Socio-historical perspectives on young fatherhood: Exploration of social change on the Isle of Sheppey

Gemma Joanna Mansi

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement of the University of Greenwich for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

September 2013

DECLARATION

I certify that this work has not been accepted in substance for any degree, and is not concurrently being submitted for any degree other than that of Doctor of Philosophy being studied at the University of Greenwich. I also declare that this work is the result of my own investigations except where otherwise identified by references and that I have not plagiarised the work of others.

Signed: (student)

Date: 24.09.13

Signed:

(supervisor)

Date: 24.09.13

To my mum Vivienne and dad Andrew,
for their continuous support and lifetime of love.

For my grandparents,
who were so proud of all my academic achievements
You are all greatly missed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I offer my sincerest gratitude to two fantastic supervisors; Professor Elizabeth Meerabeau and Dr Lesley Hoggart. Thank you for your knowledge, great advice, patience and commitment. Also, a big thank you to Liz for your tutoring in academic skills which was second to none.

Beyond thanks to Steve Chevis, a caring and thoughtful friend who helped to make this thesis possible.

Thank you to three great friends and fellow PhD students, Nikki Bradley, Jan Davis and Rosa Panades-Blas. Thank you for promoting a stimulating academic and social environment, which supported me throughout my PhD.

With thanks and love to Chris, for spending time and sharing your knowledge of politics and economics, and for being so supportive in the final months of my PhD.

I would also like to acknowledge the financial and academic support from the School of Health and Social Care at the University of Greenwich; particularly in the award of a postgraduate research studentship that provided the necessary support for this research.

I would like to extend my thanks to Dr Jane Reeves for her commitment during the first two years of my PhD. Her passion and enthusiasm for research and her students has motivated and driven me to my present lecturing career for which I am most truly grateful.

Finally a big thank you to all the young fathers and other associates on the Isle of Sheppey who were involved and made this study possible.

ABSRACT

The academic field of young parenthood has seen a significant increase in interest, both academic and political, in recent years. This increased interest is related to the view that young parents are "outside" normative discourses. Nevertheless, the experiences of young fatherhood have been minimally addressed in the academic field in comparison to the vast research carried out on young motherhood.

This thesis investigates from a socio-historical perspective, the lives and experiences of young fathers, aged 16-25, living on the Isle of Sheppey over the past sixty years. The focus of this thesis was to examine how social change may have impacted upon the lives of young fathers throughout the past sixty years within one rural geographic location. This area of interest was chosen based on the current limitations of the field, which predominantly discusses young fatherhood from a contemporary point of view and from the perspective of young fathers living in urban areas.

The first phase of this study collected documents on local social affairs on the island over the past sixty years, predominantly in local newspapers and local academic studies. This allowed for the lives of the participants to be understood in the context of a general picture of the life on the island. In the second phase, life story interviews provided detailed accounts from the viewpoint of the young fathers. For these interviews, 21 participants (aged 20-74 at the time of interview) were recruited through purposive and snowball sampling. Three cohorts were formed from the 21 participants based on similar ages and experiences. Inclusion criteria were that the young fathers were aged 25 or under when they had or were having their first child and had lived on the island for at least ten years.

The study was underpinned by structuration theory (Giddens, 1984); this theoretical approach was selected in order to aid understanding of the relationship between social change and young fatherhood in one geographic location. Sociological concepts were also employed as to act as mid-range theories in order to interpret the data.

The findings from this study suggest that social structures have increasingly affected the lives and life choices of the young fathers involved over the past sixty years. Changing political discourses, particularly since the 1980's, have had a fundamental impact upon the economy, which has impacted upon the transitions that young men make, particularly from education to employment. The timing of this transition has also changed the age at which it is considered

appropriate to begin family life, and this has affected the definition of young fatherhood in recent years.

Recent political discourses have suggested that it is the individual behaviours of these young people who become parents, which is in need of changing, rather than institutional models (SEU, 1999). However, evidence from this study has shown that there have been fewer changes in the behaviour, attitudes and perceptions of fatherhood from the perspectives of the young fathers themselves over the past sixty years. Young fathers in this study still acknowledged traditional paternal responsibilities, particularly being the main breadwinner, but may have been unable to enact them.

