanging masculinity, one that all men would naturally aspire to and achieve. Demetriou (2001) asserts that the notion of hegemonic masculinity was developed in an attempt to take account of questions of power and social change which the sex role framework left largely untheorized (p337).

**Hegemonic masculinity**

A critical sociology of men and masculinity began to advance the feminist project by deconstructing masculinity and engaging in the “search for men and the recognition of their activities as the gendered activities of gendered individuals, rather than as ungendered representatives of “humanity” (Morgan, 1992, p2).
Theoretical developments in the field of gender studies, critical scholarship informed by feminist insights, and critical studies of masculinity meant that men are no longer the invisible, unmarked gender, nor as Nye (2005) remarks, “the point from which all norms, laws and rights flow- but are themselves the objects of the gaze of women and of other men” (p1938).

Informed by second-wave feminism and theories of power, theorists such as Carrigan, Connell and Lee (1985), Connell (1987), Brod (1987), Kaufman (1987), Kimmel (1987), and Hearn (1987) argued for a new trajectory in the critical study of men. In an article “Towards a New Sociology of Masculinity” Carrigan et al., (1985), extensively critiqued the ‘male sex role’ literature and proposed a model of multiple masculinities and power relations. In turn, this model was integrated into a systematic sociological theory of gender (Demetriou, 2001). Connell (1987) sees masculinity as a social construction and refers to ways of being a man in a certain time and place. The concept of hegemonic masculinity, formulated over two decades ago, has considerably influenced thinking about men, gender and social hierarchy. Gramsci’s (1971) original theory of hegemony explains how a dominant economic class controls society with the active consent of dominated groups. The term and concept of hegemony has been widely used in debates on men. The notion of hegemony provides a way of talking about overarching ideologies at the level of everyday, taken-for-granted ideas, and practices performed with consent and without coercion. Hegemony implies that men may experience subordination and marginalization as a consequence of not ‘measuring up’ to the standard against which all men are judged (Connell, 1995).

Historians and anthropologists assert that no single pattern of masculinity is found everywhere and that multiple forms of masculinity often exist within and between groups. However Connell points out that within most groups, certain masculinities are more honoured than others. He uses the term ‘hegemonic masculinity’ to refer to “the form of masculinity that is culturally dominant in a given setting” (Connell, 1996: p209). Men’s lives are characterised by a
combination of experiences of power and alienation, and even their experiences of power can be conflicting (Hearn, 1987).

The concept of hegemonic masculinity has proven useful in a number of fields, having been used in education studies (Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Martino, 1995); in criminology (Messerschmidt, 1993, 2005; Newburn and Stanko, 1994); in sports sociology (Messner, 1992); and in health research (Sabo and Gordon, 1995). According to Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) the analysis of multiple masculinities and the concept of hegemonic masculinity served as a framework for much of the developing research effort on men and masculinity (p834).

The concept of hegemonic masculinity has been particularly successful in identifying forms of domination by men, of women and other men, as well as providing useful insights for power imbalance in groups. For Connell (1987) masculinities are constructed through practices that maintain certain types of relationships between men and women, and among men. He spoke of a hierarchy of masculinities among men, located within structures of power.

The ‘content’ of hegemonic masculinity will vary in different social locations and among different groups of men and women. However, hegemonic masculinity is not totally determining of men’s experiences and performances of masculinity. In any society there are multiple masculinities and femininities, but one version of masculinity is hegemonic and dominates as the most honoured and influential cultural representation of masculinity. Demetriou (2001) identifies two forms of hegemony: external hegemony refers to the institutionalization of men’s dominance over women; while internal hegemony refers to the social ascendancy of one group of men over all other men.

The notion of ‘hegemony’, as applied to masculinity, can be used to define the maintenance of social power by certain groups, through persuasion and other means. The organization of society seems natural, inevitable and ordinary (Donaldson, 1993: p 645), and the dominant
conceptions of masculinity are affirmed in social institutions and practices, as well as ideologies. The public face of hegemonic masculinity is not necessarily about the power that men have, but about the images that sustain their power. In Western societies, hegemonic masculinity is seen to refer to white, middle-class, and heterosexual masculinity. However, the experience of masculinity is not uniform, and the concept of hegemonic masculinity addresses itself to this issue by pointing to the dominance in society of certain forms and practices of masculinity that are historically and socially constructed (Andrist et al., 2005). There are particular forms of masculinity that are deemed to be socially acceptable and particular forms that are not acceptable in many circumstances. This captures the complexity and multiplicity of men’s lives and moves away from the essentialist notion that a stable, uniform masculine essence exists.

Kimmel et al., (2005) remark on a growing critique around the concept of masculinities and hegemonic masculinity, from a variety of positions including materialist and post-structuralist. Wetherell and Edley (1999) suggest that we need to give greater emphasis to the numerous and contradictory discursive resources through which hegemonic gender identities are constructed. They argue that men can position themselves in multiple ways depending on the context, and men themselves “negotiate regulative conceptions of masculinity in their everyday interactions as they account for their actions and produce or manage their own (and others’) identities” (p337).

Multiple masculinities

Essentialist thinking assumes that masculinity is unchanging and common to all men. It propounds a monolithic view of men as privileged and women as oppressed, and it further requires gender to be a static, pre-determined system of sex-role enactment. As has been mentioned ethnographic and life-history research methods, make evident the social construction of masculinity. They demonstrate that there is no one pattern of masculinity that is found
everywhere, so it is necessary to speak of masculinities (Kimmel et al., 2005). When theorizing about men and masculinity, the concept of multiplicity is reflected in the pluralizing of the term, such that we now speak of masculinities. Many scholars e.g. Pease (2000), O’Donnell and Sharpe (2000) stress the plurality of masculinities, moving away from the fixed model of a unitary masculinity and towards an understanding of the complexity, fragmentation and differentiation which exists between the diverse lives of men, as well as the continuities that unite them (Collier, 2002).

In constructing theories of masculinity authors such as Hearn (1996), Connell (1987, 1995) and Mac an Ghaill (1994, 1996) have used feminist power theories to explain the marginalisation not only of women, but also of men on the basis of class, sexuality, and race. Their work presents masculinity as a varied and varying set of values and beliefs underlying men’s practices, rather than a group of characteristics shared by all men. The multiple masculinities approach assumes that masculinity is a multiple entity, not homogenous or reducible to a set of simple attributes. It assumes that gender is constructed by individuals as well as by societal forces. Gender is seen as a relational construct, whereby men do not produce their versions of masculinity apart from the influences of femininity and other men. Different forms of masculinity exist in conjunction with class, race, age, ethnicity, and sexuality, creating a hierarchy of hegemonic, subordinated and marginalized forms of masculinity. Men whose masculinity is subordinated or marginalized can exhibit hegemonic behaviours; that is, they engage in social practices which serve to place them in a position of power over women and other men (Cossins, 2000).

According to Connell (1994) masculinity is a configuration of practices in the structure of gender relations, with an emphasis on what people do, not what is expected or imagined (p3). What people do is embedded in and constructed through institutions and political systems. Clearly men do not live out the masculine myth imposed by the dominant culture, but neither can they live completely outside the myth since it pervades the culture (Easthorpe, 1990). The media construct, inform, and reinforce prevalent ideas about men and masculinity.
For Hearn (2004) critical studies on men should address men in the context of gendered power relations. He suggests an examination of the hegemony of men, which would seek “to address the double complexity that men are both a social category formed by the gender system and dominant collective, and individual agents of social practices” (p49). Hearn emphasises the need to look critically at the ordinary, taken-for-granted dominant constructions, powers and authorities of men in relation to women, children and other men. This clearly involves addressing men’s domination and control through consent.

The recognition of a variety of masculinities in different social and spatial contexts together with a multiplicity of power relations in those contexts means the notion of multiple masculinities has questioned the association of privilege and power with maleness in an unproblematic way (Ni Laoire, 2002). Power and difference were core concepts in the gay liberation movement, which developed a sophisticated analysis of the oppression of men as well as oppression by men (Altman, 1972). There are now several literatures that theorize and represent men in different ways, such as feminist, gay, queer, pro-feminist and other critiques (Hearn, 2004).

Brickell (2005) notes that an analysis of social structure is central to sociological examinations of masculinities. Imms (2000) comments that pro-feminist masculinity studies rooted in sociology, seek to elaborate a cultural rather than sex-role or psychoanalytical construction of gender theory (p157). Contemporary pro-feminist scholarship articulates a pluralistic vision of masculinity and has become a major vehicle for elaborating contemporary sociological theories of gender. It sees power as the central function of masculinity, and masculinity as a complex social hierarchy. Such a critical current variously looks at men as a social category, men as a gender class, specific groups of men, or collections of individuals who are men (Hearn, 2004). Gay and some queer critiques, focus on men in different ways from feminist writing. Queer theorising problematizes the category of men, along with other binaries such as gender and
sexuality. Gay scholarship may or may not problematize men’s power or the category of ‘men’ itself (Beemyn and Eliason, 1996).

In recent years there has been a growing interest in theorizing masculinity from a discursive perspective. This emphasises that masculinities are constructed within specific discourses (Petersen, 1998; Coyle and Morgan-Sykes, 1998; Edley and Wetherell 1997; Wetherell and Edley, 1999). Analysing the ways in which men talk about themselves, Wetherell and Edley (1999) identified specific positions and ‘psycho-discursive’ practices in the negotiation of hegemonic masculinity and in subjects’ own identification as men. Similarly, Lea and Auburn’s (2001) study of the story of a convicted rapist in a sex-offender programme, outlined the ways in which oppressive forms of masculinity are discursively instantiated, maintained and reproduced.

**Masculinity and normative sexuality**

From an essentialist perspective, genders are seen to have their correlative sexualities. This is a pervasive assumption in Western societies. Hence, the discourse on masculinity is enmeshed with a discourse on sexuality that reproduces hegemonic attitudes. Each type of masculinity is generally assumed to have a correlation with a specific type of sexuality. However there is not always a clear alignment of deviant masculinity and deviant sexual behaviour.

Queer theory developed the notions of ‘the normative’ and ‘the heteronormative’ to refer to the imposition of sexual identities and behaviours which are predicated as ‘normal’, and are therefore morally acceptable. By contrast, the term ‘queer’ was adopted to refer to all non-normative behaviours and identities. Different masculinities contain normative sexual elements that are reproduced and affirmed in a heteronormative cultural environment. Men who interact sexually with children are acting in a social context, which is constituted by both dynamic and cyclical patterns of masculine social practices (Cossins, 2000).
In a society where social control is based on the strict organisation of sexual desire and attraction, sexuality becomes a potent force, central to personal identities (Durham, 2003a). Carrigan et al. (2002) stress the fact that mainstream masculinity is heterosexual masculinity. They suggest that it is a fundamental element of modern hegemonic masculinity that one sex (women) exists as potential sexual object, while the other sex (men) is negated as a sexual object. It is women therefore who provide heterosexual men with sexual validation, whereas men exist as rivals in both sexual and other spheres of life (p109). Pleck (1981) observed that the homosexual/heterosexual dichotomy acts as a central symbol in all ranking of masculinity.

The social construction, of femininity and masculinity, impacts on our cultural and individual understandings of sexuality. Sexual acts may have different social and personal meanings depending on how they are defined and understood in their different cultures and historical periods (Vance, 1991). Foucault (1978) argued that sexualities are constantly being produced and modified, and that the nature of sexual discourse changes accordingly. The contention is that sexuality is an important male social practice for establishing a sense of individual power and potency (Connell, 1987, 1995; Cossins, 2000). Sexuality, in the way it is conceived, practiced, and performatively expressed, is a central aspect in the social construction of all masculinities, given that certain sexual behaviours create and maintain power relations between men and women, and between and among men (Durham, 2003a). In a western cultural framework, the objects of normative masculine sexual desire are constructed by reference to characteristics such as passivity and receptivity, aligned to the feminine in a hierarchical context which sees them as attributes of subordination.

Sexuality is a crucial locus of power in interpersonal relationships, particularly in a society where sexuality is a significant factor of heterosexist social control (Bell, 1993; Steinberg et al., 1997). Like any relations of difference which are asymmetrical in their valuation, relations of sexuality have historically privileged heterosexuality. It is situated as the norm against which all
other forms of sexuality have been constituted as deviant. Through denigrating and denying legitimacy to sexual desires expressed outside the restrictive frames of compulsory heterosexuality (Rich, 1993), ‘active’ sexuality has been historically linked to hierarchical, phallic and heterosexist aspects of the masculine gender (Collier, 1995).

Availing of the insights of feminist and gay liberation theorists, it seems evident that the dominant mode of masculinity constructs a hierarchy in sexual politics with white, heterosexual men at the top. The subordination of other forms of masculinity, such as those aligned to homosexuality, is related to the overall logic of the subordination of women to men. In this way, homosexuality is defined as feminine or ‘other than’ masculine, and thus inferior. Homophobia would therefore be crucial to the normative definition of masculinity as linked to heterosexuality, because it rules out men as potential objects of emotional or sexual attachment.

**Discussion**

We have seen that there is a range of perspectives addressing the complexities of gender in general, as well as masculinities in particular. Men’s studies and the theorising of masculinity adopt a variety of approaches. Functionalism adopts an essentialist understanding of masculinity as an attribute of a man, and a role he takes in society. Social constructionism sees masculinity as culturally, temporally, and spatially variable. Post-modern approaches to gender and masculinity consider them to be fluid and performatively expressed.

Any study of masculinities should take into account gender fluidity in a continuum that is historically and culturally contingent. It should also take into account that masculinity is itself an ideological construct, and therefore a locus of power. Perceived links between specific masculinities and certain types of sexuality reflect a society’s priorities; these links represent one of the ways in which genders are produced and policed.
In a discourse where power and powerlessness plays such a crucial role, such as media discourses surrounding men who interact sexually with children, the notion of hegemony is particularly useful. Men can adopt hegemonic masculinity when it is desirable; but the same men can distance themselves strategically from hegemonic masculinity at other moments. Hegemonic masculinity is a relevant concept to consider individual behaviours/identities and collective normative ones.

The emergence of postmodernism and post-structuralism in the social sciences and humanities during the 1980s and 1990s has been a significant theoretical development to address how power is deployed in social relations. These theoretical perspectives support the view that the subject is constituted through language, with the inherent instability that that implies. This premise effectively challenges the oppressive power relations of gender and sexuality which are sometimes presented as natural and therefore inevitable, and it highlights the importance of critiquing the discursive frameworks that shape the fabrication of concepts, the definitions of problems, and the formulation of research questions.

As we have discussed, recent years have seen the proliferation of studies on men, with gendered and critical analyses based on the assumption that men, and men’s practices, are not simply bound to biology, but are the result of historical, political, economic, social and cultural forces. In a variety of feminist analyses, focusing on different aspects of men, feminism has demonstrated that the understanding of gender relations requires attention to questions of power. For example, in terms of men who relate sexually to children, their behaviours and identities, the reliance of the media on highlighting certain social roles in their reporting, suggests a deliberate reliance on the ‘male role’ theories which were problematised as complicit with the subjection of women.

In this context, it is also interesting that Cameron (2005) remarks that gender identities may be constituted less by the contrast with the other gender, in a binary structure, and more by the
contrast with other versions of the same gender. In terms of representations of men who interact sexually with children, it may be particularly useful to place their descriptions in a continuum of masculinities. For example, this could be done in relation to issues of self-control and violence or, an equally interesting standpoint, in relation to the de-masculinizing notion of arrested development.

The diversity of possible approaches seems remarkable, there are as many ways of studying men and masculinities as there are approaches to the social sciences. They range from broad societal and structural analyses, to the collective analysis of men (Hearn, 1987). All these perspectives have in common that they interrogate different masculinities – hegemonic, complicit, subordinated, marginalised, resistant (Carrigan et al., 1985; Connell, 1995), as well as investigating the constructions of specific masculinities within specific discourses (Edley and Wetherell, 1995). In addition researchers have explored masculinities enacted by people with female bodies (Halberstam, 1998; Messerschmidt, 2004).

We will see in the following chapters how the specific forms of masculinity associated with the identities of men who relate sexually to children, and portrayed by the media, have a place in the broader ordering of gender in a given society, and may have a political role within that scheme. Individual men and certain groups may be facing and even confronting change, but this has to be put in the context of the stubborn stability of men’s structural power. As these issues are both structural and personal, Hearn (1999) reminds us that any material crisis in men’s circumstances does not equate to an ideological crisis in how men are assumed to be.

Much analysis of men incorporates feminist and pro-feminist perspectives with a focus on gender. The critical study of men opens up the possibility of explicitly gendering the dominant social group, men, as well as of making men’s relation to men clearer (Hearn, 1998). In relation to representations of men who interact sexually with children, this research suggests the existence of a self-regulating discourse on normative and deviant masculinity which adopts a particular form in the media. Heterosexuality is a significant constituent of personal and social
power and to deviate from heterosexuality is to have less power in a wide range of social circumstances and relationships. Homophobia is fundamental to the construction of normative heterosexual masculinity. A critical analysis of media discourses reveals an emphasis on the non-normative sexuality of men who are reported as paedophiles. This preserves the society-wide model of hegemonic masculinity and locates deviant sexual behaviours solely in what are constructed as sexually deviant men.

It is evident that the focus on men needs to be asserted – to name men as men- while simultaneously the category of men must be deconstructed and queried as historical, culturally specific, and ideological (Hearn, 1998). Throughout the complexity of power and power relations needs to be recognised and the gender/sexual subtext needs to be made apparent. In terms of the present study, it is important to see beyond the simplifications and generalisations of representations of sexuality in the media, which are dictated by a desire for continuity, coherence, and maximum impact.

Hegemonic masculinity, when first formulated, was understood as a pattern of practice that allowed men’s dominance over women to continue, not just a set of role expectations or an identity. Hegemonic masculinity was never assumed to be normal in the statistical sense, but we can now assert that it is beyond doubt normative. Hegemony could be supported by force; but it means ascendancy through culture, institutions, and persuasion.

Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) affirm the view that masculinity is not a fixed entity embedded in the body or personality traits of individuals. Rather masculinities are accomplished in social action, and therefore, can differ according to the gender relations in a particular social setting (p836). In such a model of gender, different categories of masculinity are relational and are constantly crosscut by other divisions. As we shall see in Chapter 8, it is interesting to note from the findings of this research that the media ‘portraits’ of supposed paedophiles tend to
focus on various linkages of masculinity with sexuality, financial status, occupation, education, or age, in order to best construct a certain profile.

Over the last number of years, the concept of hegemonic masculinity has sometimes been used as a fixed, transhistorical model, ignoring the massive evidence of change in historical and social definitions of masculinity. While incorporating some criticism of the original concept Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) suggest we need to consider how an idealised definition of masculinity is constituted in social process (p849). At a society-wide level there is a circulation of models of admired masculine conduct, which may be exalted by churches, narrated by mass media, or celebrated by the state. Such models refer to, but also in various ways distort, the everyday realities of social practice. Hegemonic masculinities may not correspond closely to the lives of many actual men; however hegemonic models that express widespread ideals, fantasies and desires are constructed. In relation to the present study, the distortion of facts in order to foreground a certain deviant gender-sexuality identity offers an important insight into a certain ideal of masculinity.

Masculinity research has been criticised for not employing a poststructuralist perspective which would, for instance, emphasise the discursive construction of identities (Whitehead, 2002). Discursive perspectives emphasise the symbolic dimension of gender. Although any specification of hegemonic masculinity typically involves the formulation of cultural ideals, it should not be regarded only as a cultural norm (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005, p842). Gender relations are also constituted through non-discursive practices, including wage labour, violence, sexuality, domestic labour, and child care, as well as through other routine social actions. Recognising the non-discursive and unreflective dimensions of gender gives us some sense of the limits to discursive flexibility (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). Thus the implications of critical research into everyday, routine, and often inconspicuous ideological interventions, such as media representations of deviancy, have a broad resonance. The concept of hegemonic masculinity cannot be reduced to structural determinism. Messerschmidt (1993)
suggests that men ‘do’ masculinity according to the social situation in which they find themselves, and this is not in conflict with the fundamental feature of the concept of hegemonic masculinity, which remains the combination of the plurality of masculinities and the hierarchy of masculinities. Hegemony is likely to be established only if there is some correspondence between cultural ideals and institutional power, while marginalization is always relative to the authorisation of the hegemonic position of the dominant group (Featherstone et al., 2007).

Hierarchy, in the context of a continuum of masculinities, is a determining factor in the deployment of discourses, such as in media accounts of men who relate sexually to children and ‘the paedophile’. A common research finding is that certain masculinities are more associated with authority and social power than others. Hegemony works in part through the production of exemplars of masculinity, symbols that have authority despite the fact that most men and boys do not fully live up to them.

As we know, post-structuralist theorists, such as Foucault, argue that power relations are visible not only through the direct repressive actions of political actors, such as the state, but also through the construction of particular forms of personal and collective identity. Masculinities are a good example of this, which makes a poststructuralist approach particularly illuminating in terms of gender. Although policed by the state through laws, moral codes, medicine, psychiatry and science, individuals may ultimately become self-policing, in that their actions significantly reflect the political interests implicit in dominant constructions of male identity (Leach, 1994). For example, it is interesting to consider the role of the media in both policing gender and facilitating self-policing; in this sense the reader/viewer may be said to become not only complicit, but also actively engaged in enforcing a certain discourse.

Clearly, social constructionist approaches are valuable tools for investigating the meaning and organisation of social life, including the social and psychic investments we all hold in the particular figurations in force in our own time and place. To explain difference, social
constructionism offers an analysis of the plurality of gender definitions. To explain power, it emphasises the ways in which some definitions become normative through the struggles of different groups for power, including the power to define. In addition, to explain the institutional dimension, social constructionism moves beyond socialization of gendered individuals who occupy gender-neutral sites, to the study of the interplay between gendered individuals and gendered institutions (Kimmel, 2000: p88). For this reason, a social constructionist perspective seems particularly appropriate when addressing the complexities of a media-constructed ‘paedophile identity’, since it is attached to a certain masculinity, it exists as a result of the need to define, and it is actualized by the convergence of institutional and individual motivation.

It has already been mentioned that the majority of adults reported as being involved sexually with children are men. Yet it appears that in popular discourse the masculinity of these men is not problematised, and they are still presented as non-gendered humans. The complex layering of gender identities and gender relations, as well as its institutional and interpersonal dimensions, are markedly un-theorized in this particular context. Yet Freel (2003), for example, has asserted that the analysis of the social construction of masculinity and male sexuality is integral to an understanding of the development of a sexual interest in children. A number of frameworks, for understanding adult male sexual involvement with children, will be considered in the following chapter.

Taking into account the exposition and analysis presented in this chapter, we must conclude that the privileging of particular qualities as indicators of sex and gender is culturally constructed. The present study will take that view as its standpoint, in order to demonstrate that the representation of men who interact sexually with children, and currently articulated in the media, relies on a constructed identity within a discourse of normative versus non-normative sexualities. Such a construction takes place in a context of hegemonic masculinities. This has a political dimension, because current media representations of these men facilitate and legitimize a
distorted version of certain deviant behaviours and identities, and purposefully impede any
debate which may question social structures in any meaningful way. There are a number of
crucial ways in which men who relate sexually to children are represented in the media. These
portrayals, their construction and its material effects will be addressed in chapters 6 and 8.

**Summary**

In this chapter we have first addressed the notion of gender, then that of masculinity/ies, in
order to consider how men and masculinities have emerged as objects of critical study, and in
order to assess the variety of theoretical perspectives pertaining to them.

We have seen that it was not until the 20th Century that social theorists explicitly distinguished
sex and gender, with sex representing one’s biological and bodily being, and gender, one’s
social and cultural being (Colebrook, 2004). From such a perspective sex is deployed to
describe innate biological characteristics, while gender is related to social characteristics which
are culturally understood to be associated with one sex or the other: maleness and masculinity;
femaleness and femininity. From a social constructionist perspective, the forms and norms of
both real and ideal masculinity and femininity vary considerably and systematically across time
and place, social class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and race. If it is more accurate to refer to
masculinities in the plural, this move must be complemented by a greater awareness of the
intersections between gender and other areas. Some masculinities have access to hegemonic
constructions, yet, as post-structuralist analysis shows, the relationship between identities and
discourses, implicates the individual in the construction and enforcement of ways of being, and
understanding others.
CHAPTER 4: EXPLANATIONS FOR ADULT MALE SEXUAL INTERACTION WITH CHILDREN

Various explanations have been posited to explain the behaviour of men who relate sexually to children. These vary in their construction of the phenomenon: is the behaviour rooted in psychosis, violence, sex, power, dysfunctional families, and/or deviance? Marshall et al., (1990) suggest that most researchers seem to take a rather narrow perspective stressing their own preferred processes to the virtual exclusion of others. These authors propose an integrated approach in which psychological, biological and sociological processes are considered.

Collier (1998) comments that an acknowledgement that men are overwhelmingly the perpetrators of violence must be informed by a theoretical perspective which understands that this violence is not innate, but the result of a complex of cultural, ideological, economic, political and personal forces. Researchers argue that a majority of adults who relate sexually to children are male and that a male sexual interest in children is relatively common in society (Finkelhor, 1986; Peters et al., 1986, Briere and Runtz, 1989; Glaser and Frosh, 1993; Hayashino et al., 1995). Medical and mainstream psychological perspectives, traditionally study men who relate sexually to children, as if the fact of them being men is irrelevant to their sexual behaviour. Gender is not seen as a focus for most of these explanations. Rather the focus is on the individual pathology of each man. The fact that these men are acting in a social context that is constituted by both dynamic and cyclical patterns of masculine social practices is obscured (Cossins, 2000).

Explanations as to why an adult man interacts sexually with a child derive from a variety of theoretical perspectives for example medical, psychological and sociological. These frameworks and perspectives also have their own internal variance. Approaches to understanding why some men relate sexually to children usually locate this phenomenon in the biology or psychology of the individual or place it in the wider context of social processes and practices. Often
explanations focus on an individual’s variation from ‘normal sexual practice’. The range of explanations that has been proposed spans a spectrum of disciplines. The psycho-medical viewpoint dominates as a theoretical framework and influences much of the popular and media discourses in relation to this issue.

The use of a variety of terms in similar contexts and issues of definitional ambiguity are discussed in this chapter. There follows a discussion of how definitions, classifications and explanations for why adults relate sexually to children, effect its conceptualisation as a medical, psychological, social, and gendered phenomenon. A social constructionist perspective recognises that social attitudes change over time and place. The facts of an event may be indisputable, however the impact of that event will be determined by the manner in which the event is perceived, defined and interpreted within the greater social context (Schulz, 2005). The chapter concludes with a discussion of the way sexual relations between men and children is constructed as a social object is highly contested.

Throughout the research literature, terminology conflates child sex abuse, incest, molestation, child sex offending and paedophilia. It is possible to say that definitional difficulties themselves are created in part by the intersection of social ideas, attitudes and values in relation to sex, sexuality, gender, law and morality. In addition to the complexities involved in defining the terms used, there is also a need to recognise that adult sexual interaction with children may involve different types of encounters. There is little evidence to suggest that a single model can subsume all theories or be applicable to most cases, as sexual relations between adults and children do not constitute a unitary phenomenon.

**The Child and Childhood**

In discussing adult-child sexual interaction the issue of ‘age’ is clearly omnipresent. It is important to consider some of the ways the concepts of ‘child’ and ‘childhood’ are theorised.
Our concept of childhood is context-linked and time-specific (Walsh, 2005). Definitions of the category of the 'child' vary according to historical period, culture, and society. In addition the term child, may be contradictorily defined in legal statutes within a particular society, or historical period e.g. age of criminal responsibility, age at which eligible to vote, age of marriage, age of consent for sexual activity. There are various biological, social and legal demarcators to childhood. The histories of childhood have been explored, and a number of writers have emphasised that concepts of the family and childhood have changed radically over time (Aries 1962; de Mause 1995). Prior to the twentieth century, children were valued more for their economic worth than for emotional reasons. Fass and Mason (2002) explain that as a result of a child labour movement and the development of compulsory education, children moved from being “economically useful” to “economically useless” but “emotionally priceless” (p3). Writers describe historical cycles of tolerance and repression in relation to adult sexual interaction with children, and the discovery and re-discovery of ‘childhood’ (Rush, 1980; Kahr 1991; Angelides, 2005). At many points in history children were regarded as miniature adults who were used sexually. The convention whereby children are treated as asexual and innocent, to be shielded from the erotic talk or behaviour of adults, is a relatively recent development (Aries, 1962).

Kincaid (1998) critiques discourses that constructs a generalized notion of ‘the child’. In western society, definitions of childhood have been based largely on arbitrary dates and biological changes as milestones marking progress into adulthood. Within modern social and political theory, the status of childhood is often assumed (Ashenden, 2004, p28), and while dominant conceptions of childhood, are rarely fully explicated the figure of the child is implicitly endowed with dependence, innocence and potential. Ashenden (2004) contends that the conceptual demarcation between adulthood and childhood is marked by distinctions between autonomy and dependence, impurity and innocence. In making these distinctions, childhood is characterised by the developmental models provided by medicine and psychology. Ames and
Houston (1990) argue that a distinction should be made between a biological child and a socio-legal child regardless of the latter’s discrepancy with biological childhood.

A number of influences impact upon our conceptualization of childhood. Prominent among these influences is the state and how it impacts on our image of childhood by the provision it makes for children and families through legislation and through education, care and welfare services (Walsh, 2005). The churches also play a role in the doctrines they espouse and the role children play within these institutions. The media play an increasing role in shaping society’s image of childhood. With the (re)birth of the child sex abuse movement in the late 1970s and 1980s, there was a steady de-sexualisation and indeed extension of childhood. In contrast to Freudian notion of infantile sexuality and to earlier twentieth century ideas of child precocity and seductiveness, children were increasingly being viewed in the 1980s as sexually innocent and vulnerable (Angelides, 2004; 2005).

Though adults have always been preoccupied with the status of childhood, modern debates have become “invested with a growing sense of anxiety and panic” (Buckingham, 2000, p3). Childhood is presented as something under siege from those who would rob children of their childhoods. Jackson and Scott (1999) suggest that the insistent emphasis on threats to childhood innocence reflects less the objective condition of children than the subjective perception of adults, reflecting “a general sense that the social world itself is becoming less stable and predictable” (p88). Jenks (1996) sees the child as a symbolic figure as a way of speaking about sociality itself, any danger to which “threatens to rock the social base” (p130). Adult perplexity at emotional and familial instability is projected onto childhood. An idealised view of childhood as a time of innocence, vulnerability and dependency is constructed through the prism of adult nostalgia (Critcher, 2002: p532). At risk are not only children but this whole discourse about childhood:

“…risk anxiety helps construct childhood and maintain its boundaries – the specific risks from which children must be protected.”
serve to define the characteristics of childhood and the ‘nature’ of children themselves”

(Jackson and Scott, 1999, p86-7).

Kincaid (1998) suggests that the high levels of abhorrence at ‘child sex abuse’ expressed by adults, betray a deep fascination with child sexuality, simultaneously fetishizing and denying adult sexual interest with children. Plummer (1990, 1991) remarks that contemporary concern over paedophilia, and adults who relate sexually with children, usually rests upon uncritical and under-theorized conceptions of childhood sexualities. Ideas of child sex and sexuality have been influenced by Christianity. According to Kilpatrick (1992) this was not necessarily because the notion of sex with children was frowned upon, as sex with children under the age of seven was deemed inconsequential. Christianity was concerned with the family and with the technical violation of the impediment of affinity (or incest), rather than necessarily with the consequences of sexual relations for children (Kilpatrick, 1992).

There is evidence to indicate that in previous centuries children generally were ill-treated and exploited, physically and sexually (de Mause, 1991, 1998). The concepts of childhood and of child protection arose as much from the desire on the part of the State to curb the sexual feelings and sexual precocity in children (Jenkins, 1998; Ashenden, 2004) as from the desire to protect children from the predations of others. Brongersma (1986) has suggested that society has engendered the notion that children do not possess any sexuality, providing the myth that all children are asexual, pure and innocent. Based on the premise that childhood is a distinct and special phase of life the development of modern understandings of childhood have been tied to the constitution of the family as a private space and to the development of distinct forms of knowledge and practice concerned with child welfare (Ashenden, 2004).
Men who relate sexually to children

The legal and social prohibition on the sexual use of children by adults is historically, quite recent. Angelides (2005) notes that historically, ‘child molesters’ were portrayed as pathetic and innocuous, with children regularly characterised as flirtatious and seductive. In contemporary western societies, such attribution would seem preposterous, and the roles of ‘molester’ and ‘child’ have been completely inverted. In relation to the crime of child sexual abuse, Schulz (2005) remarks that:

“If we really want to understand this crime, then we need to accept this fact – that most child molesters are not monsters. They are human beings who might have more in common with us than not” (p2).

Cossins (2000) argues that the ‘deviant’ child sex offender of the 1990s was, in the 1890s, a man who was considered to be expressing a ‘natural’ masculine sexual desire (p5).

“Can a man be entirely blamed for his relationship with a powdered and painted thirteen-year-old who looked at least eighteen, and haunted low class hotels or picked up drunks and offered them her favours for a small reward; or the garageman who was visited by a ten-year-old eleven times for sexual purposes before she decided the recompense was inadequate and informed the police; or a man whose girlfriend of fourteen boasted of intercourse with twenty-four men before she met him; these can hardly be called examples of seduction of the innocent”

At different times, the extent and tolerance of the notion of children as objects of sexual desire has varied. Halperin et al., (2001) has detailed the codes of sexuality in ancient Greek society, indicating that among the ruling classes, in the male-dominated society of the time, the purest form of love was the bond between an older free man and a pubescent free boy. The concerns about sexuality were in terms of those who played an active role in sex and those who were passive. Writers have pointed to the existence of historical and anthropological work that details examples of sexual relations between men and boys (Robertson, 2005; Sandfort et al., 1990, 1991). There is substantial historical and anthropological evidence of adult-child sexual interaction across cultures and time, revealing the ubiquity of sexual behaviors with children (Herdt, 1981; Briere and Runtz, 1989; Angelides, 2004). Quinsey (1986) and Bauserman (1989) reviewed ethnographic evidence of adult sexual relations with children. Ethnographic reports show that many non-European cultures have had few inhibitions about stimulating rather than suppressing children’s sexuality (e.g. child brides) (Li, 1990).

Plummer (1981, 1991) discusses how images of man-child sex range from baby girls being choked on their father’s penis, to teenage boy hustlers hanging around Times Square or Piccadilly Circus. Clearly not only is there a difference in what is being done in these cases, there is also a major difference in the social meanings of age. The attraction to physically developed adolescents is widely experienced and acknowledged, through the pictures used in advertisements and soft porn publications and the popularity of teenage prostitutes, that it scarcely amounts to sexual deviance. In spite of the social and legal prohibition of sex between adults and children, there are simultaneously circulating messages that encourage adult sexual desire of children and young people. Kincaid (1998) argues that there is a degree of paedophilia in the imagery and discourse of mainstream culture that must be recognised. Obvious examples are child pornography, the sexualisation of children in advertising and film, and the valorisation of forms of sexuality that involve the eroticisation of power over a sexual partner.
Rubin (1993 [1984]) states that sexuality is considered good if it is normal and natural, ideally heterosexual, marital, monogamous, reproductive and non-commercial: “Bad sex may be homosexual, unmarried, promiscuous, non-procreative or commercial. It may be masturbatory or may be casual, may cross generational lines and may take place in ‘public’ or at least in the bushes or baths” (pp13-14).