This study also provides an original contribution to the field of young fatherhood, addressing the situation of under-researched rural working class young fathers. It also provides an evidenced account, which goes some way to balancing the moral panic created around the discourse of young fathers as choosing to be a burden on society and not caring about their responsibilities.

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.0 Introduction

The focus of this thesis is the social and personal experiences of young fathers (aged 16-25 years when they had their first child) on the Isle of Sheppey over the past sixty years. This thesis examines how young fathers have experienced social change and what particular aspects of social change have affected their experiences as fathers. It also investigates how the perception of young fatherhood has changed over time. Social change is the context for examining the main focus, which is the changing nature of young fatherhood on the Isle of Sheppey. The findings of this study will have relevance to young parents, professionals involved in the lives of young fathers and academics with a particular interest in young fatherhood in the context of social change. This study is important because it provides over a sixty year period, data on the major social changes which have impacted upon the lives of young fathers in one geographic location and how young fatherhood has been affected by social changes for these young fathers.

This chapter begins by discussing some general aspects of the literature on young fatherhood and why this particular topic was chosen for study. Continuing from this, the chapter discusses the place of study including the general dynamics of the Isle of Sheppey and the importance of place when considering social change. The chapter then discusses the reasoning behind the chosen research methods in the study. Further, it examines the theoretical framework employed within the thesis and the major concepts identified in the thesis. Lastly, the chapter presents an overview of how this thesis is organised and outlines each chapter.

1.1 Responding to the literature

There are a significant number of studies discussing young parenthood and young motherhood (Phoenix, 1991; Speak et al, 1995; Allen and Dowling, 1998). In comparison, only a small number of studies, particularly in the UK, have been devoted specifically to young fathers, who are generally defined in the literature as young men who have had a child at the age of 25 or under (Dudley 2007; DCSF, 2009). There has been minimal debate on this definition of young fatherhood within recent political and academic spheres (Wilkes et al, 2012, DCSF, 2009; DoH, 2004; Jaffe et al, 2001), however Kiernam (1995) defined young fatherhood as being age 22 or below.

There is evidence of dramatic change over the past sixty years regarding when it is considered an appropriate time to begin a family. Contemporary statistics state that the average age of all fathers at the birth of a child has increased by nearly two years over the last two decades from 30.8 years in 1991 to 32.6 years in 2011 (ONS, 2011). However, previous to this definition and statistics, it was typical of young men to have a child soon after marriage during their early twenties (ONS, 2002). This dramatic shift has been related to social and economic change, which has affected the timing of changing life transitions, particularly parenthood (Furlong and Cartmel, 2007). One of the main emphases of this thesis is to illustrate how structural forces have affected the typical life course of young working class men who are generally identified as becoming young fathers and how this has also affected the changing definition of young fatherhood.

The evidence suggests that like young mothers, the likelihood of a young man becoming a young father is associated with a number of social risk factors he may have experienced (SEU, 1999; 2001; Jaffee et al, 2001). The literature discussing young fathers generally focuses on the phenomenon of young fathers as a "social issue," concentrating on social problems they are likely to encounter. There is evidence in the literature to suggest that government initiatives, particularly during the period of the New Labour government, have encouraged the participation of young fathers and have focused on the needs of young fathers as well as young mothers (Sheriff, 2007). The social problems they are likely to face may affect their chances of being a "good" father according to traditional familial discourses (Bunting and McAuley, 2004; Reeves, 2006; Duncan, 2007).

In particular, there are gaps in current research knowledge relating to socio-historical change amongst British young fathers in socially deprived rural areas. Socially deprived young fathers have been identified as a contemporary issue and have been typically associated with urban blackspot areas such as council estates, with little research attention being paid to various social risk factors related to rural youth (Meek, 2008). In response to the current literature, this thesis aims to focus on the social and personal experiences of rural young fathers on a socially excluded and isolated island over the past sixty years. This particular research gap is not only unique to the current academic field but is important in providing clear foundations and understandings as to what social factors have affected and determined society's perception of fatherhood and the changing definition of becoming a father over the past sixty years.