The extent of sexual behaviour between men and children is difficult to establish. Since relatively little is known about the distribution of the various forms of sexual behaviour in society at large, these standards tend to be drawn largely from ideological norms. The prevalence of adult sexual interaction with children in the general population is unknown. Prevalence figures on experiences of sexual victimization in childhood in the general population vary dramatically, depending on the research sample, the questions asked, and the definition of ‘sexual abuse’ (Craissati et al., 2002). In mainstream psychological research, male sexual interest in children is commonly based on information from clinical samples, incarcerated offenders and male college students. Briere and Runtz (1989) surveyed male university students and found that some men have reported or exhibited some sexual interest in children: 9% had fantasised about having sex with a young child, while 7% indicated some likelihood of having sex with a child if they were guaranteed they would not be punished or identified. In another survey of ‘normal male adults’ Crepault and Couture (1980) reported that 62% of men fantasized about having sex with a young girl, 3% with a young boy. Templeman and Stinnett (1991) surveyed male college students and found that 5% expressed an interest in having sex with a girl less than 12 years of age. Hall et al. (1995) demonstrated that heterosexual male volunteers exhibit some sexual arousal to prepubescent girls; less than they do to pubescent girls or adult women, but more than they do to male stimuli. Fromuth et al., (1991) found that 3% of college men that they surveyed reported having a sexual experience with a child when the respondent was aged 16 years or older. The social construction of women as asexual carers and nurturers may lead some people not to consider the possibility of them relating sexually with children (Saradjian, 1996; Tardif et al., 2005). Based on clinical ‘impressions’ or theoretical
arguments, many authors argue there is an under-reporting of the prevalence of women who are sexually involved children (Hetherton, 1999; Denov, 2004).

Discussions of adult sexual interest in children intrude upon aspects of commonly held understandings of human behaviour that individuals and societies are generally unwilling to confront or explore. It demands a greater public awareness and consideration at times of ‘moral panic’ as it raises uncomfortable issues for law-makers, social workers, the legal profession, medics, educators and so on; while it is generally allowed to slip off the socio-political agenda before the underlying issues are addressed (Queensland Crime Commission, 2000). Man-child sexual interaction is most frequently discussed in the context of reform of the criminal justice system, law enforcement practices, child protection policies and institutional reforms. It should also be considered in the contexts of masculinities, sexualities and social attitudes. A comprehensive theory of man-child sexual interaction has to be a complex matter and include elements related to broad social processes as well as to intimate personal relationships and to personality factors (Glaser and Frosh, 1993). At the micro-social level, there are the interpersonal networks in which sexual relations between adults and children occurs, and at the macro-social level a focus on the sexuality of men and children and gender relations. To explore any history of adult male sexual interest in children, one must acknowledge that such history is as much about the social construction of the concept of ‘child’, of ‘sexuality’, of ‘sexual deviance’ and of ‘social deviance’.

A paedophile is considered to be sexually attracted to children. In scientific and popular discourse, paedophilia is a term used frequently when discussing men who interact sexually with children. Paedophilia is a clinical diagnosis usually made by a psychiatrist or a psychologist (Ryan et al. 2007). The primary function of the term is as a classification of mental ill health and sexual disorder. The act of defining paedophilia, as with other sexual categorisations, is located within a history of ambivalence and dissent. The issue of definition is confounded by the fact that its precise meaning relies upon definitions of what it means to be a
'child'. Debates concerning adult-child sexual interaction have been manifest across history in the form of a range of discursive struggles, with at any given time a particular discourse being dominant in the field. Terminology used conflates child sex abuse, incest, molestation, child sex offending and paedophilia with the term paedophilia often used as an umbrella term to refer to any occurrence of an adult sexually relating to a child. Ames and Houston (1990) suggests that the difficulty in conducting and interpreting research about the aetiology of paedophilia results in part because of the different definitions ‘paedophilia’ has received.

The nature of the particular discipline reporting the research very much influences the perspective that is taken on what motivates man-child sexual interaction. Most theories treat it as an obvious pathology that needs to be explained by problems in the individual or the society. As we shall see later in this chapter, views on and definitions of, sexual activity between adults and children encompass and involve scientific rationality, issues of objectivity and value neutrality, as well as political influences, social mores, moral norms and discursive practices. Emanating from a natural science paradigm that largely ignores the social context, mainstream medicine, psychiatry, and psychology endeavour to understand and explain sexual deviance through a pathologization of the problematic individual. With the advent of the feminist discourse of child sex abuse in the 1970s, attempts were made to situate that individual in a social context (Rush, 1980; Finkelhor, 1984), instead of isolating the individual abuser/offender in order to understand the supposed peculiarities of his condition. Within cultural configurations and legal institutionalisation, sexual behaviour other than adult heterosexual intercourse has been considered variously as offensive, aberrant, abnormal, perverse, inverse, deviant and illegal. These terms carry within them a relationship to standards of morality, physical and mental health, social functioning, and legal culpability.
Legal Interpretations

In the early decades of the twentieth century, according to Bell (1993) the crime of incest was rarely addressed within legal discourse. When it was, it was seen less as a crime against the child, and more as a crime against nature, the institution of the family, or the future generation which was thought to be polluted by in-breeding. The rape of children by non-family members tended to be constructed within legal discourse as a violation of the father’s property rights than a crime against a child. Gebhard et al., (1965) stated that the “inevitable fusion of secular law and religious belief has given rise to some curious inconsistencies” in what is deemed a sexual offence (p3).

Regardless of the status of consent the morality surrounding sexuality has influenced the law in this area. What is categorised as sexual deviance has been collapsed into a range of sexual offences (Chung et al. 2006). Where consent is not freely given, sex is defined as sexual assault or rape (Archard, 1998). Consent refers to the notion that sexual acts should be entered into freely, without coercion and with informed agreement of the parties concerned. What constitutes ‘consent’ to sexual relations and who is considered free and able to give consent, is open to a variety of philosophical interpretations. Individuals below the recognised age of consent are not considered sufficiently mature to agree to sexual acts, which can lead to their partners being charged with statutory rape (Archard, 1998). From a legal perspective the age of consent varies across cultures, and from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. Many jurisdictions in the world today have an age of consent between 14 to 18 years, but ages as young as 12 and as old as 21 also occur, with some countries in the Middle East holding female ages of consent in the single-digit range (http://www.irelandinformationguide.com/Age_of_consent).

What is regarded as unlawful sexual contact is sexual contact (variously defined) with anyone under the age of consent, which in Great Britain is 16 years, and in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland is currently 17 years of age. In Ireland, paedophilia is not a category of
criminal offence. There is no common law, or statutory definition, of paedophilia or a paedophile in Irish law. There is no specific offence in law of ‘child sex abuse’. Offences are framed in terms of defilement, rape, incest, sexual assault, sexual indecency, and creating and possessing child pornography (http://www.citizensinformation.ie). Minimum age provisions declare sexual contact with persons under a certain age to be criminal. Graupner (2002) states that such minimum age limits are an invention of the past 200 or 300 years, before which individual biological sexual maturity was the decisive factor. Research on ‘age of consent offences’ is mainly undertaken by psychologists and criminologists pursuing the practical concern of treating individuals, assessing their personal characteristics and evaluating the impact of various options of ‘treatments’ (Tremblay, 2001: p32).

Explanations for adult male sexual interaction with children

This chapter considers of the study of men’s sexual interaction with children from different perspectives. There is a particular focus on three types of explanatory frameworks: (a) mainstream medical and psychological models which primarily locate adult sexual interaction with a child as a problem behaviour within the individual adult; (b) mainstream sociological and feminist explanations that situate these behaviours within a problematic socio-cultural context; (c) while pro-paedophile and libertarian explanations consider sexual interaction between an adult and child/children as not of itself problematic. This perspective is usually applied by those involved in paedophile activism and pro-paedophile organizations; some suggest that paedophilia or child-loving is a normal part of male sexuality.

(A) Problems in the individual – medical, psychological explanations

In early twentieth century Western society, the prevailing wisdom concerning adults behaving sexually towards children, emanated from the province of psychiatry and sexology. Foucault (1978) has drawn attention to the fact that since the mid 19th Century, discussion about sexual
behaviour has been dominated by scientific investigators and by the medical profession in particular. In the ‘hierarchization of knowledge’ the discipline of medicine is at the top. Underpinning the medical approach is an assumption of superior knowledge based on an objective scientific epistemology that ensures access to the truth about the social world (Cowburn, 2005). According to Moncrieff (1997), in the 19th century the institution and function of psychiatry was to deal with abnormal and bizarre behaviour which did not necessarily comply with the demands of the social order. Its association with medicine concealed the political function of social control by endowing it with the objectivity and neutrality of science. The medical model of mental disorder has served ever since to obscure the social processes which produce and define ‘deviance’, by locating problems in individual biology and/or psychology, while at the same time it diverts attention away from the political and social factors involved.

As a means of establishing the ‘norm’ of sexuality (Bullough, 1976; Hekman, 1991), since the days of its inception in 19th Century Europe, sexual science/sexology has taken as its task the classification of sexual behaviour and the measurement of ‘deviance’. Physicians such as Lombroso measured the skulls of degenerates to find the source of their perverse desires (Pick 1989). Attempts have been made by scientists to unearth neurological explanations for paraphilia and to isolate the ‘gay gene’ (Hamer et al. 1993; Risch et al., 1993). Neurodevelopmental factors and brain abnormalities have long been suspected as potential causes of paedophilia (Blanchard et al, 2002, 2003). Quinsey (2003) suggests neuro-hormonal explanations as determinants of paedophilia (p111). The power wielded by the medical profession to influence which types of sexual behaviours are considered acceptable or unacceptable is illustrated by the legal weight that continues to be attributed to some psychiatric diagnoses for example paedophilia.
Classification and Diagnosis

Two diagnostic manuals guide medical classification of what is considered sexually deviant behaviour. The *International Statistical Classification of Diseases* (ICD) and the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* (DSM) both assume medical concepts and terms, and function on the basis that there are categorical disorders that can be diagnosed by lists of criteria.

The *International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems* (ICD) is published by the World Health Organization. It contains a detailed description of known diseases and injuries, and is used world-wide for morbidity and mortality statistics. It is revised periodically and is currently in its 10th edition - ICD-10 (WHO, 1993). Deviant sexual behaviours are described in a section entitled ‘disorders of adult personality and behaviours’. Some of the behaviours identified are: fetishism, fetishistic transvestism, exhibitionism, voyeurism, paedophilia, sadomasochism, and multiple disorders of sexual preference.

The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM) is published by the American Psychiatric Association (APA), and is the standard classification of mental disorders used by mental health professionals. It provides clear, objective descriptions of mental illnesses, based upon scientific research (APA, 2003). The first edition of the DSM was published in 1952 and has gone through five revisions since then. The most recent revision is DSM-IV TR (text revision) 2000, with the next version DSM V due in 2011 (APA, 2003).

The DSM was initially developed to provide more objective terms for psychiatric research. The criteria and classification systems used are based on a process of consultation and committee meetings involving primarily psychiatrists. McPherson and Armstrong (2006: p57) argue that psychiatry needs a certain level of diagnostic stability for its survival, but it is more difficult to achieve this in an area devoid of biological correlates with which to anchor diagnostic definitions. The publication of DSM may have been driven by, and reflected the need for
psychiatry to establish itself as a discipline and maintain a specific area of expertise in the mental illness arena in order to survive as a profession. McPherson and Armstrong (2006: p58) suggest that for psychiatry this involved strengthening its alliance with the rest of medicine through the medicalisation of mental illnesses and by developing medical models of mental illness in order to create a dominant power base for itself as a profession. To achieve these goals, control over the diagnostic labelling process was vital. Foucault has pointed to the rise in disciplinary techniques that produce detailed information about individuals as both specific individuals and cases, and as instances of a categorical type about whom knowledge can be collected and circulated as information (e.g. 1973b, 1977). This knowledge can be used in turn in the identification and governance of others of the same type. Moser and Kleinplatz (2003) suggest that all paraphilias be removed from the DSM because it is difficult to find objective, non-culturally biased criteria for classifying sexual behaviour.

The classification of sexual disorders in the DSM falls into three categories: Sexual Dysfunctions; Paraphilias; Gender Identity Disorder. Paedophilia has been included as a sexual disorder since 1968, and is categorised as a paraphilia in the DSM-IV-TR (2000). According to this classification, the essential features of a paraphilia are recurrent, intense sexually arousing fantasies, sexual urges, or behaviours that generally involve non-human subjects, children, or other non-consenting adults, or the suffering or humiliation of oneself or one’s partner (APA 2000).

The presence of certain criteria allows for a diagnosis of Paedophilia, these are:

A. Over a period of at least 6 months, recurrent, intense, sexually arousing fantasies, sexual urges or behaviours involving sexual activity with a prepubescent child or children (generally age 13 years or under)

B. The person has acted on these sexual urges, or the sexual urges or fantasies cause marked distress or interpersonal difficulty.
C. The person is at least 16 years and at least 5 years older than the child or children in criterion A.

*(DSM-IV-TR, APA, 2000)*

In delimiting the age difference between adults and children constitutive of paedophilic acts the DSM-III (1980) set the age difference at ten years or more. This was later revised to five years, with the adult having to be at least 16 years of age in order to indicate paedophilia (DSM-III-R, 1987). As adjustments to diagnostic categories between 1980 and 1994 show, if clinicians alter their diagnostic practices to match changing definitions, the number of paedophiles diagnosed and identified, may vary widely. The diagnosis of paedophilia was dependent upon the subject admitting experiencing “recurrent intense sexual urges and sexually arousing fantasies involving sexual activity with a prepubescent child or children” (APA, 1987: p285). The denial of recurrent urges and fantasies of sex with children avoided the diagnostic label of paedophilia. The DSM-IV (1994) sought to redress this by including recurrent ‘behaviours’ in the definitional criteria. Under that revised definition, it is clear that many more people could be identified as paedophiles (APA, 2009).

Clinicians and researchers tend to use self-reports as a source of information in diagnosing paedophilia. Sexual histories are typically obtained through interviews. Individuals are asked questions about their sexual thoughts, fantasies, interests and behaviour, with both age-appropriate subjects and prepubescent children. As a result of self-deception or in an effort to present oneself in a socially desirable manner, people may minimize or deny their sexual interests and behaviour (Laws and O’Donohue, 2008). In addition to interviews, a number of questionnaires have been used to assess adults with a sexual interest in children e.g. the Clarke Sexual History Questionnaire – Revised and the Multiphasic Sex Inventory II (Laws and O’Donohue, 2008). Polygraphy is a psycho-physiological method for assessing changes in heart rate, blood pressure, skin conductance, and respiration while subjects are asked specific questions about their behaviour. A polygraph test may be used to verify self-reported
information about sexual interests and behaviour (English et al., 2000). Phallometry first developed by Freund (1967) is another method used in the ‘diagnosis’ of paedophilia. This involves the measurement of penile responses to stimuli that systematically vary on the dimensions of sexual interest, such as the age and sex of the figures depicted in slides.

In strapping a sensor onto a penis, the matrix of intelligibility (Butler, 1990) takes the complicated fantasies and memories which comprise a person’s personal sex life, and “reduces them to a question of priapic potential” (Warner, 2004: p333). Warner contends that such an approach searches for ‘the truth’ in the wrong place, in a location outside of the subjectivity of the paedophile, as apparently “the paedophile’s own understanding of his conduct is illegitimate, it takes an ‘expert’ to explain his desire” (2004: p333).

Sexual interests and behaviour are not synonymous. Some adults with a sexual interest in children have not engaged in sexual behaviour with children. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual contains the psychiatric classificatory system in which adults who relate sexually to children are located. In popular discourse, the term paedophilia is used to refer to a wide range of adult sexual relations with children. Moreover, if one accepts the diagnostic criteria for a classification of paedophilia, many behaviours not strictly adhering to these criteria are included under that term.

In the scientific study of anomalous sexual behaviour, Knight and Prentky (1990) suggest that failure to take a taxonomic or classificatory structure of a population into account can lead to practical, methodological, and theoretical errors (p23). Various typologies have been developed for men who interact sexually with children (Groth et al, 1982; Knight and Prentky, 1990). In *Men who Rape: The Psychology of the Offender* Groth and Birnbaum (1979) defined a sexual attraction to pre-pubertal children as paedophilia and a sexual attraction to post-pubertal children as hebephilia. The search for a personality profile has focused on establishing the existence of fixed and stable personality traits that are predictive of sexual behaviours.
In terms of men’s sexual interaction with children, a distinction has been drawn between those who are ‘fixated’ and those who have ‘regressed’ (Groth et al., 1982; Knight et al., 1989). Researchers believe that ‘fixated paedophiles’ have a specific and often longstanding sexual preference for children whereas ‘regressed paedophiles’ engage in sexual activity with children particularly in family settings, as a result of external pressures. It is suggested that men who are involved sexually with a girl have situationally regressed; whereas those who interact with boys are likely to be fixated (Marshall et al., 1990). While this dual distinction forms the basic infrastructure for classification systems of ‘paedophiles’, other systems take into account the nature of the sexual contact, the relationship of the adult to the child, the age and sex of the child, and the meaning of the behaviour for the adult (Knight et al., 1989; Knight and Prentky 1990).

Despite the rise of feminist and critical approaches to the study of sexual behaviour and violence, there remains in medicine, psychiatry and mainstream psychology a steadfast tradition of research that seeks to reduce the phenomenon of adult male sexual interest in children to an individual level of analysis. Men are viewed as pathologically disturbed and sexually perverted.

A common theme that emerges in the literature is that men’s sexual behaviour with children can be understood as reflective of a developmental pathway in life that often begins in childhood with experiences of emotional, physical and sexual abuse (O’Reilly et al., 2004). Cortoni and Marshall (2001) focus on poor parent-child attachment and childhood abuse as aetiological precursors of sexual interest in children and sexual contacts with children. Marshall and Marshall (2000) propose a link between adverse early experiences and masturbating to fantasies of sex with children. This involves regaining feelings of power and control, identification with the perpetrator of their own childhood sexual abuse, and emotional identification with children rather than adults. Burk and Burkhart (2003) see adult sexual interaction with children as one of several possible strategies of externally based intra- and interpersonal control, which emerge in
response to things such as poor interpersonal relationships and childhood experience with adult sexuality.

It is suggested that there is a specific association between having experienced sexual relations with an adult as a child, and a later sexual interest in children (Seto, 2004). A ‘cycle of abuse’ literature (Briggs, 1995; Grant, 2000; Murray, 2000) explains the likely operation of this theory in practice. It is clear from statistical data and personal reports that a greater number of men than women come to public attention as having had sexual relations with children. However, if the cycle of abuse, or ‘victim to perpetrator’ pathway were to operate as suggested, it would be expected that more adult women would have a sexual interest in children.

According to Pringle (1998) many Western and Northern European countries share with the United States “a significant degree of similarity in the ways they explain why [sexual] abuse happens and in the principles which underpin the various forms of intervention” (: p160). Most psychological practice associated with ‘treating’ men who relate sexually to children is informed by two models - a medical/clinical model and a cognitive-behavioural model. These approaches continue to maintain “the status quo by promulgating the view that sexual violence is a psycho-pathologically isolated, idiosyncratic act limited to a few sick men” (Scully, 1994, p161). It is unlikely that a phenomenon as complex as adult sexual behaviour towards children could be explained by single factor theories. A number of comprehensive theories of child sexual abuse have been developed (Finkelhor, 1984; Marshall et al., 1990; Barbaree et al., 1998; Hall and Hirschmann 1991, 1992; Ward and Siegert, 2002).

The theoretical perspectives of writers such as these are considered particularly influential and “suggest that a range of psychological and sociocultural factors contribute to the development of child sexual abuse” (Colton and Vanstone, 1996, p19). Researchers suggest that adults who relate sexually to children tend to endorse emotional and behavioural patterns consistent with preoccupied or fearful patterns of attachment (Jamieson and Marshall, 2000) and they tend to
report dependent and problematic relationships with their mothers (Tingle et al., 1986). A report from the Queensland Crime Commission in Australia states that male experiences of childhood are central to the development of sexual proclivities, and ‘chaotic’ or dysfunctional family settings can provide socialising influences which may preclude or reduce the likelihood of the development of ‘normal’ sexuality (Queensland Crime Commission, 2000: p6-7).

According to Hawton (1983), the history of treatment approaches used to help individuals troubled by sexual deviation is notable for the way it has reflected the changing attitudes of both society and medicine to such behaviour. The diagnostic criteria indicative of paedophilia and the way they are applied by individual clinicians are at least to some extent influenced by cultural variables and are periodically altered to reflect the contemporary social landscape. Viewed from a social constructionist perspective, what is and what is not considered a mental disorder changes over time. Before 1973, homosexuality was listed in the DSM as a diagnosable mental illness, and the diagnosis of some sexual disorders such as gender identity disorder may be influenced by gender role expectations. While diagnostic criteria do not mention gender, clinicians may diagnose women’s and men’s behaviour differently (Downing 2004). Locating sexual behaviours within a natural science paradigm largely ignores social context and the gender of those engaged in that behaviour.

(B) Problems in society - Sociological/Feminist Explanations

A functionalist analysis looks for the source of deviance in the nature of society rather than the biological explanations for, or psychological nature of, the individual. The functionalist approach stems from the work of Durkheim, who believed societies are held together by shared values and economic interdependence (Ritzer, 2006). There is always the possibility of a collapse of society if its values are not constantly reaffirmed and passed on from one generation to the next. Thus, the maintenance of values is a crucial ‘function’ of society.
In relation to adult male sexual involvement with children, it is feminist analyses that “have taken up the challenge of framing the sociological questions” (Bell, 1993: p3). Mainstream feminist explanations focus on the unequal power relationships between men and women and adults and children, and on the adult’s responsibility for initiating and/or maintaining sexually abusive behaviours (Cossins, 2000). The social structure of society and differential gender socialisation are taken into account. With consideration of social structures, processes and socialisation, there is a reduced emphasis on psychological factors as dominant contributors in men’s sexual interaction with children. Kelly (1988) seeks to make connections between child and woman abuse, sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, locating these issues within a continuum of violence.

Sexual behaviour with children has a history of being a socially acceptable, sexual practice engaged in by some men, and as such, it needs to be examined in terms of the role that it plays as a gender-based sexual practice (Cossins, 2000). Instead of isolating the individual man in order to understand the supposed peculiarities of his condition, feminist research attempted to understand the condition by situating the behaviour in a social context (Rush, 1980; Herman and Hirschman, 1981; Finkelhor, 1984). Ward (1985) suggests that the rape of girl-children by a father is an integral product of society, based on male supremacist attitudes and organisation, and reinforced by the basic social structure of the family. As such, the sexual use of children is permitted, as it is an unspoken but prominent factor in socializing and preparing the girl child to accept a subordinate role and to feel the power exercised over her by men (Rush 1980).

Rape was viewed as an abuse of power, rather than being primarily about sex, and male sexuality was understood to be about the deployment of power (Warner 2009). Adult rape and child sexual abuse were linked as common tools of female oppression in the service of patriarchy (Brownmiller, 1975). The sexual use of children by men is viewed as an expression of male social power and a means by which patriarchal social relations are reinforced and reproduced (Driver and Droisen, 1989; Stoltenberg, 1990). Children become likely victims,
because they are physically small and trusting of authority figures. Finkelhor (1984) contends that power is a central issue as men have power over women and objectify them; men are expected to be sexually aggressive; and adults have power over children and objectify them. Nelson and Oliver (1998) urge that attempts to theorise sexual relations between adults and children must engage both the reality of rape and incest and the social reality of gendered constructions of sexuality. The prevalence of girls as victims arises from the combination of their lower status as females, and men’s greater likelihood of desiring young women than young men (Nelson and Oliver, 1998: p559). As such, these authors contend that sexual use of a girl by a man reinforces patriarchy, letting the man experience complete dominance and teaching the girl that she is powerless in the face of dominant male sexuality.

The ‘naming’ of sexual exploitation and violence perpetrated against women and children as crimes of rape and sexual assault, positioned them as issues of social and criminal justice (MacKinnon, 1989). It challenged the social, political and economic construction of the family which renders sexual violence and abuse in that sphere beyond the gaze of social policy and the law (Pateman, 1989). Turning attention to socially constructed forms of masculinity, feminist research demonstrates that the psycho-medical reification of the aberrant ‘pervert’ or ‘paedophile’ is a way of “preserving the normality of normative masculinity at the same time as obscuring what the offender shares with other men” (Cossins, 2000: pxx). Thus rather than representing a deviation from normative masculinity, a man interacting sexually to a child “is congruent with normative masculine sexual practices” (Cossins, 2000: p74).

Equating men’s sexual involvement with children exclusively with male power fails to take account of instances where women use positions of power to abuse (Colton and Vanstone, 1996). In addition, some feminist analyses may be criticised as being unable to satisfactorily explain the diversity of human sexual desire and the fact that some men are sexually aroused primarily by children or other men. While pointing out the limitations to some feminist analyses, it has to be recognised that feminist theory represents a starting point for challenging other
contemporary theories, such as the medical and mainstream psychological models of individual biology and pathology, (McConaghy: 1993: p345).

(C) Pro-paedophile/ sexual freedom

Paedophile rights and support groups comprised of mainly gay male members, formed in many western countries in the 1970s and 1980s (Angelides, 2005). Many of them used the idioms of early gay liberation in calling for the abolition of the nuclear family, the sexual liberation of children and the lowering of age of consent laws (Jenkins, 1998; Angelides, 2005). The paedophile activist movement, referred to by some supporters as the childlove movement, incorporates a variety of views. Generally, the movement advocates the social acceptance of adult sexual attraction to children and discusses changes in areas of concern such as age of consent laws, and diagnostic psychiatric classifications.

Paedophile activism was prominent during the 1950s in the Netherlands where the international ‘Enclave Circle’ organization was formed by Dr Frits Bernard among others. By the 1970s, Bernard’s ‘Enclave kring’ had established a variety of scientific and social movement activities, concerning paedophilia and advocacy of man-child sexual activities in the Netherlands. In Britain, paedophiles publicly organised and ‘emerged’ towards the late 1970s (O’Carroll, 1980; Plummer 1980). Since the 1980s, there has been mounting negative public reaction to bodies such as the Paedophile Information Exchange (PIE) and the North American Man Boy Love Association (NAMBLA). Increasingly paedophile activist groups can successfully communicate over the internet. Goode (2006) remarks that while the popular media offers a vision of moral distinction, and an unambiguous consensus on evil, one only has to log onto the internet to find quite different versions of reality. Tremblay (2001) claims that the web is of particular significance for paedophiles; it provides a forum that allows for the exchange of personal and anonymous information and an organized means for socially isolated people to overcome geographical, legal and social barriers.
The internet hosts a number of sites actively promoting paedophilia as both an activity and as a political identity akin to other oppressed sexual minorities. On these sites, paedophilia is often presented in terms of a romantic appreciation of young children (e.g. http://www.logicalreality.com; http://www.puella.com). Self-defined paedophiles such as Lindsay Ashford, is involved on a number of websites on paedophilia (e.g. http://lindsay-ashford.blogspot.com/: 2009), are keen to make a distinction between paedophiles (good) and child molesters/child sex abusers (bad), arguing that children should have the right to have sexual relations with adults, and that without this legal right children are unfairly disenfranchised. In answer to questions in relation to equality in a paedophilic relationship, and whether he believes paedophilia will ever be socially accepted, Martin de Jong chair of the Dutch Paedophile Association (NVSH) argues that:

“most relationships are characterised by inequality and nobody makes a fuss about that. The relationship between parents and children is also unequal. There should be the possibility for a paedophile to foster a special relationship based on mutual trust with a child who chooses him/her. This relationship should allow the child to bring up anything that bothers him or her, and which cannot be brought up with others such as developing sexual feelings, and all kinds of physical and mental questions. The paedophile’s duty in such a relationship is to help the child in its development, and to take care of the child’s well-being and take responsibility for all the joint actions they take. Furthermore, the paedophile should teach the child the norms and values that are necessary, for becoming a good human being so that the child can develop mutually respectful and pleasant relationships with others”

An attempt to distinguish between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ sex with children is the stance of North American Man Boy Love Association (NAMBLA), with its slogan ‘sexual freedom for all’. It is also the view expressed in a core text of the Paedophile Information Exchange (PIE) by Tom O’Carroll (1980). According to deYoung (1989) paedophile advocacy literature uses particular strategies to promote goals of public acceptance of paedophilia. Using the term ‘adult-child sex’ instead of abuse (Rind et al., 1998), Jones (1990) suggested that ‘intergenerational intimacy’ should not be considered synonymous with child sexual abuse, “intergenerational attraction on the part of some adults could constitute a lifestyle ‘orientation’, rather than a pathological maladjustment” (p288).

According to Fagan et al., (2002) most child sex abuse cases involve adults not motivated by sexual attraction to the child. Berlin (2000), a noted expert in the field, affirms that the psychiatric profession considers paedophilia to be a mental disorder. However, he continues that “like heterosexuality and homosexuality (orientations that differ from one another on the basis of differences in sexual attraction), pedophilia, too, can be thought of as a sexual orientation that is different from others on the basis of age of attraction” (p838).

People such as Tom O’Carroll and Lindsay Ashford actively campaign against the idea that children are unable to consent to sex. Many paedophile activists attempt to refute certain ‘scientific’ research that finds all sexual contact between adults and children to be harmful. They state that there are a variety of different categories constituting sexual involvement with children and this is commonly not acknowledged by mainstream scientific research, where it is regarded as one phenomenon, yielding one (usually negative) outcome. A study that is frequently cited as embodying the type of ‘objective’ research needed is Sandfort’s (1987a) study on boys’ relationships with paedophiles, published in the peer-reviewed Journal of Sex Research. Critics such as Mrazek (1990) suggest that the study was “politically motivated to ‘reform’ legislation” (p318).
In his book *Understanding Loved Boys and Boylovers*, Riegel (2000) states that “anyone who holds the idea that a young boy cannot give or withhold consent has never taken such a boy shopping for new sneakers” (p38). The so-called ‘out’ boy lover Riegel asserts that “the acts themselves harm no one, the emotional and psychological harm comes from the ‘after the fact’ interference, counselling, therapy etc., that attempt to artificially create a ‘victim’ and a ‘perpetrator’ where neither exists” (2000 p21). Similar arguments are made by the SafeHaven Foundation, an organization for ‘responsible boylovers’. On their website, they write “the child sex abuse industry…takes a boy who has enjoyed pleasurable and completely consensual sexual experiences with another boy or man, and traumatizes him in an attempt to convince him that what he did was wrong” (SafeHaven Foundation, [http://www.safet.net/info/index.html](http://www.safet.net/info/index.html)).

Brongersma (1990) in *Boy-Lovers and Their Influence on Boys* reports from interviews with participants in sexual relationships between men and boys, suggesting that sex may not be the primary element in a man-boy relationship.

O’Carroll stresses the view that paedophilia be seen as a strong and persistent orientation as described in DSM4-TR (O’Carroll, 2001). Some organised paedophiles have proposed an ethical framework that could allow acceptance of their desire for sexual interaction with children. The Martijn Association has published the *OK* magazine since 1986, and their website advises everyone to observe the law (Martijn [http://www.martijn.org/page.php?id=200000](http://www.martijn.org/page.php?id=200000)). Calling itself “a place for young guys who like younger guys”, Age Taboo offers support to ‘sexual minority youth’.

A number of organisations put on public or private events for paedophiles to meet and “express who we are with pride” (Kline, [www.cerius.org](http://www.cerius.org)). MHAMIC (Male Homosexuals Attracted to Minors Information Centre) organises reviews and synopsizes scientific papers published on paedophilia. NAMBLA (North American Man Boy Love Association) organises public conferences, publishes a newsletter and maintains a website. There are websites for *child lovers*; for *boylovers* e.g. *Free Spirits* and *Boychat*; and for *girllovers* e.g. *Girl Chat* and *Alice’s Garden*. 
The International Paedophile and Child Emancipation (IPCE) movement was started in 1986 as an international community of organisations working for emancipation of consensual ‘intergenerational relationships’. The IPCE website has a comprehensive library of reference materials on ‘intergenerational relationships’ including journal articles and essays. In its November 2008 newsletter IPCE states “IPCE meets once every one or two years in a different country, publishes a newsletter and website, co-ordinates the (electronic) exchange of texts and keeps an archive of specific written publications (Newsletter E26: http://www.ipce.info/ipceweb/newsletters.htm).

Some pro-paedophile activists have put up the argument that the decriminalization of paedophilia and the abolition of age of consent, are part and parcel of a progressive politics of liberation for oppressed sexual minorities, and as such should be integrated with the feminist and homosexual rights movements (Li et al., 1990). Rubin (1993 [1984]) remarks that the law is especially fierce in maintaining the boundary between childhood ‘innocence’ and adult sexuality. The sexual freedom/liberationist approach is based upon a belief that laws on sexual conduct, except where explicit force or violence is used, are an incursion into individual freedom and privacy, and as such are a form of coercive social control. According to Rubin (1993), our culture denies and punishes erotic interest and activity by anyone under the local age of consent, rather than recognizing the sexuality of the young and attempting to provide for it in a caring and responsible manner. Levine (2002) suggests the threat of molestation by strangers is exaggerated by adults who want to deny young people the opportunity for positive sexual experiences. Jarod (1997) asserts that prohibition of all paedophile acts is unjust and implies the persecution of a minority. According to Nelson (1989), adult-child sexual contact has been conceptually limited to a problem-oriented, victim/violence model that often neglects participants’ perceptions and other variable situational factors. Most operational definitions include only unwanted or problematic experiences or samples taken from biased populations. For Plummer (1990, 1991) the phenomenon of child sexual abuse is assembled in a particular way and uses the rhetoric of rape, exploitation, violence, power and seduction – a language of
danger. In contrast, child love uses the language of love, consent, joy, willingness and choice – a language of pleasure. Plummer sees the paedophile as a socially constructed, deviant category, a label imposed on otherwise normal men, who threaten family power and control over biological offspring. Brongersma (1990) posits that the paedophile could be seen as a victim of society.

Interestingly, much of the pro-paedophile literature and web material focus on sexual relations between men and boys. According to Sandfort (1982), boys possess ‘natural’ needs for sexual attention from a person of their own choosing: an adult male friend who instils trust, courage, love and affection through intimate sexual friendship, a friend who treats the boys as an equal and in doing so boosts the boy’s feeling of self-esteem and self-worth. Brongersma suggests that part of the role the boylover wishes to have in the life of a boy is one of protection and guidance (Brongersma, 1986, 1990). While there are advocacy groups for men who have a sexual interest in girls and for those whose interest is for boys, the pro-paedophile argument is apparently largely focused on relations between men and boys. In this way, there are appeals to a paternalistic protector figure, a surrogate father, as confidantes of children.

In the context of debate about the negative effects on the child of sexual relations with adults, some writers and activists propose potential positive experiences for a child from sexual contact with an adult. In his review of research studies Brongersma concluded that there was not necessarily any observed psychological damage in children from sexual involvement with adults (1986, 1990). Traumatisation if it did occur was as a consequence of the reactions of other people upon disclosure of the sexual relationship, rather than the sexual contact itself.

There is the suggestion also that homosexual young people in particular may experience sexual interaction with an adult as positive (Rind, 2001). It is argued that given the majority of boys who have sexual encounters with older females report a positive experience (West and Woodhouse, 1993), some homosexual boys may perceive their sexual experiences with older
men as positive (Rind, 2001). Stanley et al., (2004) suggest using a modified definition of child sexual abuse based on perceptions of the sexual experience instead of the current age-based definition (p7). They suggest that it must be acknowledged that a violation of social norms, which is the basis for the age-based definition, does not necessarily result in harm. A definition of child sexual abuse based on social norm violations is further problematic for same-sex relations as same-sex sexual activity is considered a social norm violation by many. Stanley et al., (2004) remind us that ‘impartial scientific’ models, which seek to understand the world as it really is, assume that any event can occur and thus we should consider the full spectrum of possibilities. The contention is that scientists must not limit their conceptual base to inferences belonging to the victimology model, and that opening the conceptual continuum of intergenerational sexuality will provide insights as to why sexual interaction causes harm in some cases and not in others.