1.2 Place of study

The Isle of Sheppey, which is situated off the north coast of Kent, was selected for this study because of the particular social characteristics of the Island. The current population on the Isle of Sheppey is 40,300, with an estimated 12,000 living in Sheerness, the main town on the Island (ONS, 2011b). The local literature describes the Isle of Sheppey as a rural, working class, closely knit community, which has seen very little change in regards to mobility off the Island. In recent years, the Island has suffered from the effects of deindustrialization, statistically high levels of teenage pregnancy, social isolation and social exclusion (Pahl and Wallace, 1982; Swale Borough Council, 2002; 2008; ONS, 2007; Swale Borough Council, 2012). Given some of the dramatic changes that have taken place on the Island and with little movement off the Island, how young fathers have ascribed social meaning and attachment to their environment was a particular focus of this thesis.

The social meaning of place has been the focus of theoretical development and empirical research within different disciplines. Experiences within a specific setting can be both positive and negative and may be illustrated through nostalgic memories (Vorkinn and Riese, 2001). Proshansky et al (1983) claimed that those who are attached to an area may be more sensitive to site impacts and environmental changes. Furthermore, feelings of belonging to a certain place occur in individuals who have predominately positive cognitions related to a specific setting. In such settings people can acquire a sense of belonging to places that give meaning to their lives, which humanistic geographers have focused on by using the terms sense of place and rootedness. This study aims to illustrate the significance of place for young fathers living on the Isle of Sheppey and how the perception of place has changed throughout sixty years.

1.3 Data collection

This study involved collecting data through purposive and snowball sampling from three cohorts of young fathers who were aged 20-74 at the time of the interview. All young fathers that took part in this study were 25 or under when they became fathers, had spent at least ten years living on the Isle of Sheppey and had their first child whilst living on the Island. The definition of young fatherhood, as identified in the above, was based upon contemporary understandings, which identify a young father as being 25 or under (DCSF, 2009). It is important to note that this definition was applied to all participants in this study, to help illustrate how social change has affected the age in which it is considered appropriate to be a father.

Twenty-one in-depth interviews were carried out and three cohorts of young fathers were formed based on similar age and experiences. The interviews focused on young fathers' experiences of various social settings including the community, education and employment as well as their personal experiences of young fatherhood. Community, education and employment were of particular interest because of their association with social exclusion, which according to the literature is a major factor in young fathers' lives (Jaffee et al, 2001; Catan, 2004; Reeves, 2006; Cater and Coleman, 2006; Henderson et al, 2007). Focusing on these social settings also enabled me to gain a clear perspective of what young fathers identified as major events and the effects that social change such as unemployment, change in government policy and institutions such as education had had on their lives. The interviews took a narrative approach and lasted between one and a half and three hours.

The study also included documentary research, which helped build a bigger and clearer picture of significant events, local institutions and social changes that may have had a significant impact upon the Island and local inhabitants. The documentary research was conducted through various repositories, including the Sheerness local history library, the Albert Sloman library at the University of Essex and the Templeman library at the University of Kent.

1.4 Conceptual framework for the study

The overarching aim of the study was to consider the dynamics between social structure and personal agency with respect to how young fathers lived their lives, and how these dynamics might have changed during the past sixty years. The overarching theory is structuration theory as developed by Anthony Giddens (1984), which focuses on the creation and reproduction of social systems[1], based on the analysis of both social structures and personal agency[2]. In addition, Giddens (1991) work on self-identity in the late modern age has been drawn upon. This theoretical approach was selected in order to aid understanding of the relationship between social change and young fatherhood in one geographic location. The theory was also critically examined in the light of the empirical evidence generated during the course of this study. Structuration theory is best applied at the macro-level and provides a general standpoint for analysing the data collected in this thesis. A limitation of structuration theory, as suggested by Archer (2006) is that examining agency and structure as a duality can be analytically difficult to apply to specific data. Therefore, to allow for greater application to the specific context of the

[1]Social systems are a recognizable, reproduced pattern of relations between people, which are organized as social practice (Giddens, 1984).
[2] Personal agency is the capacity of individuals to act independently and to make their own free choices. Social structures are social rules and resources, which influence situational actions, and are a property of social systems (Giddens, 1984).

area of my research, I also employed further sociological concepts to act as middle range theories in order to interpret the data.

The main sociological concepts and policy issues that this thesis draws upon to aid in the application of structuration theory to the specific data are individualism, place attachment, social capital, social exclusion, the social problem of teenage pregnancy and masculinity.

From a political and economic perspective, individualism is the assumption that individuals are sovereign that is independent of one another and able to determine their own personal life path without structural constraints. Individualism is based on the individual entering into society to fulfill as well as further their own personal interests, and to demand the right to serve their own interests without taking the interests of society into consideration (Bunge, 2000). It is a longstanding ideology, dating from the eighteenth century or earlier, but has been vigorously promoted from the 1980's onwards by the processes of marketisation and globalisation.

A related but distinct concept which has arisen in the late modern period is that of individualisation, which is defined as a social process whereby individuals are encouraged to act independently of each other and social structures. The process has been encouraged by economic prosperity, education and the welfare state, which have encouraged individuals to break away from externally imposed constraints such as their traditional communities and networks and instead construct a more individualised path within an increasingly complex and risky society (Beck and Beck-Gurnsheim 2002).

There has been variation in how theorists have defined individualism and individualisation. Both Bunge's (2000) and Giddens's (1991) definitions of the terms are quite abstract in that they do not clearly define the terms; instead Bunge has relied on the term individualism to discuss both individualism and individualisation. Giddens suggests that capitalism, through the creation of markets, promotes individualism. This is extended to the sphere of consumption and the freedom of individual choice (1991). However, capitalism through the creation of markets also encourages the process of individualisation, which Giddens has not discussed in its own right. Beck and Beck- Gurnsheim (2002) however argue that it is vital to distinguish between the neo-liberal idea of the free-market individual and the concept of individualisation. They consider the individual within society as not being dualistic, but relying on partial perceptions of that society around them to create their identity. Individualisation can therefore be seen as the process of disembedding an individual from their traditional partial perceptions and encouraging them to create an identity informed by new relationships and experiences within society. Beck and Beck-Gurnsheim thus tend to dismiss the idea of individualism, seeing it as presupposing a dualistic

interpretation of agents and society. I will use both terms, as we can see that in a phenomenological sense, people still have a concept of their identity and what they want in life, and in a dualistic world, the process of disembedding people from their traditional associations is just as applicable.

Policies that promote individualism suggest that members of society should be independent and self-reliant, with little interference from the state or other social institutions (Bunge, 2000). The ideology of individualism and the process of individualisation were seen predominantly in the UK under the political discourses of Thatcherism (1979-1990), so there may be some theoretical issues with applying this concept to the first cohort. However, individualism has been a long held concept, since the early Enlightenment, and individualisation can be seen as a process intended to enhance the individualism of separate citizens. These concepts can therefore be applied in some sense across the cohorts involved in the study, allowing for comparison of the impact felt in different cohorts as their community underwent social change as a process of individualisation and as political winds shifted. This application of individualism and individualisation will therefore allow for the personal agency of participants to be examined in light of the shifting structures around them and the pressures to free themselves from those structures.

Giddens (1991) he argues that modernity breaks down the protective framework of the small community and that the individual is less embedded in a specific place. However, other authors argue that place attachment may still persist in modern societies. Place attachment has been defined as the deep emotional bond or connection that people develop toward specific places over time through repeated positive interactions (Dallago et al, 2009). Places have also been described as playing a significant role in self-identity and are a vital source of emotional and experiential meaning for the inhabitant (Burholt and Naylor, 2005). Society, identity and the meaning of places, are understood to have a mutual relationship, because the signs and symbols individuals use to express their own and interpret others' identities are related to cultural norms and values. Research has shown that strength of attachment to place is positively correlated with length of residence and use of neighbourhood facilities (Burholt and Naylor, 2005). However, increasing social and spatial mobility have challenged the traditional links between identity and place, leading to new identity formations and attachment. Collective identity building and attachment, based upon shared geographical and social experiences, have become both fragmented and individualized in recent years (Giddens, 1991).