Current attitudes towards child sexuality and representations of it are seen by some to resemble historical attitudes towards women and homosexuals – as female sexuality and homosexuality were once both considered deviant. Mirkin (1999) claims that paedophile activism is similar to feminism, the gay rights movement, or to racial tolerance. He argues that there is a two-phase pattern of sexual politics. The first phase is a battle to prevent the issue from being seen as political and negotiable, when psychological and moral categories are used to preclude any discussions. The second phase more closely resembles traditional politics as different groups argue over rights and privileges. Mirkin (1999) remarks, that feminist and gay/lesbian politics have recently entered the second phase, while paedophilia is in the first. These libertarian views have aroused fierce opposition from many people. Groups such as the National Association for the Research and Therapy of Homosexuality (NARTH, 2009) caution that once the issue of sexual interaction between adults and children becomes ‘discussable’, it is only a matter of time before the public begin to view paedophilia as another sexual orientation. In this way the issues would move from the moral to the political arena, and therefore become open to negotiation.
Discussion

Developments in the theoretical humanities, influences such as Foucault’s *History of Sexuality* (1978) and a sociological perspective on homosexuality (McIntosh, 1981), had begun to question the validity and ethical basis of understanding human sexuality through a medical lens. Such questioning acknowledges the cultural and historical specificities that cause certain mental, physical and sexual ‘disorders’ to come to prominence at certain moments in human history, and the kinds of relationships of power that presuppose them. For gender theorist Judith Butler, the human body is seen not just as a physiological entity or a fact of nature, but is a construct of ideology rather than an ontologically pre-existent entity (Butler, 1993). Thus, the body is a site on and around which political and ideological meanings cluster, brought to bear by a complex of social forces and networks of power.

To people influenced by the insights of gender studies and queer theory, the logic by which the DSM categorizes the sexual disorders it names, into a series of binaries - either/or - functional/dysfunctional - normophilic/paraphilic - requires deconstruction. The idea that one might be able to measure and correct, objectively and scientifically, either sexuality itself or its dysfunctions is problematic.

Kimmel and Messner (1995) remark that what is considered as ‘normal’ is usually that which is normative and is socially prescribed (p2). Warner (2009) reminds us that sexual acts and desires are never simply an individual matter of private concern, but are mediated by how sex and sexuality are deployed in culture. The extent to which sexual normalcy and deviance are constructed according to socially determined prejudices and presuppositions, may be illustrated by an examination of the history of the classification of these ‘conditions’ within the various revisions of the DSM. The removal of homosexuality as a sexual disorder came with the third edition revised of the *DSM* in 1987. According to Soble (1999), this reflected the effectiveness of political action over a period of time, and marked a partial triumph for emergent gay identity.
politics. In his discussion of this debate in *Sexual Investigations*, Soble (1999) asserts that accounts of healthy human sexuality become a masquerade for partisan and contentious views about what sexual behaviours are proper and right, obligatory and permissible, attractive and repulsive, harmful or contrary to society's interests (p173). He continues that medical diagnosis and legal definition are attributed to certain sexual behaviours, not necessarily because they might cause harm to the practitioner or others, but because they upset a conservative social ideal.

It is important to note that understandings of being, whereby historically and culturally contingent phenomena are naturalized as inevitable are often underpinned by ideology. In 2003, the American Psychiatric Association sponsored a symposium in which participants discussed the removal of paedophilia (as part of the ‘paraphilia’ category) from upcoming editions of the DSM. Some researchers argued that people, whose sexual interests are atypical, culturally forbidden or religiously proscribed, should not necessarily be labelled as mentally ill and psychologically unhealthy (Moser and Kleinplatz, 2003). This proved to be a controversial viewpoint. The APA issued a statement following from this, to re-assert its view that “an adult who engages in sexual activity with a child is performing a criminal and immoral act and this is never considered normal of socially acceptable behaviour” (APA, 2003).

If one understands that the classification of deviance is culturally contingent and dependent upon a fluctuating moral climate – it leads necessarily to a questioning of the status of those forms of sexuality that retain their pathological labels in the DSM. Just as homosexuality has been de-classified as a marker of disease, so certain practices which continue to be labelled paraphilic conditions, if recast in the language and logic of different political agendas, become the lynchpin of alternative communities and subcultural groups. According to Rubin (1993) “sexualities keep marching out of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual and onto the pages of social history” (p18).
Fink (1997) comments that a difficulty with much social science research into deviance is that it has tended to take the symptom for a disorder, and often the symptom for an identity. While as Karasic and Drescher (2006) remind us the sexual interests that are proscribed any society are apt to change. The bulk of research in relation to paedophilia has clearly remained almost totally unaffected by postmodern ideas of the deconstruction of identity (Angelides, 2004). The focus of analysis is one of identifying a normal/deviant opposition, and fitting individuals into it accordingly. Accurate knowledge often becomes inextricable from projected fears and emotions, as parents, psychologists, lawyers, criminologists, and law enforcers, attempt to draw boundaries around ‘us’ and ‘them’.

Paedophilia is not synonymous with ‘sexual offending against children’ though the terms are used interchangeably. Some paedophiles are not known to have ever sexually offended against a child, and many sexual offenders are not paedophiles (Seto et al., 2006). Over 90% of paedophiles who have been described in the clinical and correctional literature are male; yet other than this “there is a great deal of heterogeneity among paedophiles with regard to other demographic characteristics, such as education, socio-economic status and ethnicity” (Seto, 2008: p168). Nevertheless, there is a rush to put a profile to ‘the paedophile’. It is necessary to identify his sexuality, to compile data on paedophile populations, to calculate percentages of offender rates and to estimate probabilities of potential paedophiles (Angelides, 2004). Pivotal to these responses is the idea that to recognise and dissect the paedophile is to control, recuperate, or transform him, and by doing this to protect society from him, and to excise him from the social body.

It becomes evident that research into men’s sexual involvement with children is almost certainly distorted due to unrepresentative population samples. Research on the category of the ‘child sex offender’ is based on convicted offender populations, which are estimated to constitute a minority of adults who interact sexually with children. While the fantasies and behaviours of adults ‘undetected’ are left unaccounted for. To review criminal statistics is to see them as one
account of a social phenomenon from a particular standpoint (Cowburn, 2005: p221). Finkelhor (1984) points out that convicted offenders are probably only “the most compulsive, repetitive, blatant, and extreme in their offending” (p35). Cossins (2000) remarks that convicted offenders might have fallen foul of police because of committing the least socially tolerated forms of crime (e.g. same-sex, stranger) or of coming under greater scrutiny due to their class, race, or ethnicity. Taking account of the feminist discourse of child sexual abuse and clinical and statistical psychological data, the popular notion of the man as an asocial stranger, or dirty old man in a trench-coat, should be redundant but doesn’t seem to be.

There is little evidence to suggest that a single model can subsume all theories and be applicable to most instances of adult sexual involvement with children. This is unsurprising perhaps, as it is not a unitary phenomenon. The ranges of theories and explanations that have been proposed span a spectrum of disciplines. All are worthy of consideration, bearing in mind that at the heart of many of these approaches lies the proposition that heterosexuality - as characterised by the attraction of an adult to an adult of the opposite sex - is the norm.

Promoting the idea that children can consent to sex with adults, the ‘sexual freedom model’ is presented as an alternative and radical approach (Sandfort, 1987a). It questions the assumption of harm in sexual encounters and seeks declassification of paedophilia as a mental illness. Paedophile ‘liberation’ campaigning argues that relationships between adults and children are a legitimate form, that such relationships are often consensual, and that the only harm that can arise is that which results from society’s condemnatory reactions towards paedophilic love (e.g. O’Carroll, 1980; Tsang, 1981). Activists and campaigners appeal for scientific objectivity in research into intergenerational sexual relations, rather than that encouraged by moral guardianship. Feminist political approaches to issues of sex across generations in particular are seen to propagate an ‘abuse’ framework. Many feminists are hostile to the pro-paedophile campaign, accusing it of misogyny and hypocrisy. Paedophiles are attacked as men who simply want to exploit younger people for their own gratification. Kelly et al., (1995) and Kelly (1996)
propose a shift away from use of the term ‘paedophile’ as there is the danger of perceiving these men as ‘different’, rather than ‘normal’ men.

The feminist movement - through among other things the documentation of survivors’ accounts and the child welfare movement placed the issue of child sexual abuse in the public domain and on the research agenda. A feminist inspired sociological analysis focused on previously largely ignored aspects of sexual assault in terms of its relationship to differential power relations within the family and the wider society. Overarching social, structural and feminist explanations of sexual violence have disputed that men’s sexual interaction with children is separate and deviant. Rather it is seen as a consequence of current social and human conditions. Of course, this premise is at odds with individualistic explanations from within psychology and psychiatry.

The paradigm of morality and punishment continues to strongly influence explanations and responses in this arena, and this is evident from the Irish newspapers reviewed for this study. Much of the research into adult sexual involvement with children stems from an aetiological premise to identify individual characteristics that cause sexually abusive behaviours. These explanations are steeped in the tradition of scientific enquiry in the fields of biology, psychology and psychiatry, where the focus has been on psychopathological and cognitive behavioural causes of sexually abusive behaviours. These approaches strongly influence contemporary perspectives shaping the overall debate, including legal, treatment and policy responses. There continues to be a growing body of literature attempting to capture characteristics and circumstances, to differentiate men who interact sexually with children from ‘normal’ men. If understood as the individual pathology of the man, then he may be considered ‘deviant’ from the rest of the population. It is thought that poor impulse control and poor socialisation in childhood may result in an inability to have appropriate intimate sexual relations, and lead to ‘deviant’ sexual behaviour. An individually focused hormonal-biological understanding also reduces any man’s level of responsibility for his actions by pointing to a
biological drive. It follows from this, that reforming and treating men with a sexual interest in children would require that such individuals be detected by the state and incarcerated and/or treated through a focus on their individual deficiencies and perhaps medical interventions aimed at reducing sexual drives.

The variations in definitions of those men who relate sexually to children are linked to both understandings of sexual behaviour and the discipline or field from which it has originated. The DSM definition of paedophiles has been criticised because it implies that such people are psychically abnormal or are suffering with a mental disease or disorder predisposing them to perpetrate sexual offences (Glaser, 1997). Since there is no description without a standpoint (Connell, 1995), it cannot be assumed that scientific theories constitute value-free explanations of men’s sexual interaction with children.

Postmodern and poststructural theorizing recognises multiple explanations. Some writers have used postmodern and constructionist perspectives to suggest that sexual offences have been constructed because they differ from ‘normal’ sexual practice. Such perspectives on man-child sexual interaction have evolved from a critique of sexual deviancy and power relations. Plummer (1991) comments on ‘contemporary concern’ in this area, suggesting that these concerns rest on essentialist and uncritical understandings of intergenerational sexual relations. Developments in post-structural and contemporary feminist theories offer an opportunity to better conceptualise sexual activities as occurrences within a complex set of social relations and institutions. This enables an understanding of sexual behaviours that allow for an environment of unequal power relations between men, women and children, which creates the social conditions for an independent conscious act. Multiple discourses about social issues can be complementary, adding different aspects to the understanding of an issue. However, as we shall see in Chapters 8 and 9, medical and legal perspectives dominate media discourse. Moreover, as such, different aspects of men’s sexual interaction with children and any critical analysis of its social context are lacking.
In this research a critical analysis of discourses circulating through Irish news reports reveals the key role of discourse in the reproduction of dominant cultural understandings of ‘paedophiles’ and men who relate sexually to children. For all the media coverage and commentary, public understanding of the men involved sexually with children remains superficial. There is a homogenizing effect to his classification as a paedophile. He is rendered as ‘other’, and different, and distanced from other men. In this media environment, wider discussion of issues surrounding men’s sexual involvement with children is practically invalid.

Cossins (2000) reminds us that psychological theories emphasise the ‘abnormality’ of some men’s sexual desire for children and they “begin with the value judgement that sexual behaviour with children is abnormal, they have failed to distinguish between what is abnormal as opposed to what is socially unacceptable” (p2). The significance and the importance of gender in explanations of adult - child sexual relations as the product of a ‘normal’ male socialization rather than a ‘deviant’ one has primarily been addressed from a feminist perspective (Dominelli, 1989). However, the gendered nature of child sexual abuse has not been incorporated into mainstream discourse. It is not surprising given the levels of popular opposition and social opprobrium, that the pro-paedophile discourse is absent from the Irish newspapers reviewed for this research. However, the absence of feminist or sociological perspectives in the portrayal of the paedophile and men who relate sexually to children in the Irish media discourse is remarkable.

Despite a rich store of theoretical and research literature there is a lack of attention to gender and the different practices constitutive of men’s sexual interaction with children. This research study challenges some of the social and political attitudes surrounding adult sexual involvement with children. We will see in the following chapters that priests and homosexual men feature prominently in the newspapers reviewed. Seen through the analytical framework of hegemonic masculinity, these men are construed as ‘less than’ other men. Their sexuality - as inactive heterosexual or homosexual - is suspect in the masculine hierarchy. A simultaneous
construction of normative and non-normative masculinity continually reproduces their hierarchical relationship (Phillips, 2005). This relationship is evident in the media discourse. Stabilization and consolidation of coherent normative identity requires continual efforts to construct marginalised masculinities, marking boundaries and positions constituting self and ‘other’ (Butler, 1993). ‘Othering’ by the media, enables normal men to maintain separateness from the deviant, less masculine, paedophile. Kristeva (1982) reminds us that the construction of a ‘pure us’ and a ‘polluting them’ may be read as illustrating the centrality of the latter to the former.

In media discourse, the figure of the paedophile is socially peripheral yet symbolically central. In this study we will see that a critical analysis of media discourses, discussed in Chapter 8, reveals some of the ways that adult male sexual involvement with children is represented and consequently informs and constructs popular opinion.

Summary

This chapter has considered the concepts of ‘child’ and ‘childhood’ and reviewed some of the explanations offered to account for why some men interact sexually with children. Our ability to see something as a social problem would appear to depend on it first being represented to us as a problem through language (Baachi, 1999). Psychiatrists, medical researchers and feminists named ‘child sexual abuse’ as a problem, and it became real to us once it had been constructed and constituted in the public domain as a social object and requiring intervention.

Sexual behaviours and deviations from a supposed norm of behaviour can be, and have been studied from a variety of viewpoints and theoretical perspectives. Terms used such as sex abuser, molester, paedophile etc. are dependent on and conditioned by cultural norms, from which a certain form of behaviour is seen to be deviant, and by legal norms, which may define that
behaviour as an offence. Male sexual use of children must be understood within the context of sexual practices in general rather than separate from them.

The phenomenon of adult male sexual involvement with children is inseparable from constructions of categorical difference, sexualities, institutions and power. Among the systems within which adult-child sex is constituted are age, sex, gender, race, class, and sexual orientation. Binaries do not just describe difference, but insinuate hierarchy – subordination and domination. Any group that is ‘othered’ is often composed of many subgroups that make the hierarchal relationships more complex. How a person ends up in one group or another and where those dividing lines fit, is sometimes based on tangible factors and sometimes is rather arbitrary.
PART B

Chapter 5: Methodology - Discourse Analysis

Chapter 6: The Media; The Paedophile in the Media

Chapter 7: Ireland and the Irish Media
CHAPTER 5: METHODOLOGY - DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

This research study illustrates some of the ways men who relate sexually to children are represented in Irish newspaper reports and how these discourses relate to a wider social and political context. In this chapter, the concepts of text, context and discourse are considered. It explores what is considered as discourse and outlines a variety of discourse analytic perspectives. Critical discourse analysis is the analytic perspective used in this study. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) sees discourse as a social practice, and as such seeks to elucidate the influences of social, political and cultural contexts on discourse. It is important to critically analyse the discourses surrounding men who relate sexually with children.

Discourses and regimes of truth are important in promoting and maintaining knowledge. What counts as ‘the truth’ itself is a product of discourse. Discourse analysis refers to a way of investigating the social construction of phenomena, including ideas, practices and domains of knowledge. We have seen in Chapter 2, that there is a variety of knowledge-producing enterprises. Science and knowledge derived using scientific methods have been and continue to be particularly respected as ‘fact’ and ‘truth’.

I believe it is important to show how certain discourses operate as truthful, and to demonstrate the bases of power that underpin, motivate and benefit from the truth-claims of the discourse in question (Potter and Wetherell, 1987). An analysis of discourse can highlight things that have become implicit and ‘taken-for-granted’. This chapter concludes with a discussion highlighting how discourse is connected materially to the ways in which society is socially, politically, and economically organized. Burr (2003) remarks that dominant ways of understanding tend to
reflect the interest of the most powerful in society. In this research, the role of discourse in the production and reproduction of dominant cultural attitudes is evident.

**The Term Discourse**

The notion of discourse, in both popular and philosophical terms, integrates a number of different meanings. Researchers working from a social constructionist perspective reject the notion that the world is composed of underlying structures and that there can be one single, true way of understanding experience. Instead, knowledge is considered to be constantly negotiated through social interaction. Language and discourse is a primary site of knowledge construction (Burr, 2003). From a social constructionist perspective according to Potter and Wetherell (1987), language or ‘social texts’:

“Do not merely reflect or mirror objects, events and categories pre-existing in the social and natural world. Rather they actively construct a version of those things. They do not just describe things; they do things. And being active, they have social and political implications” (p6).

The term discourse itself may refer to language as it is displayed in text and talk. It may also refer to ways of thinking about particular phenomena, such as childhood, gender, race and how these reflect particular historical and/or moral positions. Van Dijk (1993) sees discourse as text in context and contends that discourse should also be understood as action. Writing about Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Fairclough and Wodak (1997) speak of discourse as a form of social practice that is socially constitutive as well as socially shaped. Describing discourse as social practice implies a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and situations, institutions and social structures. Discourse constitutes situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and relationships between people and groups of people.
It is constitutive both in the sense that it helps sustain and reproduce the social status quo, and in
the sense that it can contribute to transforming it.

**Text and Context**

The term text can be used to refer to the products of the processes of text-creation. Fairclough
(1989) suggests that one should use the term discourse to refer to the whole process of social
interaction of which text is just a part. There are patterns or so-called ‘genre-specific’ elements
specific to particular textual varieties e.g. a political speech follows rules that are different from
those of a talk show on television, a biographical interview, or a newspaper report (Fairclough
1995). For critical theorists ‘discourses’ are propositions in circulation about a particular
phenomenon. Foucault spoke of discourses as practices that systematically form the objects of
which they speak (Mills, 2004).

Discourses occur at a particular time, in a particular place, with particular participants – in
micro-context, and also in macro-contexts (Wodak, 1996), such as in organizations and
institutions (e.g. ‘medical discourse’). An individual discourse should be seen in the macro-
context in order to capture the specific meaning of a particular discourse sequence. As we shall
see later, Irish newspaper reports are neither isolated in place or time nor unconnected to the
wider cultural context of which they part.

Individuals draw on discourses to account for themselves and their experiences while, at the
same time, discourses contain a range of subject positions which in turn facilitate and/or
constrain certain experiences and practices (Willig, 1999). People can position themselves and
can also be positioned by discourse. From a discursive perspective, the ‘good mother’ is neither
a static nor prescriptive role, nor a belief set that mothers either comply with or reject. It is
conceptualised as a socially negotiated accomplishment that is both reflected in and maintained
by social structures. Similarly, the concept of the ‘bad man’ or the ‘evil paedophile’ is also
discursively constructed, reflected and maintained.

Discourse analytic studies of racism have been concerned with the way descriptions are
marshalled in particular contexts to legitimate the blaming of a minority group and with
resources that are available in a particular cultural setting for legitimating racist practices
(Wetherell and Potter, 1992). Wetherell and Potter (1987) used the term ‘interpretive
repertoires’ referring to related sets of terms used in a discourse, which are historically
developed and make up an important part of the common sense of a culture.

Questions of power and ideology are closely related to discourse. Wodak (1996) asserts that
discourse is so socially consequential, it gives rise to important issues of power. Discursive
practices may have major ideological effects, they can help produce and reproduce unequal
power relations …through the ways in which they represent things and position people” (p15).
Discourse research in the social sciences is based on the assumption that the studies of culture
matters – that ideas, ways of being, forms of knowledge, are worth studying and are interesting
and important in themselves. Work on ideology in cultural studies, evident in the work of Stuart
Hall and the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at Birmingham since the 1970s,
investigates the ways in which people read themselves into social relations – the ways in which
they make sense of the world and develop a taken-for-granted perspective. Ideologies provide
identities and positions for people, and as one takes on an ideology, one takes on a position from
which to speak. A discourse becomes ideological when it is linked to maintaining hegemony
(Purvis and Hunt, 1993).
**Discourse Analysis as a methodology**

Methods or analytic approaches do not tend to be free-standing; and are typically associated with broader principles and assumptions. It is only when such associations become embedded into research procedures over a long period that they become invisible. Research methods are not isolated in space but are either explicitly or implicitly related to theoretical assumptions and structures (Tischer *et al.*, 2000). Constructionism cuts across traditional disciplinary boundaries. Underpinned by social constructionism, discourse analysis is an interdisciplinary approach and is inductive in so far as it involves moving from the tangible to the abstract, from the particular to the general.

Discourses are historical and should be understood in relation to their context, they are embedded in a particular culture, ideology and history. Individual texts may relate to past or present texts, and there is the notion of intertextuality (Kristeva, 1980). Kristeva referred to texts in terms of two axes: a horizontal axis connecting the author and reader of a text, and a vertical axis, which connects the text to other texts. Similarly, discourses also overlap and interdiscursivity is the feature of a discourse that relates it to other discourses (Wodak and Weiss, 2005: p127). Ways of understanding or ‘meaning making’ take the forms defined by historically specific discourses - dominant discourses - such as science, medicine and sexuality. Specific discourses also serve prevailing relations of domination and subordination (Mills, 2004).

**Some varieties of Discourse Analysis:**

Discourse analysis connotes a number of analytical approaches often originating from within different conceptual frameworks.
Content Analysis

Content analysis is an established method of text analysis among a set of empirical methods of social investigation (Neuendorf, 2005). Usually the term content analysis referred to those methods that concentrate on clearly quantifiable aspects of text content, and on frequencies of words within a text. One could describe as variants of content analysis methods of text analysis that somehow approach texts by means of coding and categories. A qualitative approach to content analysis also developed (Mayring, 2000).

Conversation Analysis

Conversation analysis is a technique for analysing naturally occurring conversations, used by social scientists in the disciplines of sociology, psychology and communications (Sudnow, 1972). Conversation analysis is related to the idea of ‘contextualization cues’ “any aspect of linguistic behaviour – lexical, prosodic, phonological, and syntactic choices together with the use of particular codes, dialects or styles – may function as such, indicating those aspects of context which are relevant in interpreting what a speaker means” (Gumperz, 1982: p162).

Conversation analysis was developed by Harvey Sacks in the 1960s and is primarily concerned “to describe the methods speakers use to coordinate their talk, to produce orderly and meaningful conversational actions” (Speer, 2005, p16). Further developed from work of Sacks, Schlegoff and Jefferson in the 1960s and 1970s, conversation analysis provides an elaborate and systematic account of talk-in-interaction (Hutchby and Wooffit, 2008). Interaction is not only organized in its general forms, but is also organized by its particulars. Any levels of detail in talk for example hesitations or pauses can be crucial for a piece of interaction, as much of the interaction itself may be happening in these details.
Conversation analysts such as Schegloff, and discursive psychologists such as Edwards and Potter, reject the explicit separation of macro and micro contexts. Rather than asserting that gendered identities are positioned or constituted by an ‘external public dialogue’ or established ‘global patterns’, theorists such as Wetherell and Edley (1999) argue that what counts as power and normativity is negotiated and constructed by participants during the course of their interaction. This approach is essentially concerned with how contexts are endogenously produced. Conversational analysis is a technical examination that pays close attention to participants’ orientations and the categorical and sequential features of talk (Hutchby and Wooffit, 2008). The perception of conversation analysis as a non-political and non-critical examination of turn-taking does not make it an obvious candidate for use in critical research (Billig, 1999).

**Discursive Psychology**

Discursive psychology is a constructionist approach that combines insights from the sociology of scientific knowledge, ethnomethodology, conversation analysis and rhetorical analysis (Potter, 1996). These vary in the extent to which they combine poststructuralist and Foucauldian understanding of discourse, with ethnomethodological and/or conversational analytic ones (Speer, 2001).

Discursive psychology as developed by Edwards and Potter, and Potter and Wetherell, shows that in conversations, participants’ conversational versions of events (e.g. memories, descriptions, formulations) are constructed to do communicative, interactional work (Edwards and Potter, 1992: p16). These authors suggest that the focus of discursive psychology is the action orientation of talk and writing. For both participants and analysts the primary issue is the social action, or interactional work, being done in the discourse (1992, p2). This allows for the analysis of psychological phenomena such as memory and cognition as social, discursive phenomena. The empirical focus of discursive psychology is on the content of talk, its subject
matter, and its social rather than linguistic organization (Edwards and Potter, 1992, p28). Potter and Wetherell (1987) critiqued the cognitivist approaches that dominated British social psychology in the 1980s. Their critique was developed in the context of racist discourse suggesting “its critical potential from the start” (Billig, 1999, p551). Interpretive repertoires make possible different ‘subject positions’. These subject positions are psychologically-laden locations that people take up as they intentionally or unintentionally paint a picture of ‘who they are’, or how they want to be seen in a particular conversation. Subject positions are locations made possible as subjects are interpolated within certain discourses (Korobov, 2001). Wetherell and Edley’s discursive approach to hegemonic masculinity is based on a combination of ideas from feminism, post-structuralism and ethnomethodology. They looked at the ways in which men themselves negotiate regulative conceptions of masculinity in their everyday interactions as they account for their actions and produce or manage their own (and others’) identities (Wetherell and Edley, 1999, p337). Lea and Auburn, (2001) used a discursive approach to explore the rape narratives of a convicted rapist. If rape is constructed through discourse, their discursive approach sought to understand human action in terms of the language used to account for that action (Lea and Auburn, 2001).

**Foucauldian Discourse Analysis**

Discourse analysis only finds its real usefulness within the agenda of a ‘history of systems of thought’ (Foucault, 1977). Although his work is clearly influenced by the ‘turn to language’ (Rorty, 1992) which marked the constructionist approach to representation, Foucault’s definition of discourse is much broader than language, and includes other elements of practice and institutional regulation which are excluded from exclusively linguistic focuses. According to Phillips and Jorgensen (2002), Foucault has played a central role in the development of discourse analysis. In his writings he emphasises the interrelationships between power and knowledge and the way in which subjectivity or identity is constituted through a range of discourses. Parker (2004) speaks of a model of critical discourse analysis developed within the
theoretical tradition of Foucault and referred to as ‘Foucauldian Discourse Analysis’. However, Hook (2001: p538) suggests there is no strictly Foucauldian method of discourse analysis, and that Foucault’s analysis of discourse occurs fundamentally through the extra-discursive.

Foucault was concerned with the production of knowledge and meaning through discourse. His conception of discourse is situated far more closely to knowledge, materiality and power than it is to language (Hook, 2001). Foucault does not usually analyse particular texts and representations, but is more inclined to analyse the whole discursive formation to which a text or practice belongs (Foucault, 1972). His concern is with knowledge provided by the human and social sciences, which organizes conduct, understanding, practice and belief, and the regulation of whole populations. For Foucault forms of power/knowledge are always rooted in particular contexts and histories. In his discursive approach, it is discourse, rather than the subjects who speak it, that produces knowledge; the ‘subject’ is produced within discourse (McHoul and Grace, 1995).

**Critical Discourse Analysis**

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) does not have a unitary theoretical framework or methodology (Van Dijk, 2001), and is best viewed as a shared perspective encompassing a range of approaches. While there are a variety of ways to critically analyse discourse, a common feature is the claim that social and cultural elements are significant in the creation and maintenance of power relations. The objectives of analysis are derived from its theoretical foundations, and the CDA approach draws from a range of social theory and contributions from people such as Marx, Gramsci, Habermas, and Foucault.

Van Dijk (1993) comments on the range of approaches that constitute a CDA perspective and that although there are different points of view, most approaches deal with power, dominance
and inequality, and the discursive processes which legitimate them. He suggests that there are subtle means by which text and talk manage the mind and manufacture consent (254).

Critical Discourse Analysis focuses on the discursive strategies that legitimate control, or otherwise ‘naturalize’ the social order, and especially relations of inequality (Fairclough, 1989). Social power is based on privileged access to socially valued resources such as wealth, income, position, status, force, education, knowledge etc. Many subtle forms of dominance are so persistent that they seem natural until they begin to be challenged, as was/is the case for men’s dominance of women, white of black, rich of poor. Power relations are constituents of, and constituted by, discourse and critical discourse analysis focuses on both power and discourse. If the minds of the dominated can be influenced in such a way that they accept dominance, and act in the interest of the powerful out of their own free will, the term hegemony may be used (Gramsci, 1971; Hall et al., 1977).

In following the tenets of CDA, language and discourse are approached “as the instrument of power and control…as well as the instruments of the social construction of reality” (Van Leeuwen, 1993, p193). What is uncovered though CDA, as both an agent and a product of discursive occlusion, is usually defined as ideology (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997). Ideology’s ordinary indiscernibility in discourse is attributed to the functioning of hegemonic power (Fairclough, 1995).

Though some are more explicit that others in identifying their positions, CDA locates itself on a political terrain, discourse being already political. Critical discourse analysts argue that their work should be judged by its ethical and political import, and should be evaluated by their success in attaining socio-political goals. One sign of power is access to discourse, and thus the control of discourse is a key topic in this form of analysis.
Fairclough and Wodak (1997: pp271-280) summarise the main tenets of CDA:

- CDA addresses social problems
- Power relations are discursive
- Discourse constitutes society and culture
- Discourse does ideological work
- Discourse is historical
- The link between text and society is mediated
- Discourse analysis is interpretative and explanatory
- Discourse is a form of social action

Continuing a tradition that rejects the possibility of a ‘value-free’ science, CDA argues that science and especially scholarly discourse, are part of and influenced by social structure, and produced in social interactions (Van Dijk, 2005).

Discussion

Critical approaches to text and talk in European scholarship over the last decades have been interdisciplinary (Van Leeuwen, 2005). While certain approaches can be considered separate traditions, they are not necessarily irreconcilable. It is clear that complex social issues require interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary perspectives. In this research, discursive events such as the portrayal of men who relate sexually to children are seen as instances of social practice.

The approach taken to analysing discourses and discursive events during the course of this research draws on CDA and the work of Foucault, and uses a synthetic approach to a broad analysis of how discourses constitute particular phenomena with political, social, and personal consequences. The print media is critically implicated in the construction of the imagined community of the nation (Anderson 1983). It functions to mediate, interpret and create our
collective reality, while drawing on a repertoire of culturally available myths, narratives and traditions (Mulcahy, 1995; Conway, 2006). It is important to examine the ways in which powerful gatekeepers in society influence social beliefs and attitudes, and shape ideologies. These gatekeepers achieve their influence through the standards they set for what is, and what is not acceptable, and according to Van Dijk (1993) this reveals the power imbalance in discourse.

If the power of discourse is not sufficiently engaged, it becomes more a project of reading the text than engaging the discourse (Hook, 2001: p526). An analysis of discourse cannot remain just within the text. To guard against one’s analytic efforts resulting in mere ‘marking of textuality’ (Hook, 2001: p543) - with limited political relevance, and restricted critical access - it is necessary to corroborate the findings of textual analyses with reference to certain extra-textual factors such as history and materiality. The news texts reviewed during the course of this research feature a compendium of interrelated discourses, which in turn are embedded within a particular cultural context. By emphasising some aspects, more so than others, media discourses achieve ideological effects. In the context of this research a focus on the non-normative sexuality and masculine practices of men who have been involved sexually with children, buttresses notions of hegemonic masculinity and heteronormative society.

Analysis of discourse must necessarily entail a focus on discourse-as-knowledge, on discourse as a matter of the social, historical and political conditions under which statements come to count as true or false (McHoul and Grace, 1995). What appears in newspapers must be seen in reference to the broader sense-making resources available within our particular cultural context. With an emphasis on medical and legal frameworks, what is accepted as the ‘truth’ and ‘fact’ in relation to men who relate sexually to children is constructed within and from media discourses. This study highlights the need to see discourse as an instrument of power and to direct the analysis of the discursive through the extra-discursive.
If the assumption is that every text is embedded in a context, and is related to many other texts, then it follows that there can in principle be no objective beginning and no clear end, since every text/discourse is bound up with many others and can only be understood on the basis of others. Said emphasises the importance of re-relating discourse to a greater network of power-relations, to critically engage discourse is to strip it of its “esoteric or hermetic elements and to do this by making [it] assume its affiliations with institutions, agencies, classes, academies, corporations, groups, ideologically defined parties and professions... [These critical engagements] ...forcibly redefine and re-identify the particular interests that all [discourses] serve” (Said, 1983: p212).

In this study, the first stage of analysis consisted of identifying Irish newspaper reports for the years 2003 to 2005. This was done by searching digital databases and a manual search using the term ‘paedophile’ and ‘paedophilia’. Out of the articles which contain the term paedophile or paedophilia, a selection was made of those containing references to aspects of the masculinity of the men reported as relating sexually with children. Further discussion in relation to the review of the newspapers and the selection processes used are presented in Chapter 8.

Research methods satisfy certain technical criteria but should also serve to bring us closer to what it is we are trying to understand. While acknowledging the conceptual and theoretical critiques afforded by post-structural and post-modern thought, the potential apolitical relativism of those approaches is rejected in favour of a social constructionist approach with critical awareness of material realities.

In the study of discourse, it is necessary to question the text and context, the material and the extra-textual. I believe critical analysis of discourses surrounding the figure of the paedophile and media-portrayed masculine practices of those men is important. Experiences of non-normative sexuality and masculinities need to be understood in the context of dominant cultural discourses. References to markers of traditional masculinity exist within a discursive framework.
The frameworks within which these men are identified and positioned in society and the discursive themes, which are drawn upon, are examined and discussed in following chapters. Using a CDA approach, discourse is seen as social practice and we can explore the influences of social, political and cultural contexts on discourse. This research systematically relates the newspaper text to wider socio-political dimensions. The dominant discourses circulated through the media are systematically related to the socio-political context. We will see in Chapters 8 and 9, how in Ireland at this point in time, the social and political context comprises essentialist views of men and hegemonic masculinity, and an unwillingness to engage with the wider issues in the consideration of adult sexual involvement with children.

**Summary**

This chapter outlined some perspectives on text and discourse, and some varieties of discourse analyses were introduced. Critical discourse analysis is used in this research study in order to examine the representations of men who relate sexually with children, and the discourses implicated in their portrayal. The following chapter will consider media representations of the paedophile and child sexual abuse more generally.
CHAPTER 6: (i) THE MEDIA; (ii) THE PAEDOPHILE IN THE MEDIA

The chapter is divided into two parts. Section (i) begins with an exploration of media and media practices. It considers news construction and production, what issues become newsworthy and the value of particular events in media terms. There is a brief discussion of practices of representation and constructions of the ‘other’ in media discourse. This is followed in section (ii) by a presentation of some of the ways in which the paedophile, and more generally men relating sexually to children, are represented in the news media.

The media are sources of information and knowledge. Public awareness of adult sexual involvement with children as a societal problem has often been tied to media attention to the subject (McDevitt, 1996). Considered as part of larger cultural systems, media sites are a central medium of popular culture, and actively produce and promote the dominant ideas of normative and non-normative identities. It is important to recognize that public opinion is influenced by the nature and extent of news coverage. Policy-makers are clearly sensitive to how social issues are viewed by the public, whose attitudes in turn are shaped by the media.

In many fields of research, the news media provide the primary means by which information about findings is made available to the general public. In relation to men who relate sexually to children, the media has played a key role by defining the issue as one of managing a dangerous external threat residing within the psyches and personalities of some men.
(i) The Media

News Construction and Production

Newspapers inevitably make assumptions about their readers, their concerns and their ‘reading positions’ and in doing so help to create them. Texts are open to multiple readings by diverse and differently positioned readers, who are actively engaged in the production of meanings. Any given reader may read a text in multiple ways which cannot be anticipated. Yet the mass media play a role in the formation of public opinion. The issues that receive prominent attention in the media become the issues the reading and listening public regard as important. The media are also selective in the messages they transmit, and are directive in trying to shape and mould opinion (Shoemaker and Reese, 1996). The non-random nature of news construction and reporting, what is included in a specific article, and how an issue is portrayed, are key factors to consider when exploring news media representations (Allan, 2004).

News print media do more than ‘reflect’ social reality, they can be key mechanisms in the construction of ideology and they can profoundly influence the social and political responses to issues of law and order (Greer, 2003). The news journalist actively shapes news by deciding what to report, who to quote, and what angle to take. Several researchers suggest that media are central to the creation of moral panics (Cohen, 2002; Jenkins 1992, Goode and Ben-Yehuda, 1994). The implication that the media independently orchestrate public opinion in the creation of moral panics does not adequately explain or question the economic and ideological interests which are responsible for organising the media (Goddard and Liddell, 1993, 1995).