This application of place attachment will allow for investigating symbolic meanings specifically related to the Isle of Sheppey; understanding the influence of interactions young fathers have had

on the Island; and young fathers' ''sense of place'', focusing on the perceived unity of the local environment and its contribution to the construction of identity (Dallago et al, 2009). Furthermore, it will help form a stronger analysis of individualisation and individualism through investigating whether structural change has undermined local collective structures and led to detachment from the community.

Social capital is considered to be a disputed and quite ambiguous term due to its variation of applicability in different disciplines. However, there is a general consensus that it is related to the collective or economic benefits derived from social networking and the value of cooperation between individuals and groups (Portes, 1998). Predominantly, policy makers have suggested that the key contributing factors to social capital are education and employment, often focussing on the education of parents (DfES, 2005). Despite the shift in the current coalition government towards a vague refocusing on the 'big society', this concentration on employment persists (DfE, 2011). This thesis does not limit its definition of social capital to such a narrow sense. The literature has embraced multiple nuances in the understanding of the term, encompassing factors beyond education and employment, with all appearing to some extent applicable to the participants' lives in this study.

I shall outline some understandings from the major academic contributors to the discussion of social capital, which I feel go some way to expand the concept. Social capital can indeed be understood as any form of social interaction or network from which benefit can be derived for individuals or groups. This can occur through pre-existing social structures or through individualised interaction stemming from the individual's own efforts. Social capital has been chosen as a sociological concept to help understand the data in this thesis. It also provides a framework for understanding how individuals collectively benefit from social networks with a particular focus on employment. Building social capital amongst socially excluded individuals has been over recent years a major political concern and of academic interest. The overall consensus is that to possess social capital, a person must be related to others, and it is those others who are the actual source of his or her advantage (Portes, 1998).

Major academic contributors to theories of social capital have included Pierre Bourdieu, James Coleman and Robert Putnam. Bourdieu discussed social capital within a Marxist framework by naming three forms of capital: social, cultural and economic (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990). Bourdieu examined unequal access to resources and differences in power; he believed that social class influenced differences in power, creating elite groups in society. Bourdieu also highlighted that maintaining social capital did not necessarily presume economic capital; nevertheless it

contributed to the formation of elites (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990).

James Coleman's contribution to the understanding of social capital is based more predominately on non-elite groups. He argued that those living in marginalized communities or who were members of the working class could also benefit from social capital. This was due to social structures, such as education, encouraging and enabling the working class to build their social capital. Coleman's analysis was based upon the relationship between agency and social structure, which was based on the cultivation of reciprocity and trust. Key social locations for building these relationships were family and kinship networks, local communities and religious institutions (Coleman, 1990).

Robert Putnam focused from a political perspective on the significance of association and civic community. His study, based initially on Italian political institutions, argued for the significance of social capital and the quality of civic life in the cultivation of democratic society. In his famous study, *Bowling Alone (2000)* he highlights how in the US (and other western societies), social connections including political and civil engagement, informal social ties and trust are breaking down due to aspects of social change, and in particular individualisation. He argues that these networks and relationships form social capital and without social capital our lives and communities may become impoverished (Putnam, 2000).

Social capital provides a useful concept for understanding the differing levels of ability to engage with society at different times of social change, illustrating the changing nature of agency and structure. This allows for the greater application of structuration theory to the actual social change felt on the island. However, social capital does continue to suffer from similar problems to structuration theory, due to its different definitions and applications, and it could go some way to actually make the application of structuration more difficult to understand. Social capital can also be understood in terms of a lack of social capital and increasingly the idea of developing social capital is being incorporated into policies and programmes to address social exclusion.