In Putting Reality Together, Schlesinger (1989) described the media as a system at work, operating with a determinate set of routines. Commonly there is a hierarchical structure in place to produce news. This places a level of restraint on the freedom of journalists as stories can be shaped according to the decisions of people higher up in the media structure e.g. sub-editors,
news-editor, editor (Schlesinger, 1989). There is also a financial imperative and a corporate context determining the variability of the media. News organisations earn their keep by producing stories that attract audiences and advertisers.

What is considered to be a ‘newsworthy’ event does not necessarily reflect its objective features. Meyers (1997) notes the traditional importance of ‘the unusual’ in determining newsworthiness. She found that the more prevalent the crime, the less it would be reported, except for killings and where the crime can be presented as sentimental or dramatic. News values are the characteristics of a story that make it newsworthy. Among other things the news value of an event is related to its human interest. Schlesinger and Tumber (1994) suggest that whilst news values may emphasise the drama of an event and the frequency of its occurrence - what is valued also depends on the historical and social moment. It is important to recognise the cultural specificity of news values. Hall et al., (1978) identified the breaching of ‘normal’ expectations as the primary news value. Events are considered to have news value if they involve elite people, can be personalised, have negative consequences, and are part of an existing newsworthy theme.

The attribution and individualisation of responsibility to someone whose ‘individual pathology’ marks him/her out as distinct from the rest of society are central to the news value of ‘personalisation’ (Chibnall, 1977). Greer (2003) comments that the overall newsworthiness of a story is greater the more clearly and unambiguously a deviant personality can be defined and located within a context that will be culturally meaningful to the reader (p50). As we shall see in subsequent chapters, the definition of the paedophile as a deviant person is central to his representation in the newspapers reviewed for this study.

McCombs and Shaw (1993) write:

"Agenda setting is considerably more that the classical assertion that the news tells us what to think about. The news also tells us how to think about it. Both the selection of objects for attention and the
selection of frames for thinking about these objects are powerful agenda-setting roles. Central to the news agenda and its daily set of objects – issues, personalities, events etc. – are the perspectives that journalists and, subsequently members of the public employ to think about each object” (p62).

It is typically the major newspapers in a country that take on the primary agenda-setting role (McCombs and Reynolds, 2002). In the case of the print media, broadsheet newspapers tend to emphasise news, politics and economics; while the tabloids emphasise personal news and human interest stories (Galtung and Ruge, 1981).

The news professional can be seen as a gatekeeper of information. Thus editors, journalists, news writers, and broadcast producers function as information gatekeepers, channelling specific types of information into publication or broadcast presentation while excluding others. In this way, the information gatekeeper contributes to the ‘agenda-setting’ function of the news (McCombs and Reynolds, 2002). Gate keeping serves a valuable function as it reduces the range of issues before the public and may help bring about a society consensus. The creation of public awareness and concern in relation to certain issues by the news media means that the framers of the news influence how the public views various events and personalities. Media concentration on specific issues and subjects may lead the public to perceive some issues as more important than others.

Kitzinger (2000) speaks of media templates which are routinely used to emphasise particular perspectives, and serve as rhetorical devices used to help audiences and producers contextualise their stories. Kitzinger suggests an analysis of media templates allows one to see how reality is framed; how various elements of social life are constructed, and how media power is operationalized in society. The way the news stories are framed can influence particular judgements about the causes and solutions to social problems (Coleman and Thorson, 2002).
Medical and legal discourses predominate when it comes to news reports and stories involving men relating sexually to children. The man in the news report is usually in the criminal justice system and/or a treatment environment to correct his distorted thinking and behaviour. The focus on individual pathology often obscures the social context of the crime. Crime in the mass media is portrayed as being predominantly perpetrated by abnormal, predatory individuals who lie beyond the boundaries of the ‘normal’ social world (Surrette, 1994; Jewkes, 2004).

**Representation**

Representation is not merely the transmitting of already-existing meaning, but it implies the active work of selecting and presenting, of structuring and shaping (Hall, 1997). Traditional discussions of representation have centred on whether the depiction of an issue (e.g. AIDS), or a group of people (e.g. women) is an accurate or distorted reflection of reality (Widdowfield, 2001). According to Fairclough (1995), journalists recount and also interpret and explain events, trying to get people to see things and to act in certain ways. Therefore rather than an unmediated account, what appears in newsprint media is a selected and constructed representation, constitutive of reality.

In cultural and symbolic terms, power is implicit in the practices of representation. In portraying someone or something in a certain way there is power to mark, assign, to classify and exclude (Hall, 1997). The exercise of symbolic power through representational practices is evident in this research study, as the man identified as a paedophile in news reports is represented in ways that exclude him from ‘normal’ society and distance him from ‘normal’ men.

Stereotyping is a key element in the exercise of symbolic power. In a study of how a stereotypical image of the ‘Orient’ was constructed, Said (1978) argues that, far from reflecting what the countries of the Near East were like in reality, ‘Orientalism’ was the discourse by which European culture was able to manage – and even produce – the Orient politically,
sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically and in the imagination. Within the framework of western hegemony over the Orient, a new object of knowledge emerged – “a complex Orient suitable for the study in the academy, for display in the museum, for theoretical illustration in anthropological, biological, linguistic, racial and historical theses about mankind and the universe…..” (Said, 1978: pp7-8). Said’s discussion of Orientalism parallels Foucault’s power/knowledge argument insofar as a discourse produces, through different practices of representation e.g. scholarship and literature, a form of knowledge of the ‘Other’, which is deeply implicated in the operations of power (Mills, 2004).

The ‘Other’

One needs to examine the ways in which the ‘Other’ is formed as something separate, powerful and frightening to the individual. To exist in our culture, to be intelligible - not put in jail, an asylum, or reviled in public - one must conform to the culture’s ‘matrix of intelligibility’ (Butler, 1990: p17). At a broad level of how ‘difference’ and ‘otherness’ is represented in a particular culture at any one moment, similar representational practices and figures are repeated, with variations, from one text or site of representation to another (Hall, 1997). Symbolic boundaries are culturally crucial. The marking of ‘difference’ can depend on giving things meaning by assigning them to different positions within a classificatory system. Douglas (1966, cited in Smith, 2001, pp83-85) argues that social groups impose meaning on their world by ordering and organizing things into classificatory systems. Debates about ‘difference’ and the ‘Other’ may refer to different levels of analysis e.g. linguistic, social, psychic and cultural. ‘Difference’ is necessary for the production of meaning, the formation of language and culture, for social identities and a subjective sense of the self. At the same time, difference may be threatening, a site of danger, of negative feelings, of hostility and aggression towards the ‘Other’ (Hall, 1997). Symbolic boundaries keep categories pure, giving cultures their unique meaning and identity. What unsettles culture is the breaking of unwritten rules and codes regulating meanings and identities (Douglas, 1966, cited in Smith, 2001, pp83-85). The retreat of some cultures towards
‘closure’ against foreigners, intruders, aliens and ‘others’ is part of the same process of purification (Kristeva, 1982).

We must consider the importance of signifying practices to the reaffirmation of a basic normative order (Garland, 2001). Marking ‘difference’ leads to a symbolic closing of ranks, and allows us to stigmatize and expel anything which is defined as impure or abnormal. Nevertheless, ‘difference’ is also powerful, precisely because it may be seen as threatening to the social order. Clearly evidenced in the newspapers reviewed for this study, the man who relates sexually to children is signified as different, ‘other’ and ‘less than’ other men, and such signification distances him from ‘normal’ men and the socio-cultural and political contexts.

(ii) The Media and the Paedophile

Critcher (2003) notes that in media narratives about adult sexual interaction with children, it is far easier to generate panics about the perverted stranger. When the threat of ‘the paedophile’ is externalised, and the focus is on a small group of predatory strangers, it prevents a deeper understanding of the wider spectrum of men who relate sexually to children.

Linking the discourses of threat and risk and the legal, medical, social, religious aspects of social control, a dimension of a moral panic is its normative affirmation. Moral panics serve as a mode of social control, as generalised discourses about vulnerability, threats and the ‘evil Other’ centre around modes of regulating certain actions, categories and technologies (Critcher, 2003).

Pfohl (1977) stated that “the proliferation of the idea of child abuse by the media cannot be underestimated” (p320). By publicizing Kempe’s work on the ‘battered child syndrome’ in the early 1960s, many authors have noted that the media were responsible for bringing ‘child abuse’ to public attention. Child abuse as a term was used by paediatrician C Henry Kempe at a 1961 symposium of the American Psychiatric Society (Kempe et al., 1962), and an explosion of
academic literature on child abuse came in the wake of his work with physically abused children. This ‘discovery’ of child abuse used a narrow definition in line with the professional interest of Kempe and medical radiologists. The abuse of children was defined as a medical problem, blame was placed on individual deviant parents, and possible socio-cultural explanations were ignored (Pfohl, 1977; Howitt, 1992, 2002).

The sharply defined distinction between the normal man and the man who relates sexually to children encourages the use of a particular language of evil and wickedness, and the popular media offers a consensus on that evil. The media’s approach to representing a man who interacts sexually with children emphasises the view of him as a threatening stranger, from whom the innocent public must be protected (Kitzinger, 1999). In advancing this image, the press engages in a process that features ‘the paedophile’ as an external threat, while at the same time seeking to identify and apprehend him. The nature of social reaction to events depends upon the kind of information available in the public arena, and this includes specific information about what constitutes deviance and what a ‘deviant person’ is. This set of stories then becomes the text consumed by the audience, and forms part of that society’s ‘knowledge’ about men who interact sexually with children, and about gender. The patterns of stories found ‘newsworthy’ also reflect contemporary attitudes and concerns about gender. The media draws largely on medical and legal discourses, which focus on ‘the paedophile’ as an ungendered being and ignores the complexities of the issues to be addressed (Kitzinger, 1999; Soothill et al., 1998). Kitzinger (1998) has analysed what she sees as the gender-politics of news reporting of child abuse. She identifies the onset of what she calls ‘child abuse fatigue’, together with the enthusiasm with which much of the media adopted the notion of ‘False Memory Syndrome’. Kitzinger and Skidmore (1995) have shown the changes in news interest in violence towards children - and the preference for news of sexual violence and homicide, and violence by strangers, over non-fatal and familial violence. Cohen (1972, 2002) suggests that a moral panic is incited and spread by interest groups, towards people who are actively transformed into ‘folk devils’ and then treated as threats to the dominant social interests and values. Through the use of highly emotive...
rhetoric, a moral panic tends to orchestrate cultural consent that something must be done to deal with the alleged threat. DeYoung (2000) argues that a panic discourse has both ideological and material effects. It influences people to both think and act in ways that reassert and protect the dominant values and interests which are purportedly being undermined. A moral panic serves a stabilising function during a period of social anxiety.

Paedophiles have featured as folk devils in media moral panics over recent years. Referring to the News of the World (NOW) ‘name and shame’ campaign in 2000, Bell (2002) suggests that the figure of ‘the paedophile’ became a monster for our time. He is depicted as simultaneously everywhere, and as existing on the other side of rational, healthy and normal life. It is important to look at the way the figure of the paedophile emerged in those debates, and how at least in the public imagination, the ‘paedophile’ has lost any ability to be rendered into credible knowledge (Bell, 2002: p86).

“These people… are inflicted with an incurable disease, the most terrifying disease there is” (The Mirror, 18th July, 2000: p4); “Does a monster live near you?” (News of the World, 23rd July, 2000:p2). Bell (2002) comments, that in the debates surrounding the NOW ‘name and shame’ campaign, the entities of home and family emerged intact (p101). In relation to that campaign, Critcher (2003) comments that the policy agenda in Britain was reconfigured by the media agenda, as he argues the media has the capacity to construct the public agenda. There is little doubt that much of the prevailing media reporting distorts the public’s understanding of men who relate sexually to children. The cases of adults interacting sexually with children that receive significant coverage, Cheit (2003) remarks, follow a common pattern in crime reporting - one that exalts the unusual, “thereby turning the most uncommon events into the ones that seem common” (p609).

Crime news is a staple of the media, and news about ‘child sex abuse’ in the news media is mostly news about crime (McDevitt, 1996: p263). The media prefer to report on crimes “with
an apparently pure and innocent victim and a diabolic offender” as “dwelling on the atypical” is practically a tenet of crime reporting (Lotz, 1991: 63). Cheit (2003) demonstrates that media coverage gives an exaggerated sense of ‘stranger danger’ by highlighting stories about strangers and almost never mentioning anything that would suggest incest. Wilczynski and Sinclair (1999) studied press coverage of ‘child abuse’ in two Western Australian newspapers. They assessed the representativeness of newspaper coverage with reference to substantiated notifications to the child protection service during the same period. The authors found that the media over-reports sexual abuse as opposed to other forms of abuse – such as physical or emotional abuse and neglect. There is over-reporting of abuse outside the home, especially when it occurs in public places or church settings. Another distortion found in those newspapers was an over-reporting of cases involving non-familial abusers.

Law and order agendas feature prominently in the press with little if any coverage devoted to the social complexities of ‘sexual offending’. Greer (2003) reports on the increase in the number of newspaper articles devoted to sexual offending in Northern Ireland between 1985 and 1997. He looked at the construction of sex crime in the press in Northern Ireland, and offences against children were the most heavily reported sex crimes, and most often attracted widespread and sustained attention from the press. Wilczynski and Sinclair (1999) found law and order agendas tended to dominate news coverage, and little attention was paid to issues of prevention or treatment. Critcher (2002) remarks that since the 1990s, British media coverage of paedophilia has grown incrementally, initially reflecting events outside Britain. These include extradition proceedings in relation to a priest wanted for paedophile offences - which led to the fall of the Irish government in 1994; and the failure of the Belgian establishment to prevent serial murders of children by Marc Dutroux in Belgium in 1996.

With reference to high profile cases of child murder in the UK in the last number of years i.e. Sarah Payne in 2000; Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman in 2002, Goode (2006) argues that responses calling for increased information-gathering on child sex offenders, serve to inform
authorities anxious to vet and make clear distinctions between the good, normal, individual and the dangerous, deviant individual. She suggests that this response relies on a particular understanding of paedophiles and men who relate sexually to children.

Kitzinger and Skidmore (1995) contend that, due to the intellectual and emotional difficulty attached to understanding adults who relate sexually to children, people find it is easier to ‘make sense’ of the phenomenon if it is perceived as something which happens in the public sphere and can therefore be shut out. Writing about sex crime panic in the United States from the 1920s to 1960s, Freedman (1983) explains that an image of aggressive male sexual deviance emerged from the psychiatric and political responses to sex crimes. This provided a focus for a complex redefinition of sexual boundaries in ‘modern America’; and the response to the ‘sexual psychopath’, Freedman suggests must be understood in the context of the history of sexuality. She continues that the male sexual deviant became the subject of special attention, particularly if he was inadequately masculine - an effeminate homosexual or hypermasculine - the sexual psychopath (1983: p87). Both inadequate and hyper masculine categories of deviant males were thought to attack children, simultaneously threatening innocence, gender roles and the social order. Kitzinger and Skidmore (1995) suggest that people often imagine men who behave sexually with children “to be ‘dirty’ with ‘staring eyes…when you see a photo you think, oh, yeah, I can tell” (p9).

**Discussion**

Most of our social and political knowledge and beliefs about the world derive from the many news reports we read or see every day. Evidence of the nature and ubiquity of the media discourse about paedophilia is not hard to find. The paedophile is a public, visible and punishable figure, whilst men’s sexual involvement with children in families is regarded as private, invisible and intractable (Collier, 2001).
Foucault (1977) pointed to the rise of disciplinary techniques that produce detailed information about people as either specific individuals or cases, or as instances of a categorical type about whom knowledge can be collected and circulated as information. This information can be used in turn in the identification and governance of others of the same type.

The gender-neutral term ‘the paedophile’ is often used in the media to define any adult who sexually relates to a child. De-gendering obscures the reality that most adults who relate in a sexual way with children are men. Jenkins (1998) has suggested that predators, psychopaths and paedophiles represent a minor component of the real sexual issues with which children and young people are faced. The dangerous outsiders that attract a disproportionate share of official attention represent easy targets. The stranger-danger construction continues to ensure that men’s sexual interaction with children occurring within the family slips from the public agenda. The media coverage of men who relate sexually with children has been aided by professional discourses that perpetuate the idea of scientific certainty and gender neutrality (Cowburn and Dominelli, 2001). Much media coverage has tended to be sensationalist and divert attention to a few individual and not necessarily representative cases; and to prioritise scapegoats (Parton et al., 1997).

Jenkins (1992) proposes that the power and resonance of a story will be augmented by the “degree to which it is assimilated to an existing stereotype” (p216). Despite the different behaviours indicative of adult sexual involvement with children, as discussed in Chapter 4, media coverage focuses on that of the ‘paedophile’. Our sense of what we are derives to an extent from pointing to what we ‘are not’, and the use of terms like ‘monster’ and ‘beast’ emphasise the social distance between readers of newspapers and the deviants they read about. The demonization of men who relate sexually to children serves to consolidate moral boundaries and promote social solidarity.
Greer (2003) remarks that representations of the most serious sex crimes are geared to offend the sensibilities of the reader and invoke shock reaction, with the construction of narratives that conjure images of ‘deviance’ and ‘normality’, and ‘good’ and ‘evil’ (p86). In the media, men involved sexually with children are ‘othered’. They are presented as outside what is ‘normal’ in society, and they are presented as outside even what is ‘normal’ in crime (Hall *et al.*, 1978, p31).

The findings from this research confirm how current media discourses also reinstate symbolic boundaries between deviant men and normal men. In the Irish newspapers, discourses of pathology and crime provide the dominant frameworks within which discussions of men relating sexually to children occur. The consequent focus on the pathology of these men involves scant regard for the social context of normative masculinity which shapes social expectations about men’s behaviour in particular ways. The images of men portrayed in the newspapers as paedophiles, are taken up by readers and perpetuate discourses that legitimate or ‘naturalize’ the existing social order especially in relation to power, sexuality and heteronormativity.

In modern societies, the complexities of public debates about social issues delimit areas of common morality but some perceived threats provoke universal condemnation, especially when that involves children (McRobbie and Thornton, 1995). Although conflicting opinions often make a social problem a public issue, for example in the case of capital punishment, valence issues are seen to only have one legitimate side. In relation to the issue of men’s sexual involvement with children, people battle over how to solve the agreed-upon social problem and not whether a social problem exists (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993; Nelson 1984).

We will see in Chapter 7 that in Ireland, public awareness about adult sexual involvement with children has been facilitated by media investigation and reporting. As Bhatia (2006) remarks, an interesting aspect of any discourse is its context, the processes that make the construction of discourse possible and how it achieves its social objectives. In Ireland as elsewhere, the media
coverage of adult male sexual involvement with children has focused largely on the dangerous and destructive ‘paedophile’ - itself a social construction which reinforces the notion of ‘stranger danger’ in the public sphere. Our ways of talking about and representing the world through text, images and symbols, all constitute discourses through which our subjective world is experienced (Burr, 2002). In this study, newspapers are not seen as simplistically ‘telling us what to think’. This may happen and the way people consider issues is to a large extend shaped by media sources, especially if those are the main sources from which a person gets information. Also implied in my argument is that as readers the shared ‘group norm’ is a joint project in which we all play a part. The readers may not want to explore the subsidiary discourses, especially if that means confronting unpalatable aspects of adult sexual involvement with children.

The world as we know and understand it is constructed and fashioned according to the discourses circulating in society at any given time in history. The way that discourses construct our experience can be examined by deconstructing the texts in which they appear and by showing how they present us with a particular version of the world. The newspaper reports reviewed for this research are constituents of, and constitute, discourse through which Irish readers connect with men who relate sexually to children. We will see in later chapters that these discourses consistently reflect meanings that are shared in our culture.

**Summary**

This chapter outlines some of the issues in relation to the production and construction of news. News print media do more than ‘reflect’ what is happening as a social reality. They can be key mechanisms in the construction of discourses and propagation of ideologies and they can influence profoundly the social and political responses to a variety of issues. Some of the prevailing media representations of men who interact sexually with children/the paedophile were discussed.
CHAPTER 7: (i)The Irish Context (ii) Media and Child Sex Abuse

This chapter comprises two sections. Section (i) presents an overview of Ireland’s economy and society and the enduring cultural connections between the Roman Catholic Church and the state. Traditionally the Catholic Church exercised an enormous amount of formal and informal power in both the political and social arenas. There was limited open debate about issues around sex and sexuality. The liberalising agenda was hastened by the civil rights and women’s movements as elsewhere in Europe. Substantial social and economic change has occurred in the Republic of Ireland in recent decades. During this time, there has been unprecedented economic development, increased participation in the labour force, especially of women, immigration and a decline in the dominance of the Catholic Church in terms of its social control. However, Ireland remains a relatively socially conservative society.

Section (ii) of this chapter looks at the print media in Ireland and the emergence to public notice of the issue of ‘child sex abuse’. This came to prominence largely as a result of a number of high profile cases and a series of news reports and documentary programmes on television.

(i) The Irish Context

Economy and Society

In Ireland, the last twenty five years or so has been a time of rapid social, economic and cultural change. This has had implications for different people in society, as the winners and losers in an expanding economy (O’Hearn, 1998; Allen, 2000). It is claimed that Ireland has been reinvented in the 1990s, Celtic Tiger Ireland is seen as a new social order (Kirby, 2002). Few would have envisioned how far-reaching changes would take the nation - internally in terms of its social attitudes and economic revitalization, and externally in its relations with others in the
world’s community. Economic development along the scale experienced, within the time frame realised and with the consequences for individual lifestyles and the nation’s psyche, sets the recent Irish experience apart among established democracies in the western world (Goldthorpe, *et al*., 1992; O’Gráda, 1997). In the economic sphere, although gains have been uneven across society, Ireland has moved from being perceived as a poor nation on the fringe of Europe, to a position of equality and economic leadership and influence among its European neighbours (Crotty and Schmitt, 1998).

Such a prospect after Independence from Britain in 1922 would have seemed unimaginable. At that time, Ireland was a rural, resource-poor, agriculture-based, non-industrial economy. Early difficulties since Independence were compounded by the economic and social policies pursued by Fianna Fail, the political party that held power for much of the state’s existence (Fanning, 1983). Those policies resulted in a haemorrhaging of the younger population through emigration. An increasingly ageing and conservative population remained, which failed to challenge the orthodoxies propagated by the political and administrative elite (Whyte, 1984). Towards the end of the 1950s, new leadership began to explore different social and economic models, which were somewhat less insular and more international in approach. The necessity of developing an export potential to sustain growth was realised, and according to Fanning (1983), there were more outward looking and dynamic ministers in government. Economic initiatives resulted in more tourism, increased foreign investment and increased participation in the labour force. Ireland began to be socially and culturally ‘opened-up’.

From the late 1960s, the Irish social and political landscape had also begun to change. Nationalist leaders in Northern Ireland adopted the rhetoric and logic of the civil rights movements in America and Europe. The language and the strategies of political mobilization of groups, traditionally excluded from the centre of the political apparatus, also appeared in the Republic of Ireland.
The pursuit of economic growth by the state, the arrival of television, the rise of civil rights movements and many other changes began to erode the Church monopoly over morality and personal life. Membership of the EEC (EU) in 1973 was a notable ‘defining event’ in economic and cultural change in Ireland. Through the 1970s, a breakdown of the conservative consensus and a growing sense of self-confidence led to more radical discourses including those that formed on gender, social class and civil rights. The liberalising agenda in relation to the discourse on sexuality was to have ramifications beyond the sexual arena. Challenges to the authority of the Church also “undermined their philosophy of the self, family and community” (Inglis, 1998: p6); and manifested itself in the news media in a more critical issue-based approach overcoming bland or pro-establishment coverage. Keating (2002) observes that this liberating media discourse, would lead incrementally to the revelations concerning clergy and their sexual involvement with children, which began in the 1980s. These revelations and the systematic cover-up by the church have been crucial in weakening the church’s hegemony (Ferguson, 1995).

The 1980s and 1990s had seen the development of what Keating (2002) terms the battleground between the old and the ‘new’ Ireland. He suggests that the two referenda in the 1980s, confirming the prohibition of Abortion (1983) and Divorce (1986) respectively, may be seen as the last great victories for Catholic pressure (Keating, 2002: p71). Mary Robinson was elected President of Ireland in 1990. Amongst other things, she admitted to being a non-practising Catholic and attacked what she viewed as the patriarchal church. Her election allowed for the prospect of a ‘new Ireland’.

In relation to social legislation, abortion remains illegal in the Republic of Ireland. The use of contraception was legalised in 1979; divorce has been legal in the State since 1996; and homosexuality was decriminalised in 1993.
Church and State

The once official acknowledgement within the Irish Constitution of the primacy of the Catholic Church was a reflection of a distinctive, and still significant religious orientation. The most visible, and contentious, symbol of this association between church and state, was Article 44 in Prime Minister DeValera’s 1937 Constitution (Irish Constitution, 1937a). This acknowledged the ‘special position’ of the Catholic Church in Ireland and recognised it ‘as the guardian of the Faith professed by the great majority of its citizen’s’. This Article was removed from the Constitution by referendum in 1972 (http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/index.asp?docID=262).

Tovey and Share (2003) remark that any sociological study of Ireland must reflect the importance of religion in the shaping of our contemporary society. Religion continues to have relevance in terms of everyday social life and the still central role of religious institutions. While declining over the years, the majority of the population of the Republic of Ireland identify as Roman Catholic. The share of Catholics in the population has fallen from 91.6 per cent in 1991 to 88.4 per cent in 2002, and to 87.4% in 2006 (CSO, 2004, 2007a). It is difficult to overstate the cultural enmeshment that has occurred between the Irish Catholic Church and the people of Ireland before and since Independence. The basis for the partnership between church and state in Ireland dates back to the middle 19th century, when in co-operation with Catholic political movements, the Church fought for control over schools, and developed a substantial role in the provision of hospital facilities (Hardiman and Whelan, 1998).

It has been argued that dominance in the education sphere, gave the Catholic Church a key role in the formal socialization of Irish citizens.

“Control over education, as was realised by the 19th century churchmen of all persuasions in all parts of the British Isles, was indeed a prize worth fighting for. The Catholic Church in Ireland got better terms from the British state than was achieved by any other
The Church in the 19th century played a critical role in the creation of a modern education system that ensured virtually universal literacy (Fahey, 1992). Control over education provided the clergy with a crucial power base, and combined with their general high status in Irish society, this gave them a dominant leadership role. The state had developed systems in the field of education and childcare which were run by a number of Catholic religious communities. The Daughters of Charity, Sisters of Mercy, Christian Brothers and others provided a service to the state at a relatively low cost and with a minimum of state involvement. The historical development of welfare institutions and many of the service-delivery aspects of the Irish welfare state is essentially tied up with the role of the church (Tovey and Share, 2003). The Catholic Church in Ireland became a ‘proxy’ state.

Keogh (1994, 1996) identifies several factors that enabled the Catholic Church to have a strong influence over the shaping of the dominant philosophy of the Irish State and over the legislation of that State. These factors include: the role that the Church played as the conservator of Irish culture prior to Independence; its influence in establishing the Irish State and legitimizing its existence; and a shared vision between Church and national leaders in Ireland’s formative years.

The politicians and administrators, who established the government of the Irish Free State in the 1920s, took over a vast administrative bureaucracy which had been developed by Britain - a wealthy imperial power with many resources at its disposal (Quinn et al., 1999). It is suggested that in the early phases of the developing nation, the overarching aim of the political and religious establishment was the realisation of the long-held dream of Irish Catholic nationhood (Keating, 2002). This resulted in the construction of a State based on the philosophy of Catholic Nationalism. It became a deeply conservative society and its values were steeped in
conservative Catholic traditions. In the early years, the state and the main political parties were content to form an alliance with the Church. It can be argued that the financially impoverished state came to rely on the Church for its institutional structure as much as for its moral leadership and cultural identity.

The disclosure that members of the clergy and religious orders were sexually involved with children did much to discredit the church, and undermine its moral authority to take a leading role in the governance of the state. The issue of clergy interacting sexually with children and young people presents an array of targets for the press (Keating, 2002: p77). In an Irish context, the words ‘priest’ and ‘paedophile’ have become increasingly matched. The pairing of these words is not only inaccurate but it is damaging to relations between individual clergy and the public, and to society’s ability to understand the phenomenon, that is men’s sexual involvement with children.

It must be acknowledged that the operation of the Catholic Church in Ireland, in terms of its influence over governments, and its propensity to be defensive in response to the issue of ‘clerical sex abuse’, produced an environment of secrecy. The Irish Catholic Church’s history helped to create a defensive, over-clericalised institution. According to Keating (2002) the Church was ill-equipped to deal with criticism of individual clergy and the handling of disciplinary or protection issues; it developed a cultural cocoon that protected it from reproach or question on an individual or societal level.

**Gender and sexuality**

Fahey (1987) remarks that the relationship between religion and gender in Ireland is not a simple one; while undoubtedly patriarchal, the churches did provide opportunities and support for women when there were few other avenues. In the spheres of health and education, religious life was one of the few ways that women could access positions of authority and responsibility
in Irish society (Mac Curtain, 1997). The family, in Ireland as elsewhere, has been identified as an important cultural component and symbol of collective identity and security. Ireland like many other western countries has seen major changes in the nature and structure of the family unit in recent times. Tovey and Share (2003) draw attention to key trends in demographic change. These include a decline in marriage, birth and fertility rates; later age of marriage; later age for first childbirth; increased numbers of births outside of marriage, smaller completed family size and an increase in the number of people remaining single (pp160-187). By 2001 births outside marriage made up nearly one-third of all births in Ireland, while lone parents – including separated and divorced parents – headed one in seven of all family units (Tovey and Share, 2003: p246). According to the National Census 33% of all births were outside of marriage in 2006.

Women and especially mothers were accorded a pivotal position in the Irish Constitution (McKeown et al., 1998). Article 41.2.1 states that: “The State recognises that by her life within the home, woman gives to the State a support without which the common good cannot be achieved” (Irish Constitution, 1937b). This closely reflected Catholic teaching at that time – 1937 - but continues to exert an influence over policy and law. Women had traditionally remained at home and taken the lead in ensuring the transmission of traditions and the catholic religion. Over the last thirty years in particular, configurations of family life have changed, and with that so too, the roles women were assumed to play within society (O’Connor, 1998). Forty-eight percent of the female labour force was in paid employment in 2006 (CSO, 2007b). Among other things, the changing roles of women in Irish society led to a diminution of female support for and their long-standing loyalty to the Church and its hierarchy.

Although there is a greater diversity of family forms than was the case, the traditional model of family, and its related roles of father and mother, remains strong in Ireland. Changing expectations about what constitutes ‘a good father’ according to McKeown et al. (1998), mean that “investment without involvement in the family no longer carries the esteem it once did”
Kennedy (2001) suggests that like Australia and Britain, Irish society is built on a strong male breadwinner model (pp92-96).

Ferguson (1995) comments that Irish men have traditionally been represented in de-sexualised ways. He also suggests that in recent years the practices that constitute masculinity in Ireland are changing, as Irish men’s lives are being reconfigured around a number of social and economic processes (Ferguson, 2002: p122). In relation to sex and sexuality, Inglis asserts that because of church influence, the clergy as celibate men helped to create a silence, awkwardness and embarrassment about sexual matters (Inglis, 1998). He suggests that the successful implementation of the strategies, which controlled sex, desire and self-fulfilment, was central to the Church developing and maintaining a monopoly over morality and family life. The Church’s influence on the introduction of legislation prohibiting contraception and divorce, and the passing of censorship legislation, was in line with the requirements of Catholic morality.

According to Ferguson (2002) in the context of building a nation, Irish cultural practices drew strongly on racial imagery. He asserts that both Church and state combined deliberately to construct masculinity and femininity to stress the difference between the Irish and the colonizers. This was expressed in terms of sexual purity and was demonstrated in clerical obsession with things such as ‘evil literature’, contraception and the ‘unmarried mother’. The control of sex and the protection of the family had been central to the establishment of the Irish State. De Valera’s romantic vision was of an Ireland of small family farms, frugal living, self-sufficiency and national independence. According to Ni Laoire (2002), this ideology was also highly gendered. The construction of an Irish rural masculinity was closely associated with land-ownership, control of property and the authority of a powerful father-figure (Martin, 1997). Femininity became more closely associated with domesticity and motherhood. This construction of masculinity and femininity was shaped in part by Catholicism, but also by Irish nationalist ideology, which placed the woman in the home and the man in the public realm (Ni Laoire, 2002: p19). The masculinity of the ‘good Irishman’ involved both morality and manliness.
Traditional masculinity in Ireland was essentially rural, based around the family, marriage or indeed celibacy as Ferguson (2002) remarks that having a son a priest was a status symbol (p120).

In a section entitled ‘Ending the Silence on Sex’, Inglis (1998) states that due to dominance of the Catholic Church in the field of Irish sexuality well into the second half of the 20th century, sexuality tended not to be discussed in public life and the media: “Anything said or written was within the ethos and language of the Catholic Church. If sexuality was mentioned, it was referred to discretely and obliquely. It was a delicate, sensitive issue. To talk about it directly could weaken and destroy innocent minds and souls. The Church was the authority on sexuality” (Inglis, 1998: p38).

For a long time, it was in the interest of the state and the Church to maintain control over discourses of morality. However, the type of society which was reflected in the church’s vision of life was rapidly becoming out-of-tune with the needs and interests of Irish people who began to enjoy prosperity and demanded individual freedom. A coherent and radically focused women’s movement emerged in the 1970s and brought a new and distinct voice to social and political discourse (Tovey and Share, 2003). The role of movements such as the women’s movement in breaking the Church’s monopoly on the discourse over matters of sexuality has been acknowledged and identified as a major event in the weakening of Church power in Ireland. The development of pressure groups with an agenda which focused on individual and collective freedoms rather than one determined by the hierarchy, and designed to further the Catholic mission, were important actors in the re-casting of the Irish sexual landscape: “the initial resistance came from women, and then the challenge was taken up by various interest groups supporting in general, secular liberal individualism, which in turn were supported by the media and the state” (Inglis, 1997: p6).
The issue over who controlled the discourse on sexual matters has clear implications for the communication on issues of sex and sexual morality. The church control of this discourse essentially concealed any real discussion on the issue outside of a theological or medical nature. Challenges to the status quo has come from women’s groups, and gay and lesbian groups; in addition dissention from the Catholic ethos of the state, as well as a self-awareness prompted in part by affiliation with other European countries, have altered the social and cultural nature of contemporary Ireland.

Traditional ways of being men are seen to be under threat, and there is a wider social and political disparaging of men and masculinities. A self-help group for ‘male victims of domestic violence’ Abused Men (Amen) was established in Ireland in 1998. It impacted in terms of placing the issue of domestic violence by women against men on the public agenda. Ferguson (2002, p: 128) argues that advocates for Amen fall within a wider masculinity politics that advocates on behalf of men’s rights at the expense of a broader equality agenda. John Waters a campaigning columnist in The Irish Times has written explicitly anti-feminist and aggressive articles about ‘feminazis’ and the ‘domestic violence industry’ (Mac an Ghaill et al, 2004). According to Ferguson (2002), issues such as male victims of domestic violence and writers such as Waters have had a distinct effect on gender politics in Ireland, at the same time as there is a media fatigue with women’s issues. For some commentators anti-sexist policy initiatives have gone too far, with boys seen as the new victims of contemporary gender arrangements.

In Ireland, the pilot provision and subsequent withdrawal of an educational module (Exploring Masculinities) in boys’ second-level schools, evolved into a critical issue and serves to illustrate a particular cultural flashpoint. In an article in The Irish Times, journalist John Waters remarked that “Exploring Masculinities is a flabby, intellectually dishonest vehicle for the implanting by stealth of feminist ideologies in the heads of teenage boys” (2000: p56). It seemed that a conflation of unrelated issues became caught up in the mobilization of debates related to ‘Exploring Masculinities’ (EM). Exploring Masculinities was one of a number of optional
SPHE (social, personal and health education) modules that were offered to boys in single-sex schools during the Transition Year (approx aged 15/16 yrs) or senior cycle of post-primary schooling. EM was developed between 1995 and 1997 by the Department of Education and Science and the Association of Secondary Teachers of Ireland (ASTI). After a pilot phase, it was launched in 2000. The rationale proposed by the Department, as the immediate context for the EM Programme, was the absence of a gender equality programme in boy’s schools (Mac an Ghaill et al., 2004). An early evaluation of the programme explained that a fundamental premise of the EM Programme is that masculinity is a social construct (Gleeson et al, 1999). Critics considered the notion that masculinity could be seen as socially constructed to be dangerous to young males in schools. It was suggested that if boys could be ‘deconstructed’ by the EM programme, they could then be ‘reconstructed’ into girls, or feminized boys, according to a ‘global feminist agenda’ (Mac an Ghaill et al 2004. p113). Much of the criticisms reflected concerns about broader societal issues that were not specific to EM but which it was understood to exemplify. As such, EM became a tangible, recognisable, nameable phenomenon, capable of holding and conveying unease and disagreement about social change and social discontent originating at national and global levels.

Section (ii) Media and Child Sex Abuse

The Media in Ireland – Newspapers

During the 19th Century, newspapers were actively mobilised in support of nationalist and unionist politics (Tovey and Share, 2003). The development of the media in Ireland has been tied up with the emergence of the nation state, and with the ‘identity’ of that nation. Modern Irish media – in the sense of media aimed at a mass market rather than a political constituency – date essentially from the early years of the 20th Century.
The Irish Independent and The Sunday Independent founded in 1905, were according to Horgan (2001) “the voice of the increasingly wealthy, articulate and mildly nationalist Catholic middle class” (p1). According to the Joint National Readership Survey (JNRS), The Irish Independent has the highest readership of any daily newspaper 566,000 (2005), and while it has general appeal across social groups, Ferguson and McKinnon (2001: p44) assert that it has a large rural audience, and is more populist and somewhat less analytical, than The Irish Times. The Sunday Independent has the largest readership figures for a Sunday newspaper (1.13 million in 2005). From the 1980s onwards, the Sunday Independent reporting style emphasised on controversial opinion columns, gossip and fashion (Horgan, 2001). Originally seen as the voice of Southern Unionism, The Irish Times was founded in 1859. According to Horgan (2001) at its inception The Irish Times represented articulate, moneyed, Protestants with tendencies towards Liberalism. The Irish Times is now considered to be a quality broadsheet and the national ‘paper of record’, with a daily readership in 2005 of 341,000. It sells largely in the greater Dublin area, reflecting its appeal to an urban professional readership (Ferguson and McKinnon, 2001: p43-44).

The Sunday World was launched in 1973 as a national Sunday tabloid. Commentators remark that as a publication The Sunday World “had absorbed many insights from its UK competitors”. It adopted a campaigning mode, including collecting money for deserving causes, and it had a ‘problem page’ – the first of its kind in Ireland (Horgan, 2001: pp108-9). The Sunday World had a readership of 768,000 in 2005.

Over the review period for this research 2003-2005, there were six daily newspapers and nine Sunday titles on sale in Ireland.
Table 1: National Readership Figures 2003 – 2005

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<td>Population Aged 15+</td>
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<td><strong>Daily Titles</strong></td>
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<td>Irish People</td>
<td>145,000</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
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Based on readership by any adult (aged 15+)

Source: Joint National Readership Survey (JNRS) 2003 - 2005
Conducted by Lansdowne Market Research

Ferguson and McKinnon (2001) remark that the relatively non-tabloid nature of the Irish press is part due to the strict nature of the libel laws which restrict aggressive investigative journalism, while the Catholic Church had heavily regulated discourses and images surrounding socio-moral issues. Censorship has played a powerful role in stopping more explicit sexualised discourses reaching the public domain. Those who own and control the media operate in the market place; and the editors and journalists who worked for them were quick to see and exploit the movement away from Catholic orthodoxies (Inglis, 1997). These developments coincided with the gradual easing of press censorship, the internationalisation of the media generally, and a more campaigning and investigative approach from the Irish media (Coogan, 1987; Horgan, 2001). A mixture of geographical, political, and cultural influences has shaped the production of print and broadcast media in Ireland. In recent years there have been other influences, shared
with media in the developed world generally such as technological change, commercialisation and the enhanced competition especially from web based media sources.

Horgan, an expert on Irish media, remarks that we have seen the emergence of distinct trends affecting both the production and content of Irish media (Horgan, et al., 2007: p35). One trend is that of increasing foreign ownership. Market penetration by British print and broadcast media has been one of the features of the Irish media system. The Irish appetite for Sunday newspapers has always been substantial, and for years the proportion of British newspapers sold on Sundays has been very high (Horgan, 2001). Irish editions of British publications have become popular on a national level e.g. *The Irish Daily Star, The Irish Sun, The Sunday Times.*

*Independent News and Media Group* is the dominant player in the Irish newspaper industry and almost 80 per cent of newspapers sold in Ireland in 2006 were sold by companies which are fully or partially owned by the Independent Group (Treutzschler, 2004; Horgan, et al., 2007). A more diverse ownership pattern might give rise to a wider range of political positions. Chubb remarks that in the early 1980s, Irish journalists were generally trusted and held in high esteem by the public (Chubb, 1992). According to Horgan, *et al.,* (2007) that situation began to change when the British popular tabloids began to take a greater interest in the Irish market: “they brought a different tradition, different practices, and a different emphasis compared to Irish journalism. They pushed sport, sex and the cult of celebrity and they pushed stories about the private lives of public people, something that had not been done previously in Ireland” (p45).

Treutzschler (2004, p116) comments that “most Irish newspapers are politically liberal and have a middle class orientation”. However, it is important to distinguish the political positions of journalists from those of the organisations that employ them. The ownership of the Irish media is in a few hands and the editorial position of much of the industry is generally held to be centre-right. There may be no correlation between Irish journalists’ political beliefs and those of the news organisations for which they work (Horgan, *et al* 2007: p43). Laffan and O’ Donnell
(1998) remark that the media have been part of the modernisation of Irish society and culture; in particular a shift from a “relatively homogenous, closed, Catholic culture’ to ‘an open, pluralist culture today’ which is based not on a single fixed identity but on a multiplicity of identities” (Tovey and Share, 2003: p419).

‘Child sexual abuse’ as a public issue in Ireland

Lalor (2001) remarks that it is unlikely that we shall ever know the extent of child sexual abuse as it occurred in Ireland for much of the 20th Century and earlier. It existed extensively enough as a phenomenon to warrant legislative action such as the 1908 Punishment of Incest Act that criminalised incest in Ireland. However, Mark Finnane writing in Irish Historical Studies (2001) gives some indication of its significance in the 1920s. Reviewing convictions for sexual assaults on children he remarks: “…of particular note is the frequency of sexual assaults involving a female victim of under 10 years of age…..; …over the 3 years 1927-29, more than a third of prosecutions involved offences against girls under 13 years of age” (p532). Over those years, the increasing number of prosecutions for sexual assaults against boys is also noted. The reporting of these crimes is itself noteworthy and it suggests the police’s effort in relation to these offences, which were noted as “difficult to prove and shameful to be involved in” (Finnane, 2001: p532). Ferguson (1996) comments that of the approximately half a million children who came into contact with the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) between 1889-1955, fewer than one percent of the cases involved sexual abuse. He suggests that “in a traditional order characterised by cultural denial, patriarchal social relations and repression, sexual abuse was not classified and worked with in practice” (Ferguson, 1997: p31). It appears that the concept of adults relating sexually to children simply did not exist within the public domain in any meaningful sense; and Lalor (2001) comments that “society was neither sensitised to its existence nor educated as to its insidiousness” (p8).
Schools established under the Industrial Schools Act (1868), were intended to cater for children with difficulty family circumstance, orphans, those who were absent from school and whose lifestyles were putting them at risk of offending (Barnes, 1989). From the Industrial Schools Act, to the eventual decline of industrial schools in 1969, over 105,000 children were placed in this state care system. The numbers of industrial schools peaked in 1900 with 8,000 children in 71 schools. By 1969, there were 2,000 children in 29 schools (O’Riordan and Arensmann, 2007). The civil service confidence in the Church’s ability to provide care for vulnerable children was shared by the vast majority in the wider community.

In Ireland, a number of high profile cases of adult male sexual involvement with children were highlighted in the 1990s, and their unprecedented media coverage ensured that the topic of sexual involvement with children remained in the public consciousness. These cases included:

- The Kilkenny Incest Case (McGuinness, 1993) in which a girl was sexually abused by her father over a 15 year period.
- Madonna House was a residential home for children, operated by the Sisters of Charity. In 1993, allegations of sexual abuse and other misconduct were made against a number of members of staff there. The subsequent criminal investigation led to the conviction of a member of staff for various indecency offences.
- Sophia McColgan was sexually and physically abused by her father (1976-1991), during which time the local health board had almost 400 contacts with the family. The father was sentenced in 1995 to 238 years, the longest cumulative total in Irish legal history. In 1997, there was extensive media coverage of the McColgan family’s suing of the Health Board and family doctor, and the courageous high profile media presence adopted by Sophia McColgan the woman at the centre of the story (McKay, 1998).

In 1994, the Irish Catholic Bishops’ Conference convened an Advisory Committee to advise on a Church response to accusations of child sexual abuse by priests and member of religious
orders, and to develop Church policy on this issue. This initiative was at least partly the result of a massive public outcry at the apparent lack of concern shown by the Church for the victims of ‘child sexual abuse’. The case of Fr. Brendan Smyth seemed to indicate to the public that for many years Church authorities preferred to deny and hide his actions by moving him from parish to parish rather than recognise the nature of his behaviour as a crime and its traumatic effects (Moore, 1995).

Not just an Irish phenomenon, Jenkins (1996) notes the words of a journalist commenting on a case of ‘clerical sexual misconduct’ in Massachusetts in the mid 1970s:

“if any priest had any sexual problem or was involved in a compromising incident – even if it involved an arrest – the diocese could prevail upon the local papers not to write about it and upon the district attorney’s office not to prosecute. To reveal a priest’s shortcomings was akin to blasphemy in the eyes of diocesan officials, and they were ever-vigilant against such disclosures” (p61).

Regarding the case of Brendan Smyth, Ferguson (1995) comments:

“Since the Smyth affair began, the media have made constant reference to the notion of ‘the paedophile priest’. In tandem with the invention of a new category of sex offender, the construction of the ‘paedophile priest’ relied on powerful visual imagery. From the outset of the affair, the media has relentlessly used the same photograph of Brendan Smyth’s face so that it has become the embodiment of the greatest demon in modern Ireland” (p249).
Inglis (1997) suggests that a sense of indignation and desire to blame, led the media to actively expose the nature of clerical abuse:

“in the same way as the church had hunted out the masturbatory child, the fornicator, the childless couple, and the homosexual, the bourgeoisie – particularly the media – hunted out those they felt were the cause of their sexual repression; that is the paedophile priest, the promiscuous bishop, the abusive nun or brother” (p15).

Displacement of the traditional power of the Catholic Church has been a complex process that cannot be reduced to any single causative factor (Inglis, 1998). However, the social problem of ‘child sex abuse’ is a key site around which the configuration of gender and power relations and masculinities has occurred (Ferguson, 2002: p123). A series of clerical ‘scandals’ and clergy sexual involvement with children - some of whom were known to the Church hierarchy but not reported or brought to justice by them - has dramatically weakened the Church’s moral authority (Moore, 1995).

The publication of the results of a survey of sexual abuse and violence in Ireland (SAVI) (McGee et al., 2002) was a landmark event in the documenting of sexual abuse. The SAVI Report was based on the results of a survey commissioned by the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre. Over 3,000 members of the public were questioned about their attitudes, beliefs and their own lifetime experiences of sexual abuse and violence. The publication of this first national study gives us an insight into the extent and nature of some of the adult-child sex experienced by the population. Based on the results of the 2002 survey, taking the child as under 17 years of age, it was found that in Ireland about one-third of women, and a quarter of men experienced some level of sexual interaction with an adult in childhood. In terms of the adults sexually involved with those young people, the vast majority (89%) were men acting alone, while 7% were women acting alone. A relatively small percentage of adults fitted the ‘stereotype’ of sexual
abusers of children: strangers were in the minority, over 80% of children knew the adult involved and clerical/religious ministers or clerical/religious teachers constituted 3.2% of adults.

In Ireland as elsewhere, there are stories and reports in the media on a daily basis, about men sexually involved with children. In Ireland, the media played a significant role in the exposure of the physical and sexual abuse of children by priests and other members of religious orders. This media coverage has had a number of effects. The Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse, and the Act (2000) of the same name, came into being as a direct result of a series shown on television States of Fear (Raftery and O’Sullivan, 1999). This television series profiled the widespread physical and sexual abuse of children in Ireland’s Industrial Schools and schools for the disabled in the 1950s and 1960s. After a Third Interim Report, published in January 2004, Ms. Justice Laffoy resigned as chairperson, from the Commission. She was replaced by Justice Ryan and in May 2009 the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse produced its final report. The ‘Ryan Report’ revealed widespread and seemingly systematic abuse of children in institutional care over a number of years. Since its publication, there has been massive media coverage and public outcry at the way men and women in religious congregations have abused children.

**Discussion**

The last decades have been a time of enormous change in the society and economy of the Republic of Ireland. With a history of economic recession and social conservatism, from the late 1980s, Irish society is more accepting of internal dissent. Better economic conditions have led to increased immigration and a greater receptivity to external influences. The traditional power and influence of the Catholic Church has decreased and the historical association between that Church and the Irish state has weakened.
French sociologist Sorlin (1994) remarks “there is no immunity against the media. Even people who never read a newspaper and have no television set are surrounded by messages, be it only advertisements stuck on walls” (p17). In relation to the ‘uncovering of sexual abuse of children’, the Irish media have played a major role by revealing the extent of a problem that had been hidden for decades. Since the 1980s, there has been increasing coverage of cases of ‘child sexual abuse’ in the Irish media. Journalists revealed situations where children had been used sexually by men in state care institutions, schools, churches, and in some cases within families. 

Irish public discourse now began to include references to adult sexual involvement with children, power, authority and cover-ups. Initial revelations were dramatic. However, over the years, there has been a notable lack of critical engagement with the social complexities of man-child sexual interaction as a phenomenon, or possible links to the social practices involved in its existence.

Media coverage of clergy who had been sexually involved with children may have contributed to a decrease in public religious observance but more especially a diminution of respect for the institutional Catholic Church. The cultural significance of the priest in addition to his sexual behaviours fuelled and sustained an outcry towards the figure of the ‘paedophile priest’, despite little evidence that clergymen are more or less likely than any one else to have a sexual interest in children. One can only speculate that for the collective Irish consciousness, public awareness of clergymen being sexually involved with children resonated more deeply than its occurrence in other countries. While in addition, the absence of traditional secular authoritative institutions left a residual vacuum at these times of scandal.

Multiculturalism is an issue that is only beginning to emerge in Ireland, though it has been of importance in the western world in terms of religious change (Tovey and Share, 2003). However, despite modernising tendencies, a fairly traditional model of masculinity emerges from press discourses. This is clear from the review of newspapers undertaken for this study.
Stereotypical markers of men and sexuality pervade news reports. There will be further discussions of these issues in Chapters 8 and 9.

The research literature points to the occurrences of adult male sexual involvement with children in the Western World through history, and there have of course been instances in Ireland. However, the public acknowledgement of this in Ireland, as elsewhere, was absent. Over the last twenty years, the first public murmurings of these activities came to light in reports of priests and religious men who had been involved sexually with children and young people. Official statistics suggest that clergymen comprise a small overall percentage of men who sexually interact with children (McGee et al., 2002). Nonetheless the media-created ‘paedophile priest’ caricature has acted as an emotive totem in Ireland in recent years. The public disclosure of clergymen and their sexual involvement with children served as a ‘trigger event’ over a number of years. A trigger event invites emotional reaction and identification. Adult male sexual involvement with children symbolises a valence issue with one dominant definition of its cause and remedy; and its portrayal in the media creates points of resonance with public sensitivities.

The reaction to ‘clerical sex abuse’ and the erosion of deference shown to the Church and its clergy, runs parallel to the modernising strands which have compromised the Church’s power (Plante, 2004). In Ireland, the abhorrence for the phenomenon has been initially located in the figure of the ‘paedophile priest’, which conveniently acts as a deflector from the much wider social involvement at work in any sexual relations between adults and children.

Irish newspapers are reviewed for this study and it may be the case that the research findings represent the peculiarities of the Irish context only. However, in addition to limited debate about sexual issues, due to religious influence and political abdication, we must see Ireland in its Western cultural context. That context precludes discussion of men’s sexual involvement with children and indeed the framing of any debate on that topic incorporating different perspectives. We have seen in previous chapters that Foucault proposed that the discourses that we engage in provide us with a frame of reference, a way of interpreting the world and assigning meaning to it. Dominant discourses circulated through the media can conceal the possibilities of alternative
positions. This research shows that in relation to men who relate sexually to children, the exclusion of certain perspectives through the mainstream media facilitates the silencing and marginalisation of some people, while reifying and legitimating dominant discourse.

Summary

This research study critically analyses the discourses constructing the paedophile in Irish newspapers. It is important to set the newspapers and Irish society in a context. This chapter presents an overview of the social, economic and political dynamics in Ireland. There is particular focus on the Catholic Church and its influence on social and political aspects of Irish life. The importance of the media in terms of its role in society and bringing child sex abuse to public attention in Ireland is discussed.
PART C

Chapter 8: This Study – Research Findings

Chapter 9: Conclusion
CHAPTER 8: THIS STUDY - RESEARCH FINDINGS

This Research Study

Against the background of the literature reviewed and discussion of the role of the media in (re)presenting information of public interest, this chapter focuses on the present study in terms of the research methodology used; the selection of a sample of news reports for analysis; and the rationale for these choices. The findings from a critical analysis of media discourses are discussed.

In order to carry out this research it is necessary to explore understandings of adult male sexual interaction with children and perspectives on gender and masculinities. As I have shown in previous chapters, there are a variety of perspectives from which these issues are viewed; and it is also important to note how some perspectives and explanations carry certain authoritative weight and fuse into cultural assumptions. Many people receive their only ‘legitimate’ information in relation to men’s sexual involvement with children from media sources. In earlier chapters, I have shown how the news media inform and construct popular discourses. Through an exploration of the media representations of men who relate sexually with children, I believe we gain some insight into how the media discourses both reflect and inflect our cultural consciousness. I suggest that these discourses and culturally assumed norms in turn, mask a pervasive societal anxiety in relation to men’s sexual involvement with children.

This chapter outlines the findings from an examination of men and masculinities as they are portrayed in representations of ‘the paedophile’ in Irish newspapers. The study critically analyses these media discourses and explores its possible connections to the wider social and political context. It is important to be clear at the outset what is meant here by ‘masculinity’ and the kind of analytical framework that is used to examine masculinities and the gender order in
particular times and places. We have seen in Chapter 3, a variety of ways in which gender and masculinity have been, and continue to be understood. Accepting gender as a social practice means it is inherently involved with other social practices and structures. Within this analytical framework then, any study of men and masculinities demands critical and explicitly gendered analysis. Connell’s concept of hegemonic masculinity has been influential in this context and refers to dominant prescribed ways of being a man that emphasise heterosexuality, power, success, non-victimisation and control. The study of masculinities as configurations of practice (Connell, 1995) does not mean focusing in any simple sense on issues of character or men’s personalities. It requires us to examine the shifting nature of power relations within the gender order and the processes and relationships through which men and women conduct gendered lives (Ferguson, 2002). While in their very dominance, men are everywhere to be seen, the social relations and practices, which sustain and constitute masculinity, have remained curiously invisible (Ferguson, 1995, p251). There are evident ideological and political struggles connected to the changing concept of masculinity, and notions of ‘men and masculinity’ are likely to remain, to some extent idealized products, representative of both the social conditions of the time and dominant ideological or discursive ‘truths’.

In Chapter 2, we saw how epistemologies inform theoretical perspectives. What counts as knowledge and truth may vary, but certain knowledge and forms of knowledge generation are often more valued than others. It is clear that legal, medical and psychological perspectives - grounded in scientific methods, retain an ideological hegemony in the context of adult sexual interaction with children. One result of this is the classification of the paedophile, and his demarcation as a criminal, ill, treatable or untreatable man, separate from other men and society.

There are multiple institutional supports and various social structures and practices underlying the production of truth. Said (1983) notes:
“...the will to exercise control in society and history has also discovered a way to clothe, disguise, rarefy and wrap itself systematically in the language of truth, discipline, rationality, utilitarian value, and knowledge. And this language in its naturalness, authority, professionalism, assertiveness and antitheoretical directness is...discourse” (p216).

According to Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) the concept of hegemony, employed in studying media representations of men, helps to make sense of both the diversity and the selectiveness of images in the mass media. From its initial formulation hegemonic masculinity embodied the currently most honoured way of being a man. Other men are positioned in relation to the hegemonic ideal and marital status, family, employment and sexuality are significant components of that.

I was interested to examine how a man and his masculine practices are represented in newspaper reports, and the discourses in which he is constructed and reconstructed. It is necessary to ‘operationalise’ masculinity as a heuristic device to some extent, in order to explore media representations of the masculinities of these men.

The newspapers were searched using the terms ‘paedophile’ and ‘paedophilia’ and hundreds of items containing these words were returned. These included articles, opinion pieces, letters, court reports, editorials and film and book reviews. The vast majority of these reported on ‘issues’ - as outlined below in Table 2 (p173) - such as community notification, sex offender registration, institutional abuse. Those that contained details of the man often did not give much information about him as a person and his personal circumstances, but rather focused mainly on his offending and abusive behaviours.
There were considerably fewer articles/reports containing some personal details of the man and his masculine practices, and these were selected for further analysis. As this is not a quantitative research study, the sample of texts for analysis was not specified to be of a particular size, nor is it intended that the findings be generalised and statistical inference is not an objective. In the context of this research study the number of texts selected is of less importance than the criteria used in their selection.

The selection of texts was informed by themes identified in the masculinities’ literature. I wanted to explore how the men, reported as relating sexually with children, are portrayed ‘as men’ and with references to some of what are considered to be facets of masculinity such as marital status, family, employment, and sexuality. Using this as the sample selection criteria, approximately thirty articles referring to the man and his masculine practices were critically analysed. This sample provided sufficient material to explore the concept of representation in the context of this study.

Certainly not the only source of information about adults who relate sexually to children, press discourse is one cultural form which has devoted an enormous amount to this issue in recent years (Greer, 2003, p140). News media may reflect the social world but are also liable to construct how and why issues are represented. This research examines how a man constructed as a paedophile is portrayed, and demonstrates the social and political implications of those discursive representations avoiding the problematization of normative masculinity.

**Review of Newspapers**

Four newspapers publications from the years 2003 to 2005 are reviewed for this study. It is important to contextualise this study with reference to some of the relevant major news stories of that time. Newspapers from the UK and Irish versions of British titles are widely available in the Republic of Ireland, as are other British media e.g. television and radio. Thus, many of the
news stories covered there are shared with an Irish readership and audience. Some of the stories ‘making the news’ in Ireland could originate in Britain and/or resonate with some of the reported stories there. Issues such as arrests for viewing and possession of child pornography, the murders in Britain of Sarah Payne aged 9 (in 2000) and the double murders of Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman both aged 10 years (in 2002) were high profile news stories. While reports of clergy involved sexually with children during these years, were widely reported in the newspapers. These events provided opportunities for discussion of issues such as child safety and protection; sex offender registration and notification; employment prohibitions and clerical celibacy among others.

**Table 2: Some topics featured in news reports in relation to the paedophile/ paedophilia:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Catholic Church:</th>
<th>moral bankruptcy; church cover-ups; priests moved from parish to parish; demands for compensation; celibacy; calls for apologies; investigation set up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Technology:</td>
<td>dangers of mobile ‘phone and internet technology; unsupervised chatrooms need for protective measures; paedophile networks; internet pornography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Abuse:</td>
<td>denials of responsibility; demands for compensation, calls for apologies; investigative tribunal established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex Offenders Registration:</td>
<td>proposed tagging of paedophiles; employment checks; community notification</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the newspapers over that period there were reports in relation to sex offender registration, employment restrictions, dangers of internet chat rooms, abuse of children while in state care institutions, possible secret use of cameras on mobile ‘phones, clerical celibacy, demands for compensation for victims of abuse, church cover-ups and famous figures who as adults were sexually involved with children. In the latter instance, the cases of Gary Glitter, Jonathan King, Pete Townshend and Michael Jackson were featured in reports. In relation to the Irish context,
there were some discussion pieces and letters referring to the arrest of a celebrity chef for possession of child pornography and allegations that Roger Casement and Patrick Pearse, both important figures in Irish history, had a sexual interest in children.

Four major Irish newspapers were reviewed for the years 2003, 2004 and 2005. These were two daily newspapers - *The Irish Times* and *The Irish Independent* (both broadsheet publications); and two Sunday Titles - *The Sunday Independent* (broadsheet) and *The Sunday World* (tabloid). The readership figures for these publications for the years 2003 – 2005 are shown in the Table 3 below. The newspapers were reviewed through the *Lexis Nexis Professional* database, which has a selection of international newspaper titles, and through reviewing hard copies of *The Sunday World*, which was not publicly available in digital format at the time of this study.

### Table 3: Readership of the newspaper reviewed in this Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>The Irish Independent</th>
<th>The Irish Times</th>
<th>The Sunday Independent</th>
<th>The Sunday World</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number (000s)</td>
<td>% of Pop aged 15+</td>
<td>Number (000s)</td>
<td>% of Pop aged 15+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>532</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>612</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
<td>323</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>566</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on readership by any adult (aged 15+)
Source: Joint National Readership Survey (JNRS)
Conducted by Lansdowne Market Research

**Search Terms; Selection of Material**

As discussed in previous chapters there is substantial variation in terminology used to describe sexual interaction between men and children, and differing opinions as to what constitutes sexual relations and indeed what ages demarcate childhood. Here, the retrieval and selection of newspaper articles for analysis was achieved in two phases. From the research and popular literature reviewed during the course of this research, it is clear the term ‘paedophile’ is often
used interchangeably with child sex abuser, child sex offender, child molester, child lover, user of child pornography etc. It is used as an umbrella term, covering multiple contexts and instances of men interacting sexually with children. Across the four newspapers, ‘Paedophile’ and ‘paedophilia’ were used as search terms to locate news reports of men and their sexual involvement with children. Phase 1 consisting of this initial search returned hundreds of articles and covered the topics referred to above (see Table 2). These were reviewed, and those articles that contained information in relation to the men involved and their masculine practices were selected for further analysis. In Phase 2, the content of these articles and the discourses therein were critically analysed and related to the social, political and cultural context in Ireland during that time period. This selection process is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Sample Selection: newspapers, newspaper articles

Phase One: Over the period of the three years and across the four newspapers reviewed, the news reports retrieved after a search for ‘paedophilia’ and ‘paedophile’ included articles, opinion pieces, letters, court reports, editorials and film and book reviews. They focussed on cases of sexual interaction between a man and a child or children, and on wider dimensions of the topic.

Phase Two: The second phase of the search involved a focus on reports that contained references to the personal details and masculine practices of the man reported to have been sexually involved with a child/children. This selection was informed by my reading of the literature on masculinities, and as such the themes apparent in the text are the basis for their
selection. The articles/reports which included these references were transcribed for further analysis. Critical Discourse Analysis - as the approach used in this study - allows us to relate the text and discourses from the Irish newspapers to a wider material reality in Irish society.

Overall, the sample of reports largely detailed men’s sexual involvement with children outside a family context. There were more news stories about men relating sexually with boys than with girls; and there was one report of a woman accused of having sexual contact with a girl.

**Themes**

For the purposes of this project, traditional aspects of masculinity were taken as masculine practices. The reports for analysis contain some references to the ‘masculine practices’ of men identified as relating sexually with children.

The newspaper reports are broadly grouped here (Table 4 below) into four *themes*: (1) viewing/possession of internet child pornography; (2) sexual involvement between a father/relative and a child within a family context; (3) clergymen involved sexually with children; and (4) men involved sexually with a boy/boys.

**Table 4: Themes – men relating sexually to children**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme One</th>
<th>Internet child pornography</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme Two</td>
<td>Man – child sexual interaction within family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme Three</td>
<td>Clergyman - child sexual interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme Four</td>
<td>Man - boy sexual interaction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These themes have been derived as a framework in which to present the excerpts from the newspaper reports reviewed. The themes broadly constitute different contexts for men’s sexual
involvement with children, as reported in the newspapers. In some of the reports, one or more of these themes could be present. For example, a clergyman involved sexually with a boy overlaps Themes 3 and 4, or an uncle sexually involved with a nephew spans Themes 2 and 4.

Overall, the themes of both clergymen and laymen relating sexually to boys are the most common across the newspapers. The excerpts, as edited verbatim transcriptions from the newspaper reports, are presented in date order in Appendix One. Some contextual information is given in brackets as explanation when required. The publication and date are given after each excerpt. What follows in the next section are examples of these news reports presented under each theme.

**THEME ONE: Internet Child Pornography**

Adult sexual involvement with children is not new, nor is the practice of putting these images into print for consumption by those who take gratification from it. The criminalisation of both adult-child sexual activity and the production and possession of child pornography is a relatively recent phenomenon.

The terms paedophile, child sex abuser and child pornography user are used interchangeably. There is some agreement that child pornography and child sex abuse are inexorably linked (O'Donnell and Milner, 2007; Healy, 1996) as in the majority of cases, child pornography cannot be produced without a child being sexually abused. It is clear, that the Internet provides an environment for the proliferation of child pornography (Krone, 2004). Child pornography existed before the creation of the Internet. It is not clear whether the advent of web-based technology has fuelled the demand for child pornography and expanded an existing market, or whether it simply caters for that market in new ways.
Following an FBI investigation in the United States, names and details of Irish based subscribers to a child pornography website were passed to the Irish police (Garda). In 2002 *Operation Amethyst*, a Garda operation targeting consumers of child pornography, involved simultaneous searches of over one hundred individuals suspected of downloading images. Several high profile people were caught during the police operation. The Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998 had been introduced after the conviction of paedophile network leader Marc Dutroux in Belgium in 1996 (Burke, 2007). Under this legislation, possession of child pornography can be punishable by up to five years imprisonment; using children or allowing a child to be used for the production of pornography is punishable by up to 14 years imprisonment (Act, 1998).

Taylor and Quayle (2003) point out that the legal definition of child pornography does not capture all the material that an adult with a sexual interest in children may consider sexualised or sexual; as commonplace items such as holiday photographs and underwear catalogues may be seen as sexual material by some. It is important that child pornography be understood, not only as a separate genre for and by 'paedophiles', but in a wider context in which cultural ideals of beauty are youth, and the media is reliant upon the sexualisation of children for financial gain (Renold *et al.*, 2003).

The association between viewing/possessing child pornography and child sexual abuse is not discussed here. For the purposes of this study viewing and/or possession of child pornography is considered to be a form of sexual involvement with children. There were a number of reports about men viewing child pornography over the internet in the Irish newspapers

*Examples:*

*Excerpt 3 (E3):*
HE’S SIMPLY DIGUSTING

The innocent 8 year old child [in pornographic images] should have been playing with her Barbie dolls and doing the fun things that kids do. She should have been thinking about Santa and Barney and the stuff that makes a child’s world such a precious place.

The Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Unit (DVSAU) [police] ...they are the good guys who have exposed a group of sick people, most of whom are rich, upper class and in positions of power and influence.

Tim Allen [referring to Allen a celebrity chef] rats have more morality that this pony-tailed creep...

(The Sunday World, 19th January, 2003)

Excerpt 2 (E2):

**WHO STAR IN KIDDIE PORN PROBE**

British police are conducting their largest ever investigation, codenamed Operation Ore, into on-line paedophilia and child pornography...

...people, including a judge, magistrates, dentists, hospital consultants and a deputy headmaster have so far been arrested. Fifty police officers have also been arrested including two officers who investigated the murders of Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman...

(The Sunday World, 12th January, 2003)

People were ‘named and shamed’ by the tabloid Sunday World. Reports contain details of men arrested under the police Operation Amethyst: ‘most of whom are rich, upper class and in positions of power and influence’ (E3). The occupations of those arrested are frequently listed in these reports. An example of this is seen in excerpt 2 (E2) above. Occupations include judge,
magistrate, dentist, hospital consultant, headmasters and police officers and denote professionals and authority figures as implicated. Such a portrayal serves to distance those men from the generic ‘ordinary man’, working hard and not benefiting from social networks ‘of power and influence’ (E2). In addition many of the occupations e.g. choirmaster, vicar, teacher, academic, librarian (E21) may be perceived as traditionally not ‘manly’ occupations. Members of the police force were arrested during the course of the Operation Ore investigation in Britain, but it is also conveyed that police officers leading this investigation are the ‘good guys’ (E3) representing the ordinary people, and raiding the homes of ‘these sick people’ (E3). One of those arrested is referred to as ‘pony-tailed creep’ (E3) which is not a traditional masculine signifier, and we read in another instance that a college lecturer impersonated a girl in on-line chat rooms (E4); we are left in no doubt that impersonating a young girl is an unlikely behaviour for a ‘normal’ adult man.

Excerpt 4 (E4):

LECTURER PRETENDED HE WAS GIRL IN CHILD PORNOGRAPHY IMAGES

A college lecturer who downloaded 12 child pornographic images to his laptop computer used them to pretend to other users on the Internet that he was the girl in the photographs although he had no sexual interest in minors, a sex addiction counsellor told a court yesterday.

The court heard that before the offence he had been receiving counselling for self-injury and negative self-image. He was later referred to sexual addiction expert ... because he was at that stage addicted to adult pornography.

When the child pornography was discovered, [sex addiction expert] assessed the defendant as to his motivation and found that he used an image to ‘take on the identity of the female portrayed in it’.
Since Mr Storey first appeared in court, he had been suspended from his job, but his wife, friends and family had supported him. He had references from the rector of his local congregation and from the marriage and relationship counselling service which he had been attending.

(The Irish Times, March 8, 2003)

It is evident in the above report (E4), as it is in many others, that references to a man’s family, and wife help to convey a normative social and sexual arrangement and illustrates that through psychological distress he may have temporarily deviated from the social norm.

In Excerpt 27 we read of a married grandfather who had downloaded thousands of images of child pornography and distributed some of them. He is construed as a remorseful ‘family man’ and explains that his sexual involvement with children is out-of-character for him. The police commented on his co-operative behaviour and his expressions of sorrow for what he had done, they suggested that he was a lonely man living in his own world. Expert opinion, in this instance from the Grenada Institute which specialises in the treatment of sex offenders, reported his lack of paedophile tendencies: ‘…a Grenada Institute report [suggests] that he is not a paedophile and does not show these tendencies’ (E27).

Another article (E16) reports on a remorseful man ‘…appalled by his behaviour’ who has been ‘lonely, bored, depressed and drinking more than he should have been…’. This report is of a separated father of two jailed for possession of images of child pornography. We are presented with a synopsis of his current state of health, we read that the man is in his early 60s, was ‘going through a bad patch’, and was depressed, bored and lonely.
FUN-PARK FOUNDER GIVEN SIX-MONTH TERM FOR HAVING CHILD PORN IMAGES

A report on fun park founder given 6 month term for having child porn images: The founder of the Clara Lara children's fun-park in Co Wicklow, who was jailed for six months yesterday after pleading guilty to possession of child pornography, has not been a director of the company since May of this year.

More than 1,000 child pornography images were found on the computer of Peter Morphew, a 63-year-old separated father of two...

Yesterday Morphew told Judge Raymond Groarke in Wicklow Circuit Court he was ‘appalled’ by his behaviour...

He said in evidence that he had been going through a ‘bad patch’ at the time. He had got to a certain age, he was lonely, bored, depressed and drinking more than he should have been in the evenings...

‘I hope most people know that it's not me. I can't believe I did it. I can't say why I did it. I certainly wouldn't, couldn't do it again.’