Social exclusion is defined in the literature as "a complex and multi-dimensional process. It involves the lack or denial of resources, rights, goods and services, and the inability to participate in the normal relationships and activities, available to the majority of people in a society, whether in economic, social, cultural or political arenas" (Byrne, 1995, p16). Policy makers also broadly accept the nature of this definition (SEU, 1999; 2004). The term social exclusion is used to characterise various forms of social disadvantage and has been used to describe and to explain the phenomenon of young fatherhood in the UK in recent years (Byrne, 1995). Early parenthood has been identified as a major factor amongst socially excluded young

people (SEU, 1999; 2001; DfES, 2006; Cartmel and Furlong, 2007). Socially excluded individuals are likely to encounter poor health, limited access to public services, unemployment, poverty and social deprivation (DCSF, 2009). Existing studies on young fathers identify exclusion as either the result of structural factors (Jaffee et al, 2001) or of the lack of personal commitment and motivation by the young fathers (Raffo and Reeves, 2000).

Such debate in the literature suggesting that young fathers are particularly socially excluded, indicates that this is a suitable choice of concept in this thesis. There is a possible limitation as to whether social exclusion can be applied to any but the last cohort of young fathers, as the term has only been coined through the work of the social exclusion unit and began building academic currency mostly since the 1990s. The term social exclusion may be considered troublesome to apply prior to its carrying political currency as well as changing social indicators. This does not however mean that it cannot be usefully applied, simply that it would be problematic to attempt to draw conclusions about differing levels of social exclusion felt by different cohorts. Social exclusion theory is applied to the relationship between young fathers' agency and social structures on the Isle of Sheppey, emphasising at the micro-level how the macro-level structuration issues can lead to change and possible difficulties for the young fathers involved.

Teenage pregnancy became one of the primary concerns on the political agenda during the New Labour period. However, an absolute definition of 'teenage pregnancy' is quite difficult to locate in policy papers and instead they tend to report teenage pregnancy statistically, for example teenage pregnancy is defined by the DCSF (2009) as the rate of under-18 conceptions. The New Labour government clearly depicted teenage pregnancy and those young men involved as a problem as highlighted in the Teenage Pregnancy report (SEU, 1999). It was suggested from the report that to assist the reduction of particularly high statistics of teenage pregnancy relative to other western countries, policy needed to support young people in changing their own behaviour rather than focusing on structural factors impacting upon these young people. Addressing individuals' negative attitudes to education and lack of education regarding contraception was considered essential in changing individuals' outcomes. Other structural forces, namely the media, have also promoted the view that young fatherhood is a social concern, which is a behavioural issue rather than a structural problem. According to the literature "young fathers" today have been depicted largely in the media as "deadbeat dads" and "absent fathers" and are considered to be more likely to be reliant on welfare and social housing, with little aspiration or future prospects (Murray, 1990; Pears et al, 2005; Gregory and Milner, 2011). Such negative views may portray young fathers as a risk or as no use to the family unit, which may affect and change how young fathers maintain and construct their identity of fatherhood.

Government policy has defined young fathers as being aged 25 or under (DCSF 2009), but this thesis will concentrate on those young fathers aged 16-25 when they became fathers. This focus on young parenthood rather than teenage parenthood is due to the low occurrence and significant ethical issues involved with studying those below the age of 16, which could allow for parental influence on their testimony. Furthermore, applying this recent definition to all participants will help reflect upon the extent in which social change has impacted upon the age considered appropriate to become a father.

Lastly masculinity has been used as a key concept in understanding the experience of young fathers. Masculinity has been described in the literature as having major influences on the life transitions of men. The working definition of masculinity in this thesis is defined by Connell (2000) as configurations of practice within gender relations, a structure that includes large-scale institutions and economic relations as well as face-to-face relationships and sexuality. Masculinity is institutionalised in this structure as well as being an aspect of individual character and personality.

Connell (2005) provides four terms to describe masculinity. The first is hegemonic masculinity, defined as the dominant form of masculinity within society and is culturally most valued. Qualities include heterosexuality, whiteness, physical strength, and suppression of emotions. Second, complicit masculinity where men do not fit the characteristics of the hegemonic ideal but often admire it and wished to become it at some point in their lives. Third, marginalised masculinity where men cannot fit into the hegemonic ideal because of certain characteristics e.g. race or disability, although they may still succumb to the norms of hegemonic masculinity, for example physical strength. Fourthly, subordinate masculinity where men exhibit qualities that oppose hegemonic values, therefore may exhibit physical weakness, being a homosexual or showing effeminate behavior.