(The Irish Times, 3rd December, 2003)

Excerpt 14 is from a report of a man in his late forties who had been arrested on charges of possessing child pornography. He had no previous convictions, and has been unemployed for many years, staying ‘at home in bed’. We read that he has alcohol and mental health problems. His defence council pleaded for leniency, as the accused man looks after his father who is also ill.
These reports generally show married and separated men with children who have found themselves in difficult personal situations. This includes mental health problems, unemployment, and long-term illness. We are told of their remorse for their sexual behaviours with children. Expert opinions are offered by legal and medical sources: judge, defence councils, police, and psychiatric reports. The experts advise who is considered likely to be a ‘true’ paedophile and who may have situationally regressed, echoing a consistent definitional dichotomy in the medical and psychological discourses referred to in previous chapters.

**THEME TWO: Sexual contact within a family context**

The public image of a man who is involved sexually with children is that of the stranger, and outside of a family context. It seems as if our ‘horizon of understanding’ does not allow us to comprehend the phenomenon of adults interacting sexually with children and even more so if that occurs within the family. For Gadamer “the horizon is the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point” (1979: p269).

Some reports featured fathers accused of having sexual relations with their children (E8, E19, and E12) usually daughters, occasionally sons. The reports present these men as components of a dysfunctional family in so far as relations between husband and wife are temporarily or permanently fractured, the children are placed in care outside the home and the traditional ‘male role’ as head of household is unclear. The absence of a wife and suggested ‘withdrawal’ from sexual relations with him, may be read from the reports as part explanatory factor for his sexual involvement with his daughter. Despite the chaotic and dysfunctional nature of his life and the portrayal of his non-traditional masculine situation, there is the implicit suggestion that his non-normal sexual behaviours with children are temporary anomalies in his normative heterosexual framework.
Examples:

Excerpt 19 (E19):

CONFESSIONS OF A DEPRAVED DAD: Sickening Truth Behind The Case That Shocked Ireland

“... the paedophile tried to rationalise his appalling behaviour by claiming that he didn’t really have a father’s relationship with his children.

He stated that ‘as a child I had been singled out for beatings [by his own father] because I had severe dyslexia’...

At school ‘Brother X made me stand up and called me female names’... ‘I found this very embarrassing’

‘When I was nine a man sexually abused me and my brother...’

...I was buggered in Dublin and England by two different men...buggered one time in Liverpool. ‘I am now married and have six children’.

‘I masturbated in the woods in her [his daughter’s] presence...’

‘During this period I had no sexual relationship with my wife and my domestic situation was very frustrating...’

‘I felt guilty after having sexual intercourse with my daughters. I was robbed by my wife of my fatherly relationship with my first three children.

She handed them over to her mother to take care of’

‘I discussed buggery’ [with son] and I showed him how its done. I had my clothes off and [son] had his clothes off sitting on my knee. ...I exposed myself to him and I had an erection. When [son] was growing up I had anal sex with him. I remember putting [son] sitting on my knee and ... [raping him]. I hate talking about this now as I feel so ashamed. It was wrong it was not okay by nature but the damage is now done’.

(The Sunday World, 8th February, 2004)
This excerpt (E19) reports on the father at the centre of this story. It is as if the explanations for what he recognises to be unnatural behaviour include his own childhood mistreatment at the hands of his father, a learning impairment and sexually abusive experiences with men. While at school a Christian Brother made fun of him in front of his peers and he was ridiculed and called female names in front of others which he recounts as ‘very embarrassing’. Nevertheless, he is ‘married’ and with ‘six children’, so in effect he had overcome emasculating experiences such as buggery, ridicule and sexual victimization, to enter into marriage and father children. He became sexually involved with his daughters at a time when he had no sexual relationship with his wife, and he comments that his ‘domestic situation was frustrating’. Further evidence of the broken family unit is that his older children had been looked after by his mother-in-law for a number of years and he ‘was robbed [by wife] of my fatherly relationship…’. We read from the report that he feels guilty after having sexual intercourse with his daughters, and a son whom it was claimed he raped ‘it was not okay by nature…’

We read of another example (E12) of a chaotic family environment and a mother absent from the home. This report begins with a woman’s rage directed at her father. As a girl, her mother was an alcoholic and she was placed in care as a result. The father had access to his daughter at weekends, when according to the news report the ‘sex beast dad’ drugged her cocoa before forcing her into sexual activity. Further in the article we see that the man fled from authorities, was tracked down and his house was raided. The police raid uncovered a collection of children’s used underwear, child pornography and religious pamphlets. He “jumped bail and fled across the border…when police raided his house they found a life-sized doll dressed as a little girl, child sex porn, and a drawer full of used children’s underwear…”

These excerpts show married men living in difficult family circumstances, unemployment, and domestic disturbances. As is shown in Excerpt 19 above, details of the sexual activity are given. However, generally across all reports reviewed there is comparatively less graphic detail of sexual activity with a girl, when compared to reports featuring men and boys. I discuss later on,
that when men sexually relate to boys, not only is the adult-child deviance threshold crossed, but also same sex sexual involvement is considered to enhance the level of deviance of the action.

**THEME THREE: Clerical sexual interaction with children**

There is no indication that priests and members of religious orders are more or less likely than anybody else to have a sexual involvement with children. Yet in Ireland, it was through revelations of ‘clerical child sex abuse’ that public awareness was raised regarding man-child sexual interaction. Lalor (2001) comments that public abhorrence of sexual abuse committed by priests and religious is undoubtedly aggravated by the perceived betrayal of someone in a position of moral guardianship. The highly visible nature of the Church in Ireland provided a ready target for people’s disgust, hurt and anger. The contrast of the Church’s venerated position in society with its recent bruised, pathetic image as a result of ‘scandals’ creates a fascination not easily resisted by the media and other public commentators (Inglis, 1997). Throughout the newspapers, there were many reports of priests and members of religious orders who had sexual relations with children and young people. In addition to their ‘occupation’ as religious ministers, teachers and so forth, what is especially interesting in the context of this research, is the way these men and their masculinities are presented.

*Examples:*

*Excerpt 9 (E9):*

**I WANT TO FIND THE MAN WHO RAPED ME**

“James O’Connor (57) spent his childhood in reform and industrial schools.... I want to find the man who raped me...This man felt my genitals and got into bed with me...

*I [have] had problems with my sexuality*...
In Daingean Industrial School I was sexually abused by my other inmates…. The first few times that Brother X flogged me, he would fondle my genitals”

(The Sunday World, 18th May, 2003)

A man who is now in his late 50s is reported to want to find the clergyman who raped him (E9). He was in reform schools in his childhood, and says that he was also sexually abused by other boys while in school. We read that a Christian Brother felt the boy’s genitals and got into bed with him. In an industrial school “the first few times that Brother X flogged me, he would fondle my genitals...” here is the positioning of flogging and the possible arousal of a sexually repressed cleric. It is also reported that the man has had problems with his sexuality as a result of the sexual contact with the clergyman in his childhood.

Excerpt 10 (E10):

NOT AGAIN - CLERIC IS CHARGED WITH ABUSING BOYS
AT THE SCHOOL THAT OVERLOOKED HIS PERVERTED PAST

“Cleric is charged with abusing boys at the school that overlooked his perverted past...
a convicted pervert cleric (62) is to be charged with sexually abusing three boys in a school...”

(The Sunday World, 29th June, 2003)

This excerpt (E10) refers to the activities of a priest who was ‘a leading member of the community’; he was a member of a singing group and attended musical events. The priest who we are told had a ‘perverted past’ is now in his 60s and faces charges in relation to his sexual involvement with young boys.

The clergymen in the news reports were in positions of authority in schools, as teachers and administrators, and all featured in reports as having been sexually involved with boys. As
supposedly celibate members of the clergy, these men are outside the heteronormative social structure. In addition to speculative debates in relation to celibacy and repression of ‘normal’ sexual expression, these reports also suggest the homosexuality of the clergymen involved.

**THEME FOUR: Sexual interaction between a man and boy**

According to Dorais (2002) “the abuse of boys by older males breaks the taboo around the vulnerability of males, the taboo against homosexuality, and the taboo against the involvement of minors in sexual activity” (p3).

Many of the newspapers contained articles about men suspected of or charged with sexual involvement with boys. The men in the news reports were commonly current or former teachers and both clergymen and laymen. When the homosexuality of these men is not explicitly reported, then it is implied. Interestingly terms such as befriending, grooming, coaxing, and offers of sweets/money feature in the reports of men sexually involved with boys and not in other contexts reported.

*Examples:*

*Excerpt 28 (E28):*

**PAEDOPHILE CLAIMS LOVING RELATIONSHIP WITH VICTIM**

“A barrister defending a paedophile claimed in a court case last week that children of 12 years of age are ‘quite capable’ of knowing what they want...

"... a primitive Methodist Church cleric, John Wray (79) [who] pleaded guilty to the buggery and indecent assault of a teenager on separate dates between 1974 and 1986..."
The abuse occurred in Bray Co. Wicklow, where Wray – a separated father of six, originally from Rochdale in England – lived in a caravan...

The court heard Wray kept a menagerie of animals that attracted children and had befriended the victim’s family...continued until the victim was 20 years of age...

...Wray a self-confessed homosexual told the boy he loved him like a son and it was ‘our secret’...

The victim ...was a homosexual and [the defence barrister] said it was wrong to say Wray was ‘grooming’ the boy and there was no suggestion or evidence that money or threats was ever passed between them...”

(The Sunday Independent, 16th January, 2005)

This excerpt (E28) contains a number of interesting points. The ‘paedophile’ was a ‘self-confessed’ homosexual, and the young man with whom he had been sexually involved is also declared a homosexual in the news report. Surprisingly, the defence counsel gives his opinion on children’s sexuality, and as capable of knowing what they want, alluding to the fact that it may have been a consensual relationship. There are references in this report to popularly understood ‘paedophile tactics’ such as the defendant’s animal menagerie attracting children, and befriending of the boy’s family. The contact between the ‘paedophile’ and the boy continued until the latter was 20 years of age. The clergyman said he loved the boy as his son. The use of the term ‘buggery’ makes the nature of some of the sexual activity explicit. The clergyman had separated from his wife and lived in a caravan. The fact that he was a non-Catholic clergyman and not a native of Ireland also distances this man from a cultural normality.

The question of what is a ‘normal loving relationship’ is also raised in Excerpt 22 (E22).
Excerpt 22 (E22):

MAN FELT SEX WITH SCHOOLBOYS WAS A ‘LOVING RELATIONSHIP’

A 69 year old former bus conductor who indecently assaulted two young brothers over a sustained period of time said he was having ‘normal, loving and caring relationships’ with them, Dublin Circuit Criminal Court has heard.

Frank Cooney...who abused the boys in hotels and B&Bs, told Gardai such behaviour was normal in many societies around the world and that they were ‘healthy normal relationships’.

He also told Gardai following his arrest in 1998 that he had had ‘relationships with other boys’ and named two of them....

Garda Levins said Cooney used to take the brothers to Dublin airport for plane watching. The first time he abused the older brother in a field where he indecently assaulted him. Cooney told Gardai that his sexual preferences is for boys aged between 11 and 16 years, after which he had lost interest in them.

(The Irish Independent, 17th September, 2004)

Here we read of a 69 year old man charged with indecent assault against boys, that was carried out in a field, hotel rooms and bed and breakfast accommodation. He told the Court that he was having ‘normal, loving and caring relationships’ with two brothers over several years, and that elsewhere around the world he said such ‘relationships’ were seen as ‘healthy’ and ‘normal’.

These views are very much in a minority in Irish society, and their presentation in the newspaper report increases the perceived ‘deviance’ of the man involved. The reporting of his stated sexual preference for boys aged between 11 and 16 years of age, confirms aspects if a non-normative masculinity.
Excerpt 20 (E20):

**FORMER TEACHER SHOWED BOY GAY PORN**

A former school teacher from Dublin was jailed for 12 months in Britain yesterday for raping a 14 year old boy in his hotel room and stripping him naked. Eamon McDonnell (47) befriended the boy and coaxed him into his room with the promise of cigarettes before kicking the door shut and showing him gay porn...

Mc Donnell was released from prison in 1997 after abusing a number of boys at his school...

McDonnell was visiting London on a trip from Dublin when he spotted the boys [staying in same hotel] in their underwear on the way to the shared bathroom…”

(The Irish Independent, 6th April, 2004)

We read (E20) that a former school teacher was jailed for raping a 14 year old boy. The man and he had been previously “released from prison ... after abusing a number of boys at his school...” The proposed homosexual orientation of the man in his 40s is conveyed albeit indirectly – he had gay pornography and he ‘spotted’ boys in their underwear on the way to the bathroom.

Excerpt 17 (E17):

**PERVERT TEACHER FREED TO PREY ON CHILDREN:**

**Sick Paedo Back on the Loose**

A pervert school headmaster...

The sleazy paedophile singled out vulnerable children for sex during a teaching career spanning four decades.

The 70 year old was sentenced to 6 years...his litany of sex attacks on young boys.
In 1999, he pleaded guilty to masturbating nine different boys aged between 12 and 17...

But what the court didn’t hear was how he tried to bugger three of his victims.

During his trial, a 26 year old man told how the abuse caused him to become a heroin addict and a male prostitute, that he lost his self respect for a long time and had abused girlfriends.

Another of Tiernan’s young victims told the Sunday World shortly after Tiernan’s conviction, how the sex monster had blighted his life.

Then just a 14 year old pupil, Tiernan gained his trust by giving him sweets and lifts home from school.

Incredibly, pervert Tiernan believed he was having relationships with the boys and his sex acts were a display of friendship.

In his statement to Gardai he told how he had his first sexual experience with a student aged 15 or 16. He referred to the sex acts as ‘sexual experiences’ refusing to acknowledge that his desires were twisted.

(The Sunday World, 11th January 2004)

An elderly school headmaster (E17) was sentenced to prison following a ‘litany of sex attacks on young boys’. His sexual involvement with a number of boys included ‘masturbation’ and ‘buggery’. “…he pleaded guilty to masturbating nine different boys aged between 12 and 17…but the court didn’t hear that he tried to bugger 3 of his victims…”. The report explains that the schoolmaster also had sexual experiences with a (male?) student when as a teenager. We are told that he was under the illusion that he was having a relationship with the boys, and he refused to acknowledge his ‘twisted desires’. The report outlines some of the repercussions for a male victim of the headmaster. He became a heroin addict, was abusive to his female partner and ‘the abuse caused him to become a … a male prostitute’. 
**Excerpt 7 (E7):**

**THIS EVIL PERVERT RUINED MY LIFE: Exclusive: Nephew Tells Full Horrific Story of Uncle’s Abuse from Age of Five**

Nephew (36) of merchant seaman [told how uncle] put his arm around me, kissing, French kissing, he would open my pants, [rub my] penis, masturbate...

‘It started when I was about 5 or 6…’

‘It started out this way – touching me with his hands. He used to put his arms around me – kissing, French kissing. He used to open my pants and catch me by the private parts; the penis. He used to get me to masturbate him. He ejaculated all the times when I did this…’

‘He buggered me basically…I am fully convinced that even now this is the reason that I am still passing blood when I go to the toilet’

‘During the time of the abuse [which ended when he was 12], he often asked me to put his penis in my mouth…You name it he done it – oral sex, masturbation, French kissing, buggery’

“The abuse was always in my mind when my Navy colleagues were sleeping in the same accommodation as myself – 11 of us in one cabin. I used to take showers when there was nobody around”.

He lost his job in the Navy and his relationship with the mother of his 4 children has fallen apart because of his excessive drinking. He is due up in court on a drink driving charge”.

(The Sunday World, 13th April 2003)

We read (E5) that a former sailor in his late 50s had ‘interfered’ with his nephews and another boy “former sailor Collins (58) interfered with three of his nephews and another boy… [who could earn a pound if he touched his penis…” In a later article, (Excerpt 7 above) referring to the same case, one of those nephews told how his uncle ‘buggered me basically’ (E7). The
report gives details …“put his arm around me, kissing, French kissing, he would open my pants, [rub my] penis, masturbate…” as his uncle ‘ejaculated all the times when I did this [masturbate him]’. We read how one of the nephews now grown up has ‘lost his job in the Navy and his relationship with the mother of his 4 children has fallen apart because of his excessive drinking’.

Excerpt 25 (E25):

MOVIE PAEDO ON THE LOOSE

A convicted paedophile who provided boys and girls as extras to the Irish movie industry is back on the streets of an Irish city ...

Byrne (48) and his boyfriend O’Neill...

Byrne who left his wife and children to form a twenty year homosexual relationship with O’Neill...

A Sunday World team traced Byrne to an address in Cork city centre where he was spotted in the company of another male, who is thought to be his new boyfriend.

Byrne and his sick gay lover horrifically abused a young boy from the time he was just six, between March 1985 and December 1993, while they were running a hairdressing salon in Dublin’s north inner city.

[They] offered sweets/money in return for sordid sex acts. This occurred twice weekly, mainly in the gay pervert’s salon where everyone in the local area considered them to be harmless ‘sissies’”.

(The Sunday World, 24th October, 2004)

We read that while running a hairdressing salon in the city, Byrne and his ‘sick gay lover’ carried out the abuse. The ‘gay pervert’s’ salon was the location for the abuse despite people in the local area considering them to be ‘harmless sissies’. Colloquially a sissy is seen as a non-threatening person usually a man or boy who is seen as non-assertive and effeminate. This
excerpt (E25) contains several depictions of the ‘paedophile’s’ homosexuality. He relinquished a heteronormative lifestyle - he left his wife and children, for a homosexual relationship, with a subordinate masculine status. We are told that the reported paedophile has been seen with another man, who the report explains ‘is thought to be his new boyfriend’. The sentence for which the 48 year old was jailed, involved the sexual abuse of a boy from the age of six.

Excerpt 1 (E1):

WHY I’M EXPOSING PAEDO BROTHER WHO SHOWS NO REMORSE

Tom Gilligan (52) grew up in Navan and joined the army at 15. He worked as a D.J., a private investigator, and a driving instructor before setting up his ‘Fame to Frame’ snooker promotions company as a hobby. It gave him the front he needed to access little boys.

His brother said ‘there is no way Tom only abused one child once in his life, he was always a loner, who only befriended children, now we know why’.

[In his personal papers] Tom Gilligan gushes enthusiastically about his friendship with another 12 year old boy ‘he is bubbly and friendly, good natured and yet he’s very sensitive. He’s very special…’ ‘sometimes he gets a bit stubborn and I can see the start of his interest in girls, which often brings its own problems’”.

(The Sunday World, 12th January, 2003)

This excerpt (E1) follows the story of a man who is exposing his brother’s (Tom) sexual behaviour and making his personal memoirs available. We are told that Tom, now in his 50s, joined the army at age 15, and followed a changeable career path before setting up a promotions company. The latter occupation allowed him ‘access to little boys’.
Personal details reveal Tom to have been a loner who befriended children, and according to his brother the reasons for this behaviour are now clear, in so far as his sexual activity with young boys reveals. We are presented with an excerpt from Tom’s personal papers, in which he ‘gushes’ with enthusiasm when describing his friendship with a 12 year old boy. He speaks of this boy as being ‘special to him’. The adolescent is starting to show an interest in the opposite sex, which at his age readers could construe as normal and normative development, but seen by Tom as a situation that ‘often brings its own problems’; as his own abnormal desires will be thwarted by the inevitable course of nature.

Excerpt 29 (E29):

**PAEDOPHILE TEACHER WHO PREYED ON PUPILS JAILED**

A teacher, described as a "determined paedophile", who indecently assaulted nine boys...has been jailed for 12 years

Patrick Curran (59), a teacher... was found guilty... of indecently assaulting nine boys aged from eight to 12.

Judge White said the children were at the mercy of their teacher who "cruelly violated them in the basest way". He described Curran as "calculated, deceitful and clever" and as a "determined paedophile".

[Detective] Garda...agreed with prosecuting barrister ..., that Curran systematically searched out boys to sit beside. He would fondle their legs and genitalia on a "very regular basis".

...Curran would place his hand on a knee and move it up towards the genital area, both over and under clothing. He would squeeze and rub the boys’ genitals.

A complainant ... told [that] Curran would regularly sit beside him while correcting his work and squeeze and caress his knee, moving up his leg.
He said he hated wearing shorts as they provided easier access as Mr Curran's hand could go up inside them.

Another former pupil ... said Curran came into the room and put his arm around his shoulders before placing his hand into his shorts and feeling his genitals.

Curran earlier told his counsel the allegations against him were "preposterous and ridiculous". He said he was a "gay person" with a sexual preference for old people over 65.

(The Irish Times, 23rd July, 2005)

Excerpt 29 from a report in The Irish Times outlines in some detail the sexual actions of a schoolteacher towards several boys. As readers, we are left with a vivid image of a man touching the legs and genital area of small boys in shorts; the shorts 'provided easier access as Mr. Curran’s hand could go up inside them'. The teacher would ‘sit beside him [a pupil] while correcting his work and squeeze and caress his knee, moving up his leg’. In denying the charges, the 59 year old man reveals he is ‘gay person with a sexual preference for old people over 65’.

This reference serves to confirm a form of sexual deviance (homosexuality) and a preference for men over age 65 years emphasises his minority social location relative to heteronormative Irish society.
ANALYSIS of Findings

The Men who relate sexually with children

What sort of men relate sexually with children? If we were to read the newspapers to find out about these men what is presented to us?

Most of the news reports included the age of the man accused/charged/under suspicion of relating sexually with children and/or using pornographic images. They were all mature men, generally middle-aged and older. Either from reported remarks of the accused person or as part of the narrative of the news itself, we can derive information on marital status, fatherhood, employment and sexuality – facets of a traditional masculine identity, and components of hegemonic masculinity. Why is it important for the press to denote the marital status of these men? Could it be there may be something ‘not normal’ about an adult man who is unmarried or single? If he is married, is this proof that he can sexually interact with an age appropriate partner?

One may question assumptions as to the centrality of the breadwinner role among men in modern economies, when women work and men may choose not to, however as Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) suggests despite the discursive plurality of masculinities, certain forms of masculinity are presented as hegemonic ideals. Paid employment assumes a central role in the maintenance of the wider social order. The men in the news reports typically are unemployed; they work in professional occupations or in stereotypically non-masculine ones.

Sex and sexuality are central features of a normative, hegemonic masculinity (Earle and Sharp, 2007). Based on the cultural assumption that the sexuality of a man engaged in sexual interaction with children is not normative, it is interesting to note how references to his sexuality are represented in the news reports. Reports of men involved sexually with boys more often than not contained details of sexual activities such as genital fondling, French kissing etc, whereas such details or their equivalent were not given in male-female contacts. There is a close
linking of the sexually marginal orientation – homosexuality - with the men’s sexual involvement with children.

In reports featuring the criminal justice system, legal and scientific experts offer opinions: judge, defence councils, police, and psychiatric reports. Expert opinion claims access to scientific fact, classification systems and diagnosis, all associated with ‘the truth’. Experts advise who is considered likely to be a ‘true’ paedophile. This authoritative truth results in the expulsion of the man from the social body or else recognises that his sexual involvement with children may be a temporary aberration. By using selective voices e.g. ‘experts’ conveys a message that certain points of view are more legitimate, reliable and significant.

The excerpts from the newspapers were grouped into four themes. These themes included men’s sexual involvement with children through pornography (Theme One); with children in a family context (Theme Two); as clergymen with boys (Theme Three); and men with boys (Theme Four). Across these themes and the news reports, reviewed three symbolic figures emerge as discursively constructed masculine identities. These are the figures of the ‘family man’, the ‘clergyman’ and the ‘homosexual man’. They are recognisable as essentialised components of dominant discourses namely hegemonic masculinity and heteronormativity.

**Symbolic Figures**

**The ‘Family Man’**

Some of the men who are presented as relating sexually to children are identified as fathers and/or currently or formerly in marital relationships. A number of fathers or other male relatives were reported as having sexual involvement with children, within their own family and through use of child pornography. Traditionally, the ‘family man’ has unquestioned access to females
and subordinate children, while maintaining authority within the family structure. The family man discourse thematizes men’s roles of breadwinner and father.

Informing us of a dysfunctional childhood and in part-reasoning for being an abusive father, one man declares that he is “married with 6 children” (E19), a pronouncement that can be seen as a heteronormative achievement and in that case significant as he had unwanted sexual experiences with men in his youth. In two instances (excerpts 19 and 12) the respective mothers (wives) were ‘absent’ during the marriage, either through alcoholism or speculated withdrawal from sexual contact respectively; and another worked outside the home as the ‘breadwinner’ (E8). In other reports, men who were fathers had left their families - and while we cannot assume a causal link – had descended into depression, alcoholism, loneliness, or in the case of some, pursued relationships with men.

The portrayal of the ‘family man’ in the news reports serves a dual function. On the one hand, the family man is assumed heterosexual and linked to a normative family structure; and I contend he is not perceived as being as deviant as the clergyman or homosexual man, both of whom feature more frequently in the news reports. On the other hand the clear indicators of personal and familial dysfunction e.g. unemployment, wife having to work, alcoholism, depression and so forth render him different and possibly ‘less masculine’ than those who successfully negotiate those aspects of their lives or at least like to believe they do. Interestingly, the very dysfunctions are seen as contributing factors to his acting ‘out-of-character’ and sexual involvement with children.

The idea of ‘success’ for men in the modern west is bound up with paid labour and with being the breadwinner and head of household. These ideas e.g. doing it for the family are strongly rooted and have provided a powerful support for the institution of reproductive heterosexuality (Petersen, 1998: p49). Although the notion of man as breadwinner is coming under threat with
changing employment patterns and gender definitions, ‘successful’ masculine identity continues to be strongly connected to paid labour.

The hard working family man is a culturally hegemonic symbol. In many of these reports, the masculine totem of gainful employment is lacking or is construed as diverging from the ordinary. Work plays a major part in traditional masculine ideology and practices. As a ‘breadwinner’ in a family context, it secures economic dominance and independence. Although the social construction of this particular masculine identity is arbitrary in one sense, it nevertheless forms a pervasive discourse that shapes how men and women respond to and deal with unemployment. In addition to the economic value, there is a symbolic value to work and Beynon (2002) maintains that “nothing has proved more damaging to [working] men and their sense of the masculine than unemployment, which took away independence and control over family finances” (p87). Unemployment has the potential to disrupt hegemonic masculine ideals as well as discourses of domestic provision and public masculinity (Haywood and Mac an Ghaill, 2003: p38).

Details of employment status were given in most reports. More detailed occupational information is provided in the news stories in relation to arrests made under the police anti-child pornography operation. We are informed that most of those involved ‘are rich, upper class and in positions of influence’ (The Sunday World, 19th January 2003) - solicitor, barrister, judge, hospital consultant, dentist – non-manual occupations. These higher professionals are joined by others such as clergymen, teachers, academics, choirmaster and librarian. Despite the fact that some police officers were also detained, the masculine power and function of the police service is recuperated, as the reader is reminded how “they are the good guys who have exposed a group of sick people” (The Sunday World, 19th January, 2003).

In a number of cases, we read that ‘expert’ – judicial and psychiatric opinion casts doubt on the paedophilic orientations of a number of men accused. It is suggested that these men have had
normative lifestyles – marriage, family etc. - and through alcoholism and mental illness have regressed. Such a dichotomization of men functions to separate ‘true’ paedophiles, from those who have ‘regressed’. Within the media discourse surrounding the paedophile, those that are designated ‘true’ are depicted as irredeemable and especially evil. This representation of the ‘family man’ mirrors essentialist assumptions.

We have seen from the literature that the so-called ‘regressed/situational paedophile’ is generally construed as a married man who finds interpersonal and sexual relations with his adult partner difficult, and ‘regresses’ into sexual relations with children. There are considered to be a number of precipitating events involved in this instance such as physical, social, sexual, marital, financial, and vocational crises to which the man fails to adapt. Mc Conaghy (1993) explains how sexual deprivation may cause some men to turn to their daughters, and female children generally who are usually either related or well known to them ‘for sexual comfort’ (p310). This construction denies the possibility that such men are sexually attracted to children. Identity categories are a product of culturally constructed and value-laden designations. The heterosexual man is often spared the socially demonised identity label of ‘true’ paedophile (Angelides, 2004). His masculinity is not portrayed as necessarily in contradistinction to normative masculinities, but seen to have gone only temporarily astray. The ‘family men’ may have defaulted but have not relinquished their status completely. The family man and the family structure remain a normative construct and unproblematised, and the masculine social location of these men while obviously ‘impaired’ seems recuperable.

The ‘Clergyman’

With variations, the term ‘clerical child sex abuse’ features prominently in Irish media and popular discourses in relation to men’s sexual involvement with children. Examining *The Irish Times* coverage of sexual crime in Ireland over a ten year period, Breen (2007) found 68% of stories about sexual crimes against children - where the profession of the perpetrator is
identified - relate to clergymen (priests and members of religious orders). However, as we have seen from previous chapters, research suggests that clergymen represent a small proportion of the men involved sexually with children and who come to the attention of the authorities in Ireland (Goode et al., 2003). The issue of priests and religious as ‘clerical sex abusers’ has dominated media attention in recent years.

Broadly speaking, the issue of men’s sexual interaction with children ‘emerged’ in Ireland from the late 1980s, with public revelations in relation to Roman Catholic clergy. The huge importance of the priest in Irish society reflected not only the strength of religious feeling of the people, but also the historical importance of the Catholic Church and its priests and administrators to Irish cultural and political identity. Historically, the priest provided the reassurance of spiritual superiority that the Catholic people seemed to need in the face of economic and political weakness, and he was frequently distinguished by having a level of education than most members of the community lacked. It is by no means clear that Catholic clergymen are more or less likely to be involved sexually with children than any other people, yet public reaction to clerical involvement has been more strident than in relation to other groupings in society.

The authority and credibility of the Irish Catholic Church have been progressively undermined by a series of controversies involving clergy. Journalist Mary Kenny refers to the publication of an historical overview of Irish Catholicism since the 1950s (Fuller, 2004) and as an example of how the honour of Irish clergy through history has been recently maligned, she writes: “In a terrible example of being repaid in one’s own coin, the ultimate sins of ‘impurity’ – in the shape of paedophile abuse – were to dishonour the Irish clergy, staining the collective reputation of many good and high-minded men who did their best to care for their flock” (The Sunday Independent, 26th September, 2004).
In the Roman Catholic tradition, mandatory celibacy is a prerequisite for ordination to the priesthood, and only men may be priests. The extensive media attention given to clergy sexual involvement with children raises issues surrounding priests and sexuality. Journalists have written articles about celibacy, homosexuality and selection of candidates for the seminary (Hoge and Wenger, 2002). The debate sparked by revelations of clerical sexual involvement with children addresses wider dimensions. In the excerpt below, we clearly see reference to the clinical definition of paedophilia, reference to the homosexuality of the clergy and a wider discussion in relation to the priesthood. An example of this can be seen in Excerpt 23 below:

**Excerpt 23 (E23):**

**ABUSE VICTIMS LOSE HEART AT CATHOLIC CHURCH’S BETRAYAL**

*Most priestly abusers are not paedophiles in the clinical sense of targeting children who have not yet reached puberty. Rather they target older children. This fact, along with the reportedly disproportionate number of clergy who are homosexual, raises serious issues about Catholic priesthood. Blaming individual abusers, or bishops who respond poorly, is not enough.*

(The Sunday Independent, 26th September, 2004)

Active heterosexual engagement is seen as integral aspect of hegemonic masculinity. The requirement to reject the external signs of masculinity may leave celibate clergymen vulnerable to allegations of being ‘less than’ masculine. It may prove a challenge to maintain a hegemonic masculine identity, socially and sexually, while remaining in the church and adhering to its rules.

The careful deployment of the myth of uncontrollable male lust and the assumption of ungovernable male sexuality means that celibate men may have to reconfigure aspects of their gender identity so that they can be masculine without having to act sexually. Being a celibate
priest may be seen as being in possession of strength to overcome normal male sexual urges, the
sublimation of which means that these men are not dominated by lust and physical desire and
display heroic strength against brute forces of nature. Alternatively, the repression of these
‘normal male sexual urges’ by being celibate, is seen by some as an unnatural practice and an
illegitimate expression of masculine sexuality. Either way the ‘urge’ is accepted as natural, and
informs the ‘male sex drive discourse’.

The publicity surrounding clergy and their sexual interaction with children has eroded
confidence in the Church’s insistence on a celibate priesthood and re-opened questions about
the sexual lives, or suppression thereof, of the clergy. It is clear that the public has been forced
to think more about the sexuality of Catholic priests, especially where there lives involve sex
with men. It is problematic to link celibate men with those men who interact sexually with
children, and popular discourse also serves to confound the issues of adult male sexual
involvement with male children and homosexuality. We can see examples of this in Excerpt 18
and Excerpt 24 below.

Excerpt 18 from an article in the *Irish Independent*, refers to details from an
authoritative report *The Laffoy Report*.²

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*Excerpt 18 (E18):*

**A DICKENSIAN TALE OF SEX ABUSE, HUNGER, SQUALOR AND VIOLENCE**

Isolated Industrial School in the 1930s and 1940s, a report [Laffoy
Report] recounts: ...from the evidence, a picture emerged which is

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² This report resulted from the Commission to enquire into Child Abuse, known as the Laffoy
Commission, which was established to investigate instances of child abuse in industrial schools and
children in care of the state. Two interim reports were published in 2001. The Third Interim Report of the
Commission was published in January, 2004. Ms. Justice Laffoy notified the Government of her decision
to resign from the Commission to take effect from the date of the publication of the Third Interim Report.
consistent with the presence in Bathmore School of a sexual predator, probably a homosexual paedophile, who systematically preyed on and sexually abused vulnerable children…”

(The Irish Independent, 31st January, 2004)

In reference to the release of the film *Kinsey* starring Liam Neeson, the *Sunday World* speaks of:

**Excerpt 24 (E24):**

**PAEDOVILE**

*Neeson plays evil pervert in sick new film*

*The story of Alfred Kinsey, a man described as a ‘sadomasochistic homosexual on a perverted mission.*

(The Sunday World, 10th October, 2004)

Writing that the Church has had a troubled relationship with speaking about sexuality and in particular same-sex relations, Jordan (2003) suggests that the paedophile crisis is a “queasily familiar” (p4) institutional cover-up, as “churches produce silence around sexual secrets that disrupt churchly power” (p10). In *The Changing Face of Priesthood*, Cozzens (2000) comments that American Catholic seminaries are attracting large numbers of homosexual students and that “should seminaries become significantly gay, the priesthood of the twenty-first century will likely be perceived as a predominantly gay profession” (p103). For years, there have been concerns over homosexual Catholic seminarians. In a workshop for psychologists engaged in the assessment of candidates for the priesthood and religious life, Coville (1968, cited in Maher, 2002, p50) noted concern for the high incidence of effeminacy, psychosexual immaturity and heterosexual retardation. A Vatican document from 1961 barred homosexuals from ordination and religious vows (Vennari, 2002).

Clerical sexual involvement with children has caused widespread problems with notorious revelations in many countries (Jenkins 1996; Rosetti, 1996; Plante, 2004). The revered position
of the priest, and the historically hegemonic authoritative position of the Catholic Church in Ireland, provides a potent cultural mix within which ‘clerical sex abuse’ takes on wide-ranging dimensions. In Ireland, the increasing number of newspaper reports on ‘clerical child sexual abuse’, coincided with a time of increasing secularism. This, in addition to the abhorrence directed towards individual clergymen, and the revelation of how the issue was managed by Church Authorities, all came to light at a time of social change in Ireland. Long festering views of injustice and repressive Catholic doctrines found room for expression.

In the context of this research, the masculinity of the clergyman via his supposed inactive sexuality, represents a marginalised masculinity and is seen to be outside of the heteronormative structure. The frequent reporting of clergymen and their sexual involvement with boys and conflations of this and same sex sexual preference also serves to emphasise this marginalisation. This research demonstrates that it is apparently easier to locate aberrant sexual behaviour such as that of men’s sexual involvement with children, outside the boundaries of heteronormative society. In the media discourse, attention is drawn to the sexuality and masculinity of clergymen and homosexual men. I argue that as they are represented as deviating from hegemonic masculinity and heteronormativity, it accentuates the social distance between those men and ‘normal’ men.

**The ‘Homosexual Man’**

Minton (2002) reminds us that it is seen by many as important to identify those who are deviant, and how society protects itself by classifying sex variants when it is possible to do so. Since its inception in the mid to late nineteenth century the term ‘homosexual’ has been used to define a pathology – a person so different in his/her practice that he/she constitutes an inferior type we need to categorize, understand and control (Halperin, 1990). In the news reports reviewed, there were a number of articles in which the homosexuality of the man reported as relating sexually to a child/children was strongly emphasised.
Dominant or hegemonic masculinities are defined in terms of a restrictive range of acceptable behaviours. It seems that the greater the need to emphasise or affirm masculinities, the greater the need to exercise subordination. Social constructionist and post-structural understandings of diverse masculinities show how they shift and change along cultural, spatial, and temporal axes. However, these masculinities are likely established and contested in a context of heteronormativity, which is often characterised by heterosexism and homophobia. Consequently, particular forms of masculinity dominate, and gain acceptance and support in a wide range of social circumstances, while other forms of masculinity are subordinated and policed (Connell, 1995). Butler (1997 cited in Salih and Butler 2004, pp243-257) claims that the prohibition of the enactment or admission of desire for anyone of the same sex is the price of a stable heterosexual gender identity. The extent of the social policing of sexuality underlines the significance and potency of sexuality and sexual identity in interpersonal power relationships (Steinberg et al., 1997).

David Plummer’s (2001) examination of the use of homophobic constructs reveals that homophobia positions the male homosexual as lacking masculinity and he represents a betrayal of male solidarity. It has been shown that the use of homophobic terms is rooted in being different from the collectively authorized expectations of male peers in lacking stereotypical masculinity and/or betraying peer group solidarity (Mac an Ghaill, 1994). Homosexuality is at the bottom of a gender hierarchy among men; this subordination involves direct interactions between men in an ideological struggle which occurs through media representations, the police, legal intervention etc., all tied together by the contempt for homosexuality and homosexual men that is part of the dominant heterosexual ideology (Connell, 1995: p78).

The negative connotations toward homosexuality and the association between homosexuality and men who relate sexually to children are evident in the Irish newspapers reviewed in this study. There are overt and implied references to the presumed homosexuality of many of the men in the news excerpts (see below). Such a deployment relegates these men to a demeaned
masculine status *vis a vis* the heterosexual (implied or stated) ‘family men’ in a hierarchization of masculinities.

**Excerpt 26 (E26):**

“Dowler believed to be a paedophile ...was a homosexual who had AIDS...”

(The Irish Times, 9th November, 2004)

**Excerpt 28 (E28):**

“...self-confessed homosexual...”

(The Sunday Independent, 16th January, 2005)

**Excerpt 20 (E20):**

“Former teacher showed boy gay porn” “...when he spotted the boys [staying in same hotel] in their underwear on the way to the shared bathroom...”

(The Irish Independent, 6th April, 2004)

**Excerpt 6 (E6):**

“Bachelor Denis O’Shea (54) convicted of buggering an 11 year old pupil during special lunchtime remedial classes...”

(The Irish Independent, 1st July, 2003)

**Excerpt 25 (E25):**

“was spotted in the company of another male, who is thought to be his new boyfriend”.... “Byrne and his sick gay lover...” “sordid sex acts mainly in the gay pervert’s [hairdressing] salon where everyone in the local area considered them to be harmless ‘sissies’”

(The Sunday World, 24th October, 2004).
Excerpt 29 (E29):

“He said he was a ‘gay person’ with a sexual preference for old people over 65”.

(The Irish Times, 23rd July, 2005)

The possibility of being gay and masculine challenges heterosexist constructions of gender (Durham, 2003b). For Sedgwick (1985, 1990) marginalisation and stigmatization of the male homosexual are functional to heterosexual and particularly masculine identity. Several times, the newspaper reports reviewed stress the suggested or actual homosexual orientation of the men: ‘gay perverts’, ‘sissies’, (E25, Sunday World, 24th Oct, 2004); ‘a homosexual who had AIDS’ (E26, Irish Times, 9th Nov., 2004); ‘a self confessed homosexual’ (E28, Sunday Independent, 16th Jan., 2005); ‘gay porn’ (E20, Irish Independent, 6th April, 2004). It is mainly in reports of sexual contact between a man and a boy that terms such as ‘befriended’ and ‘coaxed’ appear. We read of details - ‘penis rubbing’, ‘squeeze and caress’, ‘French kissing’ ‘oral sex’ and ‘fondling’. Sometimes the reports refer to men who had spoken of ‘relationships’ and ‘love’ for the boys with whom they have been sexually involved.

When a boy is sexually involved with a man, at least two societal boundaries are transgressed: adult-child sexual contact and same sex sexual activities (Dorais, 2002). The popular conception is of boys subject to possible physical penetration, which in addition to psychic and social penetration, carries with it emotive and traditionally non-masculine aspects such as victimhood and vulnerability. In the newspapers there is clear reference to the possible negative outcomes for the boys when they become adults: they suffer from addictions, mental health problems, find it hard to maintain close adult relationships, and are wary around men (E7, Sunday World, 13th April 2003), and in one instance became a ‘male prostitute’ (E17, Sunday World, 11th January 2004).
It is clear that the man who interacts sexually with children is excised from normative society. Through his sexual relations with children, he is implicated in non-masculine practices, and this research shows that from within this marginalised position the masculinities of these men are dynamically delegitimated with reference to the hegemonic norm.

It is the case that same sex sexual activity is seen as culturally non-normative and I believe the focus on the non-normativity in the media portrayals of these men increases their deviance quotient. It is important to recognise the deconstructive insight that sameness and difference - or normality and deviance - require one another for their self-definition. There were few if any instances in which the term ‘heterosexual’ or equivalent terms were used to describe a man. Yet frequently news reports were liberally strewn with pejorative or otherwise terms reflecting on the man’s homosexuality. Terms such as ‘Sex Beast Dad’ are used but ‘self confessed homosexual’, ‘sick gay lover’ and ‘sadomasochistic homosexual…’ convey different and pervasive messages. What is normative is generally what is considered to be socially acceptable. A normative demarcation is sustained throughout the news reports. It functions to stress the subordinate masculinity of the men who have been sexually involved with children, and creates and confirms the normative contours of hegemonic masculinity.

**Discussion**

**Interlinked Discourses**

Language and discursive practices are both reflections of ideology and the manifestation of power; in addition, they are active in the process of constituting and maintaining ideology. Discourse analysis as a social critique is concerned with exploring the ways in which language conspires to legitimate and perpetuate power relations. Newspapers report ‘events’, and widespread sexual use of children by men as part of our culture does not qualify as an event. We have seen that wider issues are ignored in favour of sensationalism and stereotyping. The media
discourses create a picture of men who relate sexually to children based on certain examples, and of course these skewed media representations have an impact on public perceptions and beliefs.

The discursive subject is composed of different context-bound subject positions - with symbolic, social, and material dimensions (Hall, 1997). The newspapers are replete with discursive themes that seem to crosscut stories and reports. They reflect facets of what it means to be ‘a man’ and ‘masculine’ in Irish society at this point in time. I use the term discourses of masculinity to denote a set of discursive resources, which have men and men’s practices as their focus. One avenue for exploring discourses of masculinity is provided by a critical analysis of language and constructs used in newspaper accounts of men who relate sexually to children. Although in this chapter I separate these discursive themes for discussion purposes, they are closely intertwined. I am not suggesting they are the only discursive themes which could be gleaned from an analysis of the newspaper discourses, but they have particular relevance for understanding the macro-context of hegemonic masculinity which is the perspective developed here. These discourses operate through largely taken-for-granted and unconscious assumptions shared by people within the same cultural context.

Said (1983) comments that: “over and above every opportunity for saying something, there stands a regularizing collectivity…called a discourse” (p186). A key task of critical discourse analysis (CDA) is to de-naturalize assumptions and the taken-for-granted context of discourse. In addition to a focus on the particular news texts and representations of ‘the paedophile’, this analysis looks to the discursive formation to which these belong.

From a review of newspapers, a number of interlinked discourses are evident. These discourses relate to hegemonic masculinity and heteronormativity, homophobia and the male sex drive. These discourses are embedded in a particular culture, ideology and history (Wodak, 2005). Language and discursive practices are not only reflections of ideology and the manifestation of
power, but active agents in the process of constructing and maintaining ideology. The media constructs a version of reality, but they are also constructors of that reality.

In relation to the representation of ‘difference’ and ‘otherness’ in a particular culture at any one time, similar representational practices and figures are repeated, with variations, from one site of representation to another. The analysis of news media discourses for this research reveals the discursive constructions of ‘the paedophile’ and their connection to dominant ‘discursive regimes’ operating within our culture. The media discourses as seen in the Irish newspapers, are active in the construction and maintenance of the ideology of hegemonic masculinity, and serve prevailing power relations within Irish society. The news report is not just a self-contained item or report of an event, but it acquires much of its meaning from its relationship to discourses already in circulation about men, sexuality and gender. Our understandings of gender often align with larger political or philosophical views. Those who see gender as working on a complex continuum do not necessarily limit people based on their sex. Those who see gender as fixed and biologically determined may limit the human experience to restricted gender roles.

While in addition the particular way we use words both reflects and reinforces our attitudes to gender, and in many ways it is the main way by which we construct gendered attitudes (Julé, 2008, p8).

The normative status given to the biological imperative of procreation is basic to the discourse of heteronormativity. Marriage, children, family unit, employment and sexuality are construed as part of an ideological and material phenomenon in a heterosexual matrix (Butler, 1990). Within heteronormativity, heterosexuality is privileged as the normal, natural and assumed form of sexuality (Epstein, 1997) with other orientations viewed as deviant, and such a discourse underlies most of the academic work on sexual deviance. Heteronormativity permeates social institutions and the discourse of heteronormativity pervades the newspaper reports. In the excerpts shown above, we can clearly see that sanctions follow for those who deviate from the
societal standard and the fact that heterosexuality is often unchallenged and left unexplained is also heteronormative (Epstein and Johnson 1994).

In the media, the intense focus on priests and members of religious orders constitutes a selective response to disclosures of their sexual involvement with children, not only does it raise issues for the church, but serious questions about men, masculinity, the family and sexuality. There is of course an extra-discursive context in which men who relate sexually to children are located. By focussing the debate on clerical celibacy and the paedophile priest, attention is deflected from all other men who may have sexual interest and contact with children. Press reports are clearly coming from within the dominant cultural scenarios regarding heteronormativity and hegemonic masculinity.

In the religious context, celibacy may be motivated for reasons that include asceticism, voluntary choice or compulsory restraint. In the framework of this research, a focus on the celibate, or at least inactive, sexuality of the clergyman is significant, as it does not ‘fit’ within the traditional discourse of hegemonic masculinity. Heterosexuality and sexual expression is seen to be central to a hegemonic masculine self-concept. Thus I suggest that male celibacy is seen as ‘unnatural’, and the location of deviance - such as sexual involvement with children - within the figure of the celibate priest leaves hegemonic masculine practices unproblematised. Ferguson (1995) speaks of the construction of the ‘paedophile priest’ and of how debate is framed in terms in relation to clerical celibacy, while Hearn et al. (2003) suggest that disclosures of fathers acting in a similar way represent a threat to the normative structures of patriarchal society. It infers that priests are sexually deviant on account of being celibate; and the form of masculinity represented by clerical celibacy is subordinated and marginalised.

The primacy of the ‘male sex drive’ as something natural, something that must be satisfied, and something that is ‘unstoppable’ has permeated the thinking of a lot of people in our society. This discourse incorporates the demand for a man to be sexually capable (achieve erection,
ejaculation etc) and at least heterosexually active. The discourse of the male sex drive has provided a context in which some adults can justify their sexual involvement with children. Li et al., (1990) looked at how paedophiles understand their sexuality through a series of personal accounts. In the course of their investigation, sexual desire for children and the primacy of the male sex drive discourse were articulated by a number of her research participants. Fuller (1993) found that in her study men resorted to common cultural beliefs to justify their sexual behaviours. These included the idea that men need sex for instinctual reasons and have little control over their sexual behaviour as a result (pp68-109).

The ‘sex drive’ discourse is evident in this study, particularly in reports of men who have situationally ‘regressed’ to sexual relations with children. The normative male sex drive serves to justify ‘recourse’ to available sexual opportunities in circumstances when perhaps age appropriate, pro-social sexual partners are not available. The newspaper reports clearly reflect dominant cultural assumptions regarding hegemonic masculinity, heterosexual relations and sexuality. The male sex drive discourse and the acceptance of a mechanistic model of sexuality is evident as the ‘naturalness’ and ‘outlet-requirement’ of male sexuality is implied and left uninterrogated.

**Discursive Resources**

It is important to note the ways in which the discursive resources that make up part of the ‘commonsense’ of a culture are deployed. There are at any one time certain stories and narratives of identity available in circulation (Blood, 2005, p99). An interrogation of the discourses present in news reports of ‘the paedophile’ reveal shared cultural assumptions, and are significant in the construction of subjectivity and social meaning.

A discourse is materially connected to the ways in which society is socially, politically, and economically organized. As a result, dominant ways of understanding tend to reflect the interest
of the most powerful in society (Burr, 2003) and certain discourses become authoritative. From
my reading of the newspapers, a number of discursive themes structure the accounts. These
derive most notably from the discourses of hegemonic masculinity and heteronormativity. The
reports draw upon common narratives in relation to family, masculinity and sexuality to talk
about and describe the men who relate sexually to children. Throughout, hegemonic masculinity
is discursively evoked as a cultural referent. In the newspapers, the men reported as
‘paedophiles’ are portrayed as ‘less than’ masculine. Being ‘less than masculine’ is to be
‘othered’ and marginalised from the norm, within the discourse of hegemonic masculinity.

It seems that our collective cultural consciousness can only accommodate the idea of men who
have a sexual involvement with children, if they are ‘othered’ men. Obviously, the ‘othering’ is
achieved initially through their sexual involvement with children and significantly, is enhanced
by the portrayal of their non-masculine practices. Thus within the ‘othered’ category, there is a
stratifying of these men implicit in the discourse of hegemonic masculinity. The family men
while ‘othered’ by dint of their sexual interaction with children, are shown to have temporarily
strayed under a variety of personal, social and economic pressures and chaotic family
environments. Relative to the ‘family man’, the clergyman and the homosexual man occupy a
subordinate masculine position.

The clergyman with the expected celibacy of his vocation to the Catholic priesthood or religious
life has a compromised external masculinity. It seems difficult to comprehend the masculinity
of a man who is not sexually active. Those depicted as homosexual men are least linked to
hegemonic masculinity and the heteronormative cultural context. Homophobia functions as an
intrinsic facet of hegemonic masculinity, and Steinberg et al., (1997) describe homophobic
performances as ‘border patrols’ through which the boundaries of heterosexuality are
maintained and policed (p11). Homophobia marks an intragender boundary between masculine
stereotypes and the male other, from men who are sufficiently masculine and those who exhibit
signs to the contrary (Plummer, 2001: p21). It seems as if societies will always stigmatize some
condition or situation and some behaviour because doing so provides for group solidarity by
delineating ‘outsiders’ from ‘insiders’ (Falk, 2001).

Butler (1990) suggests that any discussion of identities must consider the issue of gender
relations since ‘persons’ only become intelligible through becoming gendered (p16).
Throughout, the news reports ‘the paedophile’ remains ungendered and unintelligible as a
person, and as a man. The fact that he is a man is never critically interrogated. The implication
of gender relations and other social practices in the phenomenon that is adult male sexual
involvement with children are never problematized. However, interestingly, it is in the act of his
excision from normal society that the man reported as being involved sexually with children is
coincidentally gendered. His gendering is achieved by highlighting what he is not, and through
the active delegitimation of his masculinity. Discourses constructing a hegemonic ideal
simultaneously construct and imply versions of masculinity that are inferior to that ideal
(Phillips, 2005). The construction and positioning of ‘non-normative’ men in marginalised and
subordinate positions in relation to the ideal, functions in the affirmation of that ideal, which in
this instance is normative, heterosexual masculinity.

According to Foucault (1978) our culture actively produces perversion as a simultaneous result
and vehicle of control, defining and producing the margins in order to create and maintain the
centre. Our ideas of normative and marginalised identities are “gained from the available
cultural conversations within which society is embedded” (Phillips, 2005, p220). Those people
who differ or who deviate from the norm, come to occupy a revealing double relationship to
power, both culturally marginal and discursively central. The portrayal of the paedophile in
news reports emphasises the marginalised masculinity of an already marginalised character,
while at the same time it reinforces the centrality of culturally dominant attitudes towards
sexuality and masculinity.
The newspaper accounts draw on a range of stereotypically masculine reference points in the representations of the men who relate sexually to children, and these are consistent with concepts of hegemonic masculinity. It is important to explicitly recognise the layering and the potential internal contradiction, within all practices that construct masculinities. However, as Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) note a society-wide hegemonic masculinity provides a cultural framework. Viewing gender as performative and relational draws on work arguing that masculinity is constructed through everyday discourses, in various versions of masculinities. However, boys and men do not create themselves out of nothing, in any way they wish; rather there are popular and culturally specific ways of positioning themselves.

In most circumstances, forms of masculinity that are heterosexual are more powerful and/or privileged than others. In the placing of a man in the position of ‘Other’, he is forced into a space outside normative acceptance and subordinated within the dominant male heterosexual hierarchy. Hegemonic forms of masculine identity are subject to erosion and are often defended by pre-emptive attack within given hierarchic frameworks, achieving status by whatever means are acceptable. It seems men emasculate each other to some degree so as to gain status and there is a crucial importance attached to boundary maintenance in staving off challenges to social status and sexual identity.

Homophobia is central to the patterning of relations between men, and it functions to regulate the boundaries of conventional masculinity (Flood, 1995). There is conflict between different forms of masculine status and identity in a culture where masculine status affirmation is significant. It is vital to affirm the distance between society, normal people and those men who interact sexually with children. A historically and culturally specific discourse on masculinity is legitimate at present, and it is accepted as fact in almost every institution e.g. family, school, workplace.
The normative heterosexual masculinity promoted in the media subordinates and accentuates the non-normative masculinities of the men involved in sexual contact with children and young people. The simultaneous construction of normative and non-normative masculinity continually reproduces their hierarchical relationship (Phillips, 2005, p223). Based on a critical analysis of discourses from the newspaper reports, and using the symbolism of a hierarchy or pyramid, these non-normative masculinities are themselves stratified into hierarchic positions at different degrees of deviance from the norm (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Pyramid of Perversion

Based on my analysis of behaviours and types of men from the newspaper reports, this hierarchy diagrammatically outlines how men who relate sexually with children are represented. It is constructed from the social values attributed to various sexual orientations and forms of masculinity, in relative proximity to normative masculinity. The form of masculinity at the apex of this hierarchy is seen as less deviant, in comparison with those below which are valued as
less appropriately masculine. It seems that basic notions of masculinity are propagated - in times of perceived or real crises - when normative masculinity is seen to be under threat. I argue here that the idea of men relating sexually to children, and debate about that phenomenon, is an instantiation of that threat.

The men identified in the press reports are situated relative to their deviation from the hegemonic standard in a heteronormative society. The ‘family man’, who interacts sexually with children, while obviously non-normative, has a superordinate masculine status relative to the ‘clergyman’ and the ‘homosexual man’. An assumption of celibacy is indicative of inactive (hetero) sexuality, while the clergymen and laymen sexually involved with boys are furthest from culturally normative standards.

The interlinked discourses outlined here are evident from a review of the four Irish newspapers. The material dimensions of these discourses are linked to the conservation of hegemonic masculinity and heteronormative society from interrogation. They represent positions in the ‘regulatory fiction’ (Butler, 1990) that constructs hegemonic masculinity. The naturalness and normality of hegemonic masculinity within a heteronormative context is reproduced.

What is socially peripheral is often symbolically central, and the ‘othered’ men are distanced, via their masculine social position and status, from the traditional or normative version of masculinity that is culturally significant. Whatever the empirical diversity of masculinities, the contestation for hegemony implies that gender hierarchy does not have multiple niches at the top (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, p845). As we have seen, there are different accounts of the processes which construct sexuality. While functionalist approaches - which share many assumptions with socio-biology - may not be in favour with contemporary gender theorists, they clearly continue to have resonances in everyday life and popular culture (Tovey and Share, 2003). Developments in the theoretical humanities, feminist inspired social theory and insights
from queer theorizing are not reflected in popular discourses as exemplified by news media discourses.

Discursive practices have major ideological effects and they can produce and reproduce unequal power relations through the ways in which they represent things and position people. We see the ‘family man’ is excused the discursive designation of ‘true paedophile’. Reports featuring clergymen and homosexual men are in the majority, with a concentration on the ‘less masculine’ practices of these men.

At this time and place, the culturally significant masculine practices exclude inactive (hetero) sexuality and homosexuality. Connell (1987) reminds us that what is normative is not “a definition of normality but a definition of what the holders of social power wish to have accepted” (p52); this raises the issue of “whose interests are embodied in the ‘norms’”. The masculinities of the men represented as paedophiles in the press reports clearly demarcate normative from non-normative masculinities.

**Discursive Effects**

Different theoretical approaches (e.g. Connell, Hearn, Wetherell and Edley) see the concept of male dominance re-formulated through the idea of hierarchies among men and hegemonies of discursive masculinities. There is the reality of plural masculinities within a hierarchy, while at the same time, men and forms of symbolic masculinity, are hierarchically socially located. It is evidently imperative to maintain a distance between men who relate sexually with children and ‘normal men’.

The functional power of a discourse delimits what it is possible and not possible to say and do about an issue, and symbolically externalising these men deflects any interrogation of the potential complicity of normative sexual and social practices in adult sexual involvement with
children. In addition, the delegitimation of the masculinity of those men maintains the heteronormative gender order and internal masculine hegemony.

In addition to questions of the power of discourse, there is also the question of power over discourse (Fairclough, 1989). This is largely a matter of access. Access to or control over public discourse and communication is an important ‘symbolic’ resource, as it functions in the circulation of knowledge and information. We need to look at the role of discourse in the re/production and challenge of dominance. Dominance here is defined as the exercise of social power by elites, institutions or groups that results in social inequality, including political, social and gender inequality (van Dijk, 1993: p250). The media have an elite role in society. They reflect and create dominant ideas and ways of seeing the world. However, it must be said that power and dominance, and their relation to discourse, cannot be represented by a simplistic one-dimensional model; as actual power relations are often subtle and indirect. Relations of power are not always top-down and work without resistance. To focus on the media as a powerful elite is not to position them as villains in a simplistic story of social inequality; but to focus on their unique access to public discourse and hence on their role in the discursive management of the public mind (van Dijk, 1993: p280).

One discourse can be related to many others, and discourses may be present across different sites and draw on similar cultural referents. Here, the media discourses draw from culturally recognisable dominant scenarios to position the men who interact sexually with children in relative non-normativity. There is a demarcation active between individuals who are sufficiently masculine and individuals considered to be lacking masculinity. Negative images of homosexuality and the rhetorical association of homosexuality and paedophilia are frequently deployed in the mainstream newspapers. Interlinked discourses in this study are those associated with heteronormativity, hegemonic masculinities, the male sex drive and homophobia - as the men who relate sexually with children are discursively located outside heteronormative society.
This research demonstrates how discourses constitute particular phenomena while located in wider cultural and social contexts. This research also shows that discursive strategies and practices legitimate and otherwise ‘naturalize’ the social order and especially relations of inequality (Fairclough, 1992). Of course these discursive practices are embedded in broader socio-political and historical contexts. Ireland has experienced wide-ranging and rapid development in economic terms, and a certain social liberalism. However it also remains a fairly traditional society, where conventional attitudes towards family, gender roles and sexuality persist. It is difficult to envisage that even in more open, pluralist and politically diverse societies, the psychosocial complex that is men’s sexual interaction with children, would be openly debated.

Schulz (2005) remarks, “that if we want to learn the truth [about child sexual abuse], we must be willing to explore the limits of our own value system…” (p2). One has to ask, how does one begin to address dimensions of adult male sexual contact with children in an environment where the cultural ‘horizon of understanding’ informed by the media, precludes its comprehension and limits its discussion?

**Summary**

Four leading Irish newspapers were reviewed for reports in relation to ‘the paedophile’. The reports selected for analysis contained information on these men and their masculine practices. An analysis of discourse is a method through which the social construction of phenomena can be investigated, along with their structuring assumptions. Moving from the text to the extratextual and the contextual, it is clear that the media discourses have a material dimension and serve particular functions.

This chapter includes an analysis of the main discourses present in the press reporting of the paedophile (micro-context), and locates these discourses within the theoretical perspectives and
discursive regimes of masculinities and heteronormativity (macro-context). Media discourse, by focusing on some aspects of masculinity and sexuality, achieve an ideological effect. They buttress hegemonic masculinity and normative attitudes in society.
CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSION

This chapter draws together the main themes explored in this thesis: adult sexual involvement with children; men and masculinities; media, and a critical analysis of the discourses circulating in relation to men’s sexual involvement with children.

The aim of this research is to explore how the men who are reported as sexually relating to children, are represented in newspapers; and by so doing make explicit the power relations and ideological components of these discourses. The media play a crucial role in the production and reproduction of what are considered facts and truth. Media discourse constructs social phenomena in particular ways and indeed often defines what constitutes a phenomenon. Discourses serve several purposes, one of which is the maintenance and propagation of culturally appropriate norms. The norms of hegemonic masculinity and heteronormativity are both reflected and reinforced in the newspaper representations of men who relate sexually to children.

Questions of power and ideology are closely related to discourse. Discursive practices can have major ideological effects through the ways in which they reproduce unequal power relations, represent things and position people. Discourse itself is both constituted by, and ensures the reproduction of, the social system, and it does that through forms of selection, exclusion and domination. The discursive constructions in the newspaper reports are strongly linked to the exercise of power, expelling those men who relate sexually to children from normal society and the category ‘normal men’. It is clear how shared assumptions from the cultural macro-context are drawn upon as dominant discourses are utilised in news reports of ‘the paedophile’. Sexual deviance is located in the individual and there is a conflation of male sexual involvement with children and homosexual orientation.
The news media produce and reproduce social reality for many people. In *The Order of Discourse* Foucault (1981) asserts that in every society the production of discourse is simultaneously controlled, selected, organised, and redistributed by various procedures (Young, 1981). One of the ways discourses are circulated in Western society is through print and broadcast media. One of the central attributes of dominant discourse is its power to interpret conditions, issues and events in favour of powerful interests. Purvis and Hunt (1993) suggest some discourses become ideological through their connection with systems of domination (p497). In the newspapers reviewed for this research, we see specific interests are represented as universal interests. We must ask what configuration of power relations does the portrayal of the paedophile serve?

One must acknowledge that readers and listeners may take up different subject positions in relation to the text. However, reports in the newspapers present a description of something that is happening in a larger social context, replete with a complex set of power relations (McGregor, 2003, 2004). The media circulate a lot of information that is considered to be culturally significant and this is interpreted and acted upon by readers or listeners depending on their rules, norms, and mental models of socially acceptable behaviour. News stories ‘framed’ in specific ways cause some aspects of an issue to be given more emphasis while others are neglected or ignored. The media play a crucial role in shaping issues and in setting boundaries for what is considered to be legitimate discourse, about what is talked about and how. In the context of men interacting sexually with children, the ‘stranger danger’ construct deflects attention from sexual involvement with children by adults within a family context. Details of sexual activity such as buggery, masturbation, fondling, french kissing and so forth in this context of men’s sexual involvement with children generates disturbing images for many people. Choosing to include these explicit details, almost exclusively in reports of men involved with boys, again serves to accentuate that man’s deviation in the minds of readers. An emphasis on the suggested homosexuality of many of the men in the news reports increases the degree of non-normativity
of those men, while it crucially removes heterosexuality, and its possible implication in men’s sexual involvement with children, from interrogation.

This research found an emphasis on unemployment, alcoholism, mental illness, disarray and a fractured family environment in the portrayal of ‘family men’, illustrating how in their dysfunction they are ‘not like us’. Crucially, however there is also the suggestion that the situation of these family men may be recoverable. Their remorse is reported and expert opinion confirms their temporary situational regression to sexual activity with children. There is a dual effect operating here. These ‘family men’ by their sexual behaviour with children, occupy a marginalised position in relation to normal society. They are successfully ‘othered’, and their deviant sexual behaviour is located in them, and thus outside of, normal society. Yet in comparison to the clergymen and homosexual men that dominate the news reports, I contend they crucially may be seen as less deviant.

As has been done for this research, a critical analysis of media discourse challenges the taken-for-granted assumptions in much of what is discursively constructed as normal and normative. As non-normative masculinity is reproduced, the ideal, necessary for the construction of the marginalised, is also reproduced. So Phillips (2005) reminds us that, while the ideal is most obviously affirmed and reproduced by representations of the norm, it is also affirmed and reproduced by representations of marginalized masculinity. The suggestion of the ideal is present, as what the ideal is not.

It is essential to bear in mind the extra-textual context of discourse. One has to be aware of its material dimensions, and identify those who will and will not benefit from the mobilization of the discourse. This research shows how the discursively constructed paedophile is distanced through a strategic delegitimation of his masculine practices. This leaves the concept and practice of hegemonic masculinity unproblematized. Its implication in adult sexual involvement with children is strategically deferred.
Adult sexual interaction with children

Adult male sexual interaction with children is not a phenomenon simple either to research or to explain. Little is known about men who relate in a sexual way to children. Understanding why some men become involved sexually with children raises questions about childhood, sexuality, criminality, deviance and the social construction of moral issues.

The various theoretical perspectives described in Chapter Four provide some of the explanations as to why some men sexually interact with children. Scientific, usually medical and psychological approaches, largely situate the explanations for that sexual behaviour within the individual - be it as a result of hormonal or neuro-developmental factors, aberrant psychological conditioning or cognitive distortions. The claims of these approaches to scientific method, rationality and methodological validity serve to associate these explanations with truth in the minds of many people.

Explanations informed by feminist theorising and social constructionism locate adult sexual involvement with children within the wider dimensions of culture, place and time. Most feminist perspectives suggest that men who interact sexually with children do so as part of existing gender relations, in which power and sex are used in the exploitation of women and children. Another explanation given prominence in this study comes from those who assert sexual freedom and pro-paedophilia views. This perspective does not see sexual interaction between adults and children as necessarily problematic or traumatic for the child or young person. The suggestion is that the categorization of individuals as insane, perverted or indeed criminal, is in itself a form of social control, and an imposition of restrictions on the sexuality of adults and children. There are attempts to demarcate between sexually abusive behaviours towards children and paedophilic loving relationships with children, which according to paedophile activists can be consensual and nurturing (O’Carroll, 1980; Riegel, 2004). Apart from the latter explanation, most of the explanatory theoretical models of male sexual
interaction with children affirm the normative status of adult heterosexuality (Li et al., 1990, p218).

The corollary of the affirmation of a normative standard of sexual behaviour is the espousal of the notion of ‘abnormality’ whether couched in terms of individual pathology or deviant conditioning. The portrayal and labelling of a man who relates sexually to a child as pathologically disturbed or sexually deviant, deflects from his own agency and from consideration of wider cultural practices and gender relations.

**Men and Masculinities**

This research shows how men who relate sexually to children are discursively positioned relative to their deviation from hegemonic masculinity. The ‘family man’, perhaps exacerbated by stressful life circumstances, illness and addictions, engages temporarily in aberrant sexual behaviour. However, he remains within what Howells (1981) describes as a “normal sexual preference structure” (p78), and is distinguished from clergymen and homosexual men whose sexualities are marginalised in the context of hegemonic masculinity and heteronormativity. For clergymen and homosexual men, their sexual interaction with children and young people is more likely to be seen as a product of a deviant sexual preference.

The category of the paedophile is seen to function as a way of establishing power relations between men (Cossins, 2000). The masculine identities of the men represented in news reports are distanced from the form of masculinity that is currently culturally hegemonic. An internal hegemony (Demetriou 2001) is evident here, which preserves the social ascendancy of one group of men over other men as a function of their perceived masculinity.

It is necessary to understand sexual interaction between a man and a child or young person in the context of both the considerable public power of men as a group and the lack of power men
may experience on an individual level. This individual powerlessness may result in part from their relationships with women and children, and also as a result of their relationships with other men. Connell comments that there are relations of alliance, dominance and subordination in a masculinity which is culturally hegemonic and “relationships are constructed through practices that exclude and include, that intimidate and exploit” (Connell, 1995: 37). What do popular conceptions of a man who interacts sexually with a child reveal about the cultural assumptions in relation to male sexuality? The newspapers reflect the categorization of paedophiles referred to elsewhere in this study, and essentialist views of human sexuality. According to Angelides (2004) an identitarian model of sexuality informs the dominant discourse of paedophilia, and one that is biased towards heteronormative notions of fixed or core sexualities. The bad/less-bad masculine sexuality construction is evident in the newspaper excerpts reviewed. Common also are the ‘excuses’ used by way of explanation for ‘out-of-character’ actions, both by the actors in the reports and insinuated by the reporting itself. Family men emerge from chaotic family environments, financial pressures, ill health, addictions and unemployment and behave uncharacteristically. Indeed these points are annunciated by defence counsel, police and psychiatric experts who then draw on scientific rationale to determine who should and should not be labelled as ‘a paedophile’. Reflecting “the shaping impact on people of experts’ knowledge claims” (Lukes, 2005: p88), the proposed the connection between power and knowledge emerges. An effect of this is the materialization of a clear distinction between types of men who are involved sexually with children, as well as a distinction between these men and the rest of the male population, whom, it is assumed, bear no similarity to them in sexual practices.

Morgan (2002) notes that despite efforts to acknowledge the reality, and tolerate the existence of alternative masculinities “there remain deeply embedded and subtly coercive notions of what it really means to be a man” (p280). While men and masculinities in modern Western Europe may be multiple and variously expressed, in Ireland the model of hegemonic masculinity within a heteronormative context expresses a society-wide ideal and it is this model that features in
media representations. Nye (2005) remarks that the conceptual willingness to tolerate a plurality of masculinities and femininities may have advanced, however “in crises, whether real or invented, societies tend to revert reflexively to what appear to be stable gender norms…” (p1955). This is evident here, as the sexual behaviour is categorised, and masculinity is represented, in terms of male gender role expectations - thus revealing the cultural dominance of narrowly defined manifestations of masculinity. These media representations are part of the social agenda and contribute to the social construction of men who interact sexually with children. While there are discerning readers, and people can make up their own minds, such representations in the newspapers undoubtedly influence the way the Irish public thinks about, and responds to, those men and the issues involved.

**Media**

Research shows that sexual interaction between men and children is too common to be dismissed as a product of individual madness or even as deviant (Kelly *et al.*, 2000; Percy and Mayhew, 1997). It happens most frequently within a context of close social familiarity and is often intra-familial (McGee *et al.*, 2002). Yet the media consistently report unusual and extreme cases. Cases of ‘stranger-danger’ attract disproportionately high levels of media attention (Greer, 2003; Kitzinger, 1999). Foucault (1978) demonstrates the interplay of power and knowledge in creating a hegemonic discourse concerning sexuality and sexual behaviours. He highlights the role of medical science in providing an intellectual structure of justification for the attitudes and values of the dominant group in a society (e.g. Foucault 1973a, 1973b). In relation to men who relate sexually to children, medical and legal discourses dominate popular discourse. This is seen time and time again in the reports from the Irish newspapers.

In the newspapers reviewed the use of the term paedophile covers a range of behaviours that are not consistent with its psychiatric classification (from the DSM definition of paedophilia, see Chapter 4). There is a need to recognise that ‘paedophilia’ is not a homogenous category of
explanation for a range of behaviours. As a single, unitary phenomenon, it must be problematised - because no single category or model can adequately explain all the behaviours that can be included as man-child sexual interaction. In addition, use of the term ‘paedophile’ evokes levels of public opprobrium that make objective discussion difficult, if not impossible.

A reality is socially constructed through a mixture of popular culture, personal experience, the experiences of others, and information from institutions. Media concern about the risk presented by the sexual use of children has been characterised as out of proportion to the reality of the risk (Silverman and Wilson, 2002). The influence of the media becomes increasingly significant when alternative sources of information are not available (Surette, 1998). People use knowledge they obtain from the media to construct a picture of the world, an image of reality that informs their views. The way an issue is constructed has implications for the way it is responded to, and different people and groups within the community come to have an investment in particular constructions of that issue (Southwell, 2003). It is clear from the newspapers I reviewed, that the terms ‘paedophile’ and ‘paedophilia’ are used in reports of a wide range of sexual relations and serve as a deductive umbrella term in the context of men who relate sexually to children. The use of stereotypical terms gives the impression that those men are clearly distinguishable from ‘normal’ people. Words like ‘monster’ and ‘beast’ emphasise the social distance between the readers of news and the deviants they read about. The demonization of men involved sexually with children serves to consolidate moral boundaries and promote social solidarity.

The news reports reviewed for this research, illustrate how stories about ‘the paedophile’ in four Irish newspapers for the period under study (2003 – 2005) secure the boundaries of normative masculinities and active heterosexual masculinities in particular. Research confirms that men relating sexually to children in a family environment – whether parents or other relatives – are consistently under-reported in the media. Although this is not a quantitative study, it is noticeable in reviewing material from the Irish newspapers, the greater extent to which men outside a family context, or who are sexually involved with boys, feature in the news reports. In
addition, there is the frequent occurrence of references to the homosexuality of the man reported as being sexually involved with children. A heteronormative context provides a basis for the perception that homosexual men are a greater social threat than are heterosexual men. In terms of press reporting, the issue of men’s sexual involvement with children, and especially within families, lies far outside the reader’s ‘latitude of acceptance’ (Perloff, 2003: p60). The threat of the paedophile is externalized (Critcher, 2003). Chermak (1997) notes that the media is a deviance-defining elite. This research demonstrates that power implicit in the deployment of knowledge is used to represent degrees of deviance among an already deviant population of men.

**Analysing Discourses**

One way to challenge a ‘truth’ is not necessarily to replace it with another ‘truth’ but to examine the discursive processes by which true and false statements become meaningful. The legal and medical perspectives inform popular and media discourses. We read of men who are in the criminal justice system and/or ‘in treatment’ for their condition. These men are already designated criminal and/or ill before they get to appear in newspaper reports. Once a constituent of the news report, these men are portrayed in certain ways, which a critical analysis of discourse suggests serve extra-textual and material purposes.

This study highlights the discursive, embodied construction of a ‘less masculine other’, in the context of adult male sexual involvement with children. The ‘paedophile’ is identified and positioned in society, and certain discursive resources are drawn upon while illustrating his masculine practices. The press positions the paedophile at some distance from society and ‘normal’ men. Power and sexuality are inextricably linked in the production of masculine identities and practices. As Cossins (2000) suggests, the labelling of some men as 'deviant' may have more to say about the power relations between those labelled and the people who label them (p133).
One needs to expand the generalizability of discursive analytic work beyond the level of the targeted, analysed text. What counts as knowledge, and the various systems through which knowledge is qualified or disqualified must be traced to the multiple institutional supports and various social structures and practices underlying the production of truth. It is essential to be aware of the importance of the material correlates of discourse, and the requirement to analyse its material and extra-textual dimensions. Foucault (1981) suggests that the more we are able to tie discourse to the motives and operations of power-interests, the more analytically visible discourse will become, and as a result, the more politically robust an analysis becomes.

Maintaining a preoccupation with the contents of the text only, does not engage with discourse properly as an instrument of power, nor does it reference a greater macro perspective where different and powerful material instances of power are intimately connected to its various textual elements (Hook, 2001). In examining both the text and the context, this study has looked at representations of the paedophile and beyond, to demonstrate the bases of power that both underpin, and benefit from, the truth-claims of the discourses of hegemonic masculinity and heteronormativity. As a culturally dominant group men escape critical analysis, as does the culturally dominant concept of heterosexuality.

A continuing focus on the deviant precludes discussion of the normative, from which it is evident many men involved in sexual interaction with children and young people derive. A continued focus on the gender and sexualities of non-dominant groups leave hegemonic forms of masculinity and heterosexuality undeconstructed, as the norm. This research has confirmed that the man involved sexually with children is distanced from normality through news media discourse. It has also demonstrated that such distancing is augmented by a delegitimation of the masculine practices of the man in question, highlighting his non-normativity in relation to the hegemonic ideal.
Discursive demarcations, such as the acts of naming, classifying, and categorizing are in themselves considered acts of power which demarcate the centre from the periphery, the normal from the deviant, the same from the different, and self from the ‘Other’. In addition, identities and realities constructed through discursive practices are constructed in ways to conceal their manufacture. Labels such as the ‘dysfunctional family’, the ‘sick individual’, the ‘paedophile’ become a method of stereotyping, and provides us with an umbrella term that disguises lack of understanding or ignorance about the complexities of the behaviours, processes or phenomena under consideration. Some of the myths that have emerged concerning men who relate sexually to children are part of social stereotyping. There is much greater media attention given to forms of so-called sexual deviance. There is the notion that children are at greater risk from strangers rather than someone known to them. The deviant stranger is placed at a comfortable distance from the ‘family’ environment. Then there is the suggestion that homosexual men may pose a greater risk than heterosexual men, which may indicate more about levels of homophobia in society that it does about the realities of adult male sexual involvement with children. Stereotyping and use of loose definitions are involved as the media seek sensation rather than information. Questions about family, family interaction and family dynamics go unasked, as do questions about gender and sexuality and the role of institutions in the development of sexuality and sexual relationships.

**Some reflections on the research process**

The terms used in this thesis have not been used uncritically. I have attempted to illustrate different ways in which masculinity and masculinities are theorised and explanations for sexual interaction between adults and children. The idea of the social construction of knowledge is central to this research, as much information in the social sphere is presented and represented by the news media.
In what may be a strategic utilisation of terms in the newspapers under review, many types of sexual interaction are categorised under the term paedophilia and the complexities of adult sexual involvement with children are not interrogated. Questioning the social bases of knowledge, I believe, is part of any critical project. This research shows how men who relate sexually with children are represented in newspapers and how that version of events informs and creates public awareness of a complex social issue.

This research has, I believe, a socially relevant purpose. Unmasking the written word and critically analysing media discourse can bring about different perspectives and deeper understanding of whose interest is being served by them. The media plays a crucial role in shaping how we see events, and in setting the boundaries of what is or what is not considered to be legitimate discourse, i.e. what is talked about and how. One of the central attributes of dominant discourse is its power to interpret conditions, issues and events in favour of the powerful. The words of those in power are taken as self-evident truths (Van Dijk, 2001). This research shows some of the ways in which dominant perspectives in a society - such as those of heteronormativity and hegemonic masculinity - construct versions of reality, ones that favour their interests.

A number of perspectives inform understandings of male sexual involvement with children, the study of men and masculinities and the construction of discourses. In line with a social constructionist position, the conclusions that the researcher has made are not claims of an ultimate ‘truth’, but rather the understanding that she has reached after exploring newspaper representation of these men. The concept of hegemonic masculinity is used here as an analytical framework (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). I suggest that the hegemonic norms in the newspaper reports are used strategically to separate the men who relate sexually with children from other men.
In an arena as morally loaded as this one, it is as if people cannot entertain the notion of men’s sexual involvement with children unless those men are seen as sufficiently deviant from ‘normal’ men, leaving the rest of us feeling okay about ourselves. The action of men’s sexual involvement with children works as a form of discourse that inscribes and reinscribes the power relationships involved in the transaction of those behaviours. It constructs a message of vulnerability of roles, of sexuality and relationships (Norman, 1994). Like any other phenomenon, it has both a history and a construction. It has been, and remains inseparable from, constructions of difference, gender, sexuality and power. It provokes strong emotions and raises significant issues about how children are treated, about sexuality and about power – issues that are central to many debates and critiques of contemporary society (Glaser and Frosh, 1993, p3).

This research invokes context and links to other discourses in the interpretation of the social action that is media representation of men who interact sexually with children. It demonstrates the social interaction and power relations implicit in press discourses surrounding these men, and the cultural dominance of narrowly defined expectations of masculinity. The contextual dimension is evident from this study, as the portrayals of non-normative masculine practices of men who relate sexually with children distance them from society and ‘normal’ men. The hegemonic masculine gender ideal is pervasive. The questioning of men from within the dominant gender ideal poses a significant threat to heteronormative masculine ideology. Hegemony is likely to be established only if there is some correspondence between cultural ideals and institutional power, while marginalization is always relative to the authorisation of the hegemonic position of the dominant group (Featherstone et al., 2007).

The phenomenon of adult sexual involvement with children is a complex social issue. The discursive, embodied construction of a gendered-self and ‘other’, and the discourses or frameworks of knowledge relating to men’s sexual interaction with children, need exploration. The choice of Critical Discourse Analysis for this research is relevant, in order to highlight the role of discourse in the re/production of dominant ideology in media portrayals. Critical
research on discourse, text and the social construction of taken-for-granted things has inspired work across disciplines. Analysis of discourses, involving an examination of what gets said by whom, when and from where, is one way of working beyond the limits of discrete disciplines to discover how specific ideas come about and what their effects may be.

A gendered analysis of man-child sexual interaction is required, as I believe there are a number of issues calling for interrogation. The hegemonic domain for the propagation of research into men’s sexual involvement with children has been the field of psychopathology. Not to suggest that one abandon the study of psychopathology, but I believe research needs cross-disciplinary input and to be situated in a much broader context. Even within the medical paradigms so prevalent in defining deviance, and the norm, and claiming the objectivity of scientific rationality, the biased nature of the samples on which theories and treatment paradigms are formed should be questioned. It is important not to let volatile and emotive issues of sexuality compromise our attempts to improve knowledge about ourselves.

At the outset, I outlined how I arrived at my research question and what this study sought to address. I had intended to explore how men who have a sexual involvement with children feel about themselves as men. Wetherell and Edley (1999) suggest we should understand hegemonic norms as defining a subject position in discourse that is taken up strategically by men in particular circumstances. However as this was not a feasible option at that time, I turned my attention to look at what other people thought of men who related sexually to children. As we have seen, the public derive much of their information from media sources. This research has moved from assessing text in the newspapers, through a critical analysis of the discourses of which they are a part, to a consideration of wider extra-discursive material dimensions in the social and political environment. This study challenges some of the social and political attitudes surrounding men’s sexual involvement with children. Its specific contribution has been to demonstrate the necessity for an awareness and critical understanding of the crucial role of discourse in the reproduction of dominance and inequality in our society. This research
demonstrates the normative effects of dominant understandings of adult male sexual involvement with children.

It is clear that men’s sexual involvement with children is a widespread and common practice. However, this should not obscure the importance of considering women who relate sexually to children. I believe this is a significant area for further study and one which is also enmeshed with gender relations and in cultural construction.

This research aimed to explore the representation of men who relate sexually to children, through newspaper reports - and then to trace the discursive effects of these representations to the political and socio-cultural context. One has to bear in mind that other Irish newspapers may report things differently, and reporting styles may vary with publication type and over time. In the same way, newspapers and media in other countries may approach the reporting of men’s sexual involvement with children in different ways. Nevertheless, this research has shown that the portrayal of the ‘paedophile’ in four mainstream Irish newspapers perpetuates both stereotypical, and non-typical, views of men who relate sexually with children.

This research has taken theories from masculinity studies, sexuality studies and the ‘Other’ and applied them to look at men who relate sexually with children. I have considered the topic of man-child sexual relations which is not commonly addressed in the literature on masculinities.

I believe this research has looked at a topical issue and its findings serve socially and politically relevant purposes. It would be useful to recognise that some men relate sexually with children, and this ought to be seen as a relatively common phenomenon rather than just an illness located within deviant individuals and ‘types’ of men. The media representation of these men enhances their characterization as separate from normal society. When there is a silence on certain issues, the vacuum is filled with scapegoats and stereotypes. This research has shown how the figure of ‘the paedophile’ is linked to hegemonic forms of masculinity. Hegemonic norms are
strategically used in the newspapers to separate men from other men and differentiate among those portrayed as non-normative.
APPENDIX ONE
APPENDIX ONE

The excerpts below are from articles taken from four Irish newspapers for the years 2003, 2004, 2005. These excerpts were selected following a review of those newspapers in a two-phase process.

In the first phase of the review, using the terms ‘paedophilia’ and ‘paedophile’, newspaper articles were retrieved from an electronic database and manual searches. Because the focus of this research study is to explore how the men – as ‘paedophiles’ - are represented in the newspapers, only those articles that contained details of the men involved and their masculine practices were chosen, during a second selection. A critical analysis of some of the discourses present in the newspapers is possible by a close examination of, the articles and excerpts, selected from this second phase and is discussed in the body of this thesis.
WHY I'M EXPOSING PAEDO BROTHER WHO SHOWS NO REMORSE

Tom Gilligan (52) grew up in Navan and joined the army at 15. He worked as a D.J., a private investigator, and a driving instructor before setting up his ‘Fame to Frame’ snooker promotions company as a hobby. It gave him the front he needed to access little boys.

His brother said ‘there is no way Tom only abused one child once in his life, he was always a loner, who only befriended children, now we know why’.

[In his personal papers] Tom Gilligan gushes enthusiastically about his friendship with another 12 year old boy ‘he is bubbly and friendly, good natured and yet he’s very sensitive. He’s very special…’

‘sometimes he gets a bit stubborn and I can see the start of his interest in girls, which often brings its own problems’

(The Sunday World, by Niamh O’Connor, pp16-17)
Excerpt 2

12th January, 2003, The Sunday World

WHO Star in Kiddie Porn Probe

British police are conducting their largest ever investigation, codenamed Operation Ore, into on-line paedophilia and child pornography…

…people, including a judge, magistrates, dentists, hospital consultants and a deputy headmaster have so far been arrested. Fifty police officers have also been arrested including two officers who investigated the murders of Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman…

(The Sunday World, by Eddie Rowley, p.8)

Excerpt 3

19th January, 2003, The Sunday World

HE'S SIMPLY DIGUSTING

The innocent 8 year old child [in pornographic images] should have been playing with her Barbie dolls and doing the fun things that kids do. She should have been thinking about Santa and Barney and the stuff that makes a child’s world such a precious place.

The Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Unit (DVSAU) [police]…they are the good guys who have exposed a group of sick people, most of whom are rich, upper class and in positions of power and influence.
Tim Allen [referring to Allen a celebrity chef] rats have more morality that this pony-tailed creep…

(The Sunday World, by Paul Williams, pp8-9)

**Excerpt 4**

8th March, 2003, *The Irish Times*

LECTURER PRETENDED HE WAS GIRL IN CHILD PORNOGRAPHY IMAGES

A college lecturer who downloaded 12 child pornographic images to his laptop computer used them to pretend to other users…that he was the girl in the photographs although he had no sexual interest in minors, a sex addiction counsellor told a court yesterday.

Mr Donal Storey (48)…pleaded guilty to possessing the images at his home …last year.

The court heard that before the offence he had been receiving counselling for self-injury and negative self-image. He was later referred to sexual addiction expert Mr Owen Steevens because he was at that stage addicted to adult pornography.

When the child pornography was discovered, Mr Steevens assessed the defendant as to his motivation and found that he used an image to ‘take on the identity of the female portrayed in it’.

Asked …for his views on whether his client would fall into the category of a paedophile, Mr Steevens said: "I saw no evidence to show a sexual interest in minors or that he poses a threat to minors."
Since Mr Storey first appeared in court, he had been suspended from his job, but his wife, friends and family had supported him. He had references from the rector of his local congregation and from the marriage and relationship counselling service which he had been attending.

(City Edition: Home News; *The Irish Times*, p.4)

**Excerpt 5**

9th March, 2003, *The Sunday World*

INSIDE THE RING OF EVIL: Secret Group of Child Abusers is Exposed by Gardai

At least forty children are believed to have been abused by the paedophile ring smashed by Gardai in Co. Cork…

Two more ‘staunch family men’ trusted with children over the years are suspected of involvement…

Kingpin of the paedophile ring, former sailor Collins (58) interfered with three of his nephews and another boy…

A victim told the court how the abuse began when Collins told him he could earn a pound if he touched his penis…

(The Sunday World, by Niamh O’Connor, pp10-11)
Excerpt 6

1st July, 2003, *The Irish Independent*

COURT NAMES SCOUT CHIEF WHO RAPED SCHOOLBOY

A remedial teacher and Catholic Boy Scouts regional commissioner jailed in 2000 for 10 years for raping a schoolboy has been named. Bachelor Denis O’Shea (54) convicted of buggering an 11-year-old pupil during special lunchtime remedial classes from 1997/98.

(Irish Independent, by Prionsias O’Maolchlain, p.9)

Excerpt 7

13th April, 2003, *The Sunday World*

THIS EVIL PERVERT RUINED MY LIFE: Exclusive:

Nephew tells full horrific story of uncle’s abuse from age of five

Nephew chain smokes as he explains that he has never received counselling for the horrors inflicted by his mother’s merchant seaman brother.

Nephew (36) of merchant seaman [told how uncle] put his arm around me, kissing, French kissing, he would open my pants, [rub my] penis, masturbate…

“It started when I was about 5 or 6…”

“It started out this way – touching me with his hands. He used to put his arms around me – kissing, French kissing. He used to open my pants and catch me by the private parts; the penis. Her used to get me to masturbate him. He ejaculated all the times when I did this…”
“He buggered me basically…I am fully convinced that even now this is the reason that I am still passing blood when I go to the toilet”

‘During the time of the abuse [which ended when he was 12], he often asked me to put his penis in my mouth…You name it he done it – oral sex, masturbation, French kissing, buggery”

“The abuse was always in my mind when my Navy colleagues were sleeping in the same accommodation as myself – 11 of us in one cabin. I used to take showers when there was nobody around”.

He lost his job in the Navy and his relationship with the mother of his 4 children has fallen apart because of his excessive drinking. He is due up in court on a drink driving charge.

Abuse lasted till I was about 12…

(The Sunday World, by Niamh O’Connor, pp32-33)

Excerpt 8

11th May, 2003, The Sunday World

RAPE VICTIM LASHES OUT AT STATE FOR LACK OF CARE

Rape victim [of father-daughter] lashes state for lack of care…

Her mother was the breadwinner for the family and worked in a local factory while her husband had hours alone with their daughter…

(The Sunday World, by Niamh O’Connor, p.6)
**Excerpt 9**

18th May, 2003, *The Sunday World*

I WANT TO FIND THE MAN WHO RAPED ME

James O’Connor (57) spent his childhood in reform and industrial schools….. “I want to find the man who raped me…This man felt my genitals and got into bed with me…

I [have] had problems with my sexuality…

In Daingean Industrial School I was sexually abused my other inmates…. The first few times that Brother X flogged me, he would fondle my genitals.”

(The Sunday World, by Niamh O’Connor, p.36)

**Excerpt 10**

29th June, 2003, *The Sunday World*

NOT AGAIN - CLERIC IS CHARGED WITH ABUSING BOYS AT THE SCHOOL THAT OVERLOOKED HIS PERVERTED PAST

For 20 years, the one time member of the All Priests Group…went on to become a leading member of the community. He was a member of the Arklow Music Festival, The Avoca Singers, the Wicklow Male Voice Choir…

A convicted pervert cleric (62) is to be charged with sexually abusing three boys in a school…
WOMAN (40) CONVICTED OF CHILD SEX ASSAULT,

A 40-year-old woman was convicted at Kilkenny Circuit Criminal Court yesterday of sexually assaulting an eight-year-old girl.

Two sexual assaults occurred while the woman was baby-sitting the girl and her brother.

… Mr Stephen Lanigan O'Keeffe, prosecuting, said the case was most unusual in that it involved sexual assaults by a woman on a young girl. Johnston was minding the child and sexual contact was made before they went to bed, he said. The contacts got more serious later, in the bed they were sharing.

Later, in bed, Ethel touched her and she did the same to her. Ethel was lying on top of her and they were kissing. She went asleep and the following morning there was no touching. The victim said it wasn't nice for Ethel to do what she did and she told her mammy and daddy.

In a statement to gardai, Johnston said that in bed, she and the girl were talking about sex and she asked the girl if she wanted to know about getting aroused. That was when the touching started. She denied getting on top of the girl.

Sgt … said Johnston had had a very hard life. She said that what she had done was wrong and she was sorry.

Mr O'Kelly said his client had now married for the second time.
Her first marriage was extremely difficult. Her husband was a member of the Travelling community and beat her regularly. She lived in a state of fear.

She had nine children. A psychological test showed that she had a very inadequate personality.

Johnston was born in London but returned to Ireland with her mother and never did any examinations. She had her first child at the age of 17 and for the next number of years had been brutalised by a drunken, vicious man. She wasn't able to keep the family together.

Later, she got a job in a hotel as part of the kitchen staff and then as a porter in another hotel, where she met her present husband. Her life had taken a very positive turn since then.

Mr O'Kelly suggested Johnston behaved in an extremely immature way with a young child. She didn't appear to recognise the consequences of her behaviour, but regretted it. She fell into the category of being mildly mentally handicapped.

He did not feel that she had any paedophile orientation and he did not think there was a danger to any other children. He thought she would benefit from support.

"She has had a dreadful life," he said. "What happened was a once-off. She said she had never had any attraction to children in this way, before or afterwards."

Judge … Johnston that what she did was totally wrong. He was glad she recognised that and had pleaded guilty. He didn't think that she should serve a custodial sentence. He placed her under the supervision
of the Probation Service for 12 months and bound her to the peace on her own bond of E500.

(City Edition: Home News; The Irish Times, p.4)

Excerpt 12

3rd August, 2003, The Sunday World

ROT IN PRISON DAUGHTER TELLS SEX BEAST DAD

Adams (62) from age 3 until 12 drugged his daughter's cocoa and forced her…

Adams a painter and decorator, preyed on local youngsters…indulged his penchant for sexually abusing children…

Because her mother was an alcoholic, the little girl was in care for most of her childhood and the sexual abuse occurred at weekends when she was sent to stay with her father…

After [he] jumped bail and fled across the border…when police raided his house they found a life-sized doll dressed as a little girl, child sex porn, and a drawer full of used children’s underwear…

His home was always full of religious tracts. His 36 year old son William is also a convicted sex offender… [son] has two children [with] his former partner, and is [also] married…

(The Sunday World, by Jim Campbell, p.12)
Excerpt 13

26th October/2nd November 2003, The Sunday World

RAPE CHILD KILLS HERSELF

A 13 year old girl committed suicide, raped as a child by friend of family…

(The Sunday World, by Niamh O’Connor, p.1)

I DID NOT RAPE LEONA: Revealed: Cousin at Centre of Suicide Probe

Cousin (24) [of 13 year old girl], named as rapist added ‘I have a girlfriend. I have no problem with you naming me in the paper, I have nothing to hide’

(The Sunday World, by Niamh O’Connor, pp10-11)
TIPPERARY MAN GETS FIVE-YEAR JAIL SENTENCE FOR SEXUAL ABUSE OF YOUNG GIRLS

A man … has been jailed for five years … for sexually assaulting three young west Dublin girls over a number of years.

Christopher Ellis (48) was found guilty …

Judge O'Donnell said… there was nothing to indicate Ellis had any remorse or insight into his behaviour and he was satisfied he was a paedophile.

One of the complainants said Ellis told her she was his ‘special girl’ and also referred to himself as her "uncle" though there was no relationship between them.

…..when she protested he was hurting her, Ellis replied she would get used to it.

Det Garda Edward McBride told prosecuting counsel…

Ellis (aged 48) had no previous convictions [for viewing child pornography] and as far as [Detective Garda] knew he had not been employed for at least 15 years. He seemed to have spent most of the time at home in bed…

Defence pleaded for leniency on the grounds that Ellis looked after his father who was ill. He had a serious history of paranoid schizophrenia and also of alcohol abuse, he [his defence] said…

(City Edition: Home News; The Irish Times, p.4)
WHO KNEW ABOUT BROTHER TOBIN? Did the Christian Brothers know about Brother Maurice Tobin's sexual acts against boys?

Letterfrack Industrial School – Christian Brother who pleaded guilty to abusing young boys…

Maurice Tobin, the Christian Brother who this week pleaded guilty to 25 sample counts of sexually abusing young boys at Letterfrack, He was described in court by his barrister as being of below average intelligence. A cook at the Galway institution, it was stated he did menial jobs all his life and took his frustrations out on the unfortunate victims…

It appears in internal Christian Brother reports as "sub-superior" or second-in-command of Letterfrack in the 1970s, and who had also held the senior post of "councillor" within the same community? Far from engaging merely in menial work, Brother Tobin had become a senior leading figure within Letterfrack.

The now-convicted paedophile… was reported as being very devout. He was praised for his efficient stewardship of the kitchens. He was also in charge of the poultry farm, worked by the boys…

During the 1970s, when he had assumed his senior role within the Letterfrack community of Brothers, he is described as living "an almost hermetical life", supervising the boys' meals and eating alone.
….. the report states that his other duty "is to supervise the boys' showers".

(The Irish Times, by Mary Raftery, p.51)

Excerpt 16

3rd December, 2003, The Irish Times

FUN-PARK FOUNDER GIVEN SIX-MONTH TERM FOR HAVING CHILD PORN IMAGES

A report on fun park founder given 6 month term for having child porn images: The founder of the Clara Lara children's fun-park in Co Wicklow, who was jailed for six months yesterday after pleading guilty to possession of child pornography, has not been a director of the company since May of this year.

More than 1,000 child pornography images were found on the computer of Peter Morphew, a 63-year-old separated father of two …Peter Morphew, a 63 year old separated father of two…

Yesterday Morphew told Judge Raymond Groarke in Wicklow Circuit Court he was ‘appalled’ by his behaviour…

He said in evidence that he had been going through a ‘bad patch’ at the time. He had got to a certain age, he was lonely, bored, depressed and drinking more than he should have been in the evenings…

“I hope most people know that it's not me. I can't believe I did it. I can't say why I did it. I certainly wouldn't, couldn't do it again.”
Morphew's home was raided by Gardai on May 27th, 2002, as part of Operation Amethyst, a special investigation which has targeted almost 100 suspected Irish paedophiles for the last 18 months.

(The Irish Times, by Conor Lally, p.1)

Excerpt 17

11th January, 2004, *The Sunday World*

**PERVERT TEACHER FREED TO PREY ON CHILDREN: Sick Paedo Back on the Loose**

A pervert school headmaster…

The sleazy paedophile singled out vulnerable children for sex during a teaching career spanning four decades.

The 70 year old was sentenced to 6 years…his litany of sex attacks on young boys.

In 1999, he pleaded guilty to masturbating nine different boys aged between 12 and 17…

But what the court didn’t hear was how he tried to bugger three of his victims.

During his trial, a 26 year old man told how the abuse caused him to become a heroin addict and a male prostitute, that he lost his self respect for a long time and had abused girlfriends.

Another of Tiernan’s young victims told the Sunday World shortly after Tiernan’s conviction, how the sex monster had blighted his life. Then just a 14 year old pupil, Tiernan gained his trust by giving him sweets and lifts home from school.
Incredibly, pervert Tiernan believed he was having relationships with the boys and his sex acts were a display of friendship.

In his statement to Gardai he told how he had his first sexual experience with a student aged 15 or 16. He referred to the sex acts as ‘sexual experiences’ refusing to acknowledge that his desires were twisted.

(The Sunday World, by Eamon Dillon, p.19)

**Excerpt 18**

31st January, 2004, The Irish Independent

**A DICKENSIAN TALE OF SEX ABUSE, HUNGER, SQUALOR AND VIOLENCE**

Isolated Industrial School in the 1930s and 1940s, a report [Laffoy Report] recounts: …from the evidence, a picture emerged which is consistent with the presence in Bathmore School of a sexual predator, probably a homosexual paedophile, who systematically preyed on and sexually abused vulnerable children…

(The Irish Independent, by David Quinn, p.10)
CONFESSIONS OF A DEPRAVED DAD: Sickening truth behind the case that shocked Ireland

A father…[had carried on] a 17 year long campaign of sexual and physical abuse against four of his children…

On [other] occasions the paedophile tried to rationalise his appalling behaviour by claiming that he didn’t really have a father’s relationship with his children.

He stated that ‘as a child I had been singled out for beatings [by his own father] because I had severe dyslexia’…

At school ‘Brother X made me stand up and called me female names’… ‘I found this very embarrassing’

‘When I was nine a man sexually abused me and my brother…’

…I was buggered in Dublin and England by two different men…buggered one time in Liverpool. ‘I am now married and have six children’.

‘I masturbated in the woods in her [his daughter’s] presence…’

‘During this period I had no sexual relationship with my wife and my domestic situation was very frustrating…’

‘I felt guilty after having sexual intercourse with my daughters. I was robbed by my wife of my fatherly relationship with my first three children. She handed them over to her mother to take care of’.
‘I discussed buggery’ [with son] and I showed him how its done. I had my clothes off and [son] had his clothes off sitting on my knee. …I exposed myself to him and I had an erection. When [son] was growing up I has anal sex with him. I remember putting [son] sitting on my knee and … [raping him]. I hate talking about this now as I feel so ashamed. It was wrong it was not okay by nature but the damage is now done’.

(The Sunday World, by Paul Williams, pp54-55)

Excerpt 20

6th April, 2004, The Irish Independent

FORMER TEACHER SHOWED BOY GAY PORN

A former school teacher from Dublin was jailed for 12 months in Britain yesterday for raping a 14 year old boy in his hotel room and stripping him naked. Eamon McDonnell (47) befriended the boy and coerced him into his room with the promise of cigarettes before kicking the door shut and showing him gay porn…

McDonnell was released from prison in 1997 after abusing a number of boys at his school…

McDonnell was visiting London on a trip from Dublin when he spotted the boys [staying in same hotel] in their underwear on the way to the shared bathroom…

(The Irish Independent, p.6)
**Excerpt 21**

25th April, 2004, *The Sunday World*

**CURTIN COCK-UP**

Among the homes raided during Operation Amethyst were those of a barrister, solicitors, a vicar, owner of a children’s fun park, school headmasters, a librarian, a banker, a choirmaster, a health board official, and the chief executive of a large company.

(The Sunday World, by Paul Williams, p.12)

**Excerpt 22**

17th September, 2004, *The Irish Independent*

**MAN FELT SEX WITH SCHOOLBOYS WAS A ‘LOVING RELATIONSHIP’**

A 69 year old former bus conductor who indecently assaulted two young brothers over a sustained period of time said he was having ‘normal, loving and caring relationships’ with them, Dublin Circuit Criminal Court has heard.

Frank Cooney…who abused the boys in hotels and B&Bs, told Gardaí such behaviour was normal in many societies around the world and that they were ‘healthy normal relationships’.

He also told Gardaí following his arrest in 1998 that he had had ‘relationships with other boys’ and named two of them.

Garda Levins said Cooney used to take the brothers to Dublin airport for plane watching. The first time he abused the older brother in a field
where he indecently assaulted him. Cooney told Gardai that his sexual preferences is for boys aged between 11 and 16 years, after which he had lost interest in them.

(The Irish Independent, by Azra Naseem, p.4)

Excerpt 23

26th September, 2004, *The Sunday Independent*

**ABUSE VICTIMS LOSE HEART AT CATHOLIC CHURCH’S BETRAYAL**

Most priestly abusers are not paedophiles in the clinical sense of targeting children who have not yet reached puberty. Rather they target older children. This fact, along with the reportedly disproportionate number of clergy who are homosexual, raises serious issues about Catholic priesthood. Blaming individual abusers, or bishops who respond poorly, is not enough.

(The Sunday Independent, by Colum Kenny, p.18)
Excerpt 24

10th October, 2004, The Sunday World

PAEDOVILE, Neeson plays evil pervert in sick new film

The story of Alfred Kinsey, a man described as a ‘sadomasochistic homosexual on a perverted mission’.

(The Sunday World, by Stephen Moore, p.38)

Excerpt 25

24th October, 2004, The Sunday World

MOVIE PAEDO ON THE LOOSE

A convicted paedophile who provided boys and girls as extras to the Irish movie industry is back on the streets of an Irish city - three years before his jail sentence expired.

In February 2000, Byrne (48) and his boyfriend O’Neill…

Byrne who left his wife and children to form a twenty year homosexual relationship with O’Neill…

A Sunday World team traced Byrne to an address in Cork city centre where he was spotted in the company of another male, who is thought to be his new boyfriend.

Byrne and his sick gay lover horrifically abused a young boy from the time he was just six, between March 1985 and December 1993, while they were running a hairdressing salon in Dublin’s north inner city.
[They] offered sweets/money in return for sordid sex acts. This occurred twice weekly, mainly in the gay pervert’s salon where everyone in the local area considered them to be harmless ‘sissies’

(The Sunday World, by Paul Williams, p.36).

Excerpt 26

9th November, 2004, The Irish Times

MAN LOSES APPEAL OF LIFE SENTENCE

A man who was jailed for life for murdering an AIDS patient in his hospital bed has lost his appeal against his conviction.

Patrick Gilraine (50) had been convicted of stabbing to death his friend, Mr Kevin Dowler (52) while Mr Dowler was being treated at .. Hospital

The trial was told that Gilraine attacked Mr Dowler because he believed Mr Dowler was a paedophile who posed a threat to young boys. When arrested in the hospital grounds, Gilraine had said he did it "to save other kids", and he would do it again. "I hope he's dead. He's a paedophile," he later told gardai. Dowler believed to be a paedophile by Gilraine…

During the 4 day trial, the jury was told that Mr. Dowler was a homosexual who had AIDS…

(Ireland; in The Courts, The Irish Times, p.4)
Excerpt 27

17th November, 2004, The Irish Independent

GRANDFATHER FOUND WITH 400 CHILD PORN IMAGES

A 59 year old man had over 4,000 images of child pornography. Quinn a married man with two children and one grandchild had distributed some of the images…

Detective said Quinn had co-operated with Gardai, was sincerely sorry and was a lonely man living in his own world. Quinn had no previous convictions and the judge said: ‘I gather from the Grenada Institute [which specialises in treatment of sex offenders] report that he is not a paedophile and does not show these tendencies’.

(The Irish Independent, by Azra Naseem & Bronagh Murphy, p.7)

Excerpt 28

16th January, 2005, The Sunday Independent

PAEDOPHILE CLAIMS LOVING RELATIONSHIP WITH VICTIM

A barrister defending a paedophile claimed in a court case last week that children of 12 years of age are ‘quite capable’ of knowing what they want…

… a primitive Methodist Church cleric, John Wray (79) [who] pleaded guilty to the buggery and indecent assault of a teenager on separate dates between 1974 and 1986…
The abuse occurred in Bray Co. Wicklow, where Wray – a separated father of six, originally from Rochdale in England – lived in a caravan…

The court heard Wray kept a menagerie of animals that attracted children and had befriended the victim’s family…continued until the victim was 20 years of age…

…Wray a self-confessed homosexual told the boy he loved him like a son and it was ‘our secret’…

The victim …was a homosexual and [the defence barrister] said it was wrong to say Wray was ‘grooming’ the boy and there was no suggestion or evidence that money or threats was ever passed between them…

(The Sunday Independent, by Eugene Hogan, p.5)

**Excerpt 29**

23rd July, 2005, *The Irish Times*

**PAEDOPHILE TEACHER WHO PREYED ON PUPILS JAILED**

A teacher, described as a "determined paedophile", who indecently assaulted nine boys at a Sligo primary school has been jailed for 12 years. Patrick Curran (59)…was found guilty by a Dublin Circuit Criminal Court jury last month of 192 counts of indecently assaulting nine boys aged from eight to 12

Judge White … described Curran as "calculated, deceitful and clever" and as a "determined paedophile".
Garda…agreed with prosecuting barrister …that Curran systematically searched out boys to sit beside. He would fondle their legs and genitalia on a "very regular basis".

…Curran would place his hand on a knee and move it up towards the genital area, both over and under clothing. He would squeeze and rub the boys' genitals.

A complainant … told Mr Mulloy that Curran would regularly sit beside him while correcting his work and squeeze and caress his knee, moving up his leg.

He said he hated wearing shorts as they provided easier access as Mr Curran's hand could go up inside them.

Another former pupil told … that he captained his class football team as a 10-year-old. His team lost and he ran to the changing room in tears at the disappointment.

He said Curran came into the room and put his arm around his shoulders before placing his hand into his shorts and feeling his genitals.

Curran earlier told his counsel the allegations against him were "preposterous and ridiculous". He said he was a "gay person" with a sexual preference for old people over 65.

(Ireland; In the Courts, The Irish Times, p.4)
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