In the context of the chosen location for this study, the hegemonic ideal of working class masculinity is largely based on the understanding that there is to be little or no involvement with social settings or institutions deemed to be remotely feminine, particularly education (Reay, 2004). In recent years, working class masculinity is believed to have hindered young fathers' educational achievements, and has limited their chances in gaining suitable employment (Reay, 2004). This has been exacerbated by shifts in the economy and in the reduction in unskilled and semi-skilled work.

Based on Connell's definition, the data will be analysed to provide evidence of the life choices of the young fathers involved and whether masculinity is a dominant factor in how young working class men make decisions and live their lives. However there may be possible limitations in relation to public discourses on fatherhood. Public discourses have created powerful societal standards for individuals, particularly in relation to familial roles (McKee and O'Brien, 1983; Giddens, 1991; May, 2008). Masculinity is an important structure in the lives of men according to the literature, supporting the use of the concept in this study, aiding the analysis of how personal agency could be guided by masculinity in the face of social structures.

These concepts of social exclusion, individualism and individualisation, place attachment, social capital and masculinity, can be readily applied to the data. These concepts are all useful in analysing the consequences of social change and the relationship between social structures and the personal agency of individuals. So whilst this study will use structuration theory as an over-arching macro-level framework, the effect of this framework at a micro-level will be best discussed in the context of these concepts.

1.5 Organisation of the thesis

This thesis has eight chapters. Chapters one to three provide the reader with a step by step account of how this study was first thought of, contextual information for the study and how I proceeded in collecting data on the topic. The order in which the main findings chapters (four to seven) have been placed, is based upon the life course, helping to present life transitions and socially defined events and roles that young fathers have enacted over time, based within particular structural, social and cultural contexts. Presenting these chapters in such a way enables the reader to see how early events may have possibly influenced future decisions and events, such as the events leading up to becoming a young father.

Chapter two sets the context for the research through a literature review, which begins by outlining the current state of scholarly research on young fatherhood. Following this, the review describes how the literature was assessed and located. The review then discusses individualisation and place attachment to examine the changing nature and importance of place to individuals, particularly young people. The review continues to examine some rural locations and coastal towns including areas of Kent, as socially excluded areas. Following this, the chapter discusses structuration theory, the theoretical framework underpinning this thesis. The review then examines the changing nature of social policy from the post war period (1945) to the current Coalition Government. This section places a particular focus on the Conservative government

during 1979-1990, which is understood to be a time of significant economic shift and social policy change in Britain. Following from this, the chapter discusses how the changing nature of employment has impacted upon the male breadwinner role.

The literature review then examines theoretical perspectives on social capital as a non-monetary resource, which may support socially disadvantaged individuals. The chapter then discusses the changing role of fathers in western society and the various perceptions of fatherhood. Following on from this, the review discusses fatherless families, and possible consequences of being a family without a father. The chapter continues by discussing masculinity and the attitudes of mainly working class boys in the education system. The literature focuses on white working class young men as this represents the participants in the study. The literature review then discusses discourses associated with teenage pregnancy. Lastly, the review examines policy initiatives which aim to support young fathers.

Chapter three describes the methodology of this study. The chapter is constructed in the form of an audit trail, which illustrates my own personal journey throughout the research process discussed in relation to scholarly literature, illustrating relevance to the personal choices made and the development of ideas during the research process. The main elements of collecting the data for a research project are also discussed including ethical principles, sampling strategies, confidentiality and anonymity, and the interview process. This chapter also discusses theoretical explanations of discourse, self-presentation and morality, which are relevant to young fathers and their approach to the interview. Memory and nostalgia, the process of thematic analysis, and the selected method of data analysis are also discussed in the chapter. The chapter also examines life story interviews and local documentary data as main data collection methods in this study.

Chapters four to seven present the findings from the study. These chapters contain one or both types of evidence, namely analysed data from interviews with young fathers and local documentary data. Documentary data is used to support and/or contrast with interview data from young fathers. Both types of evidence are contextualised within the time period.

Chapter four is the first chapter of main findings, which have been placed in order of the life course with an attempt to illustrate the social formation of a young father's life. Focusing largely on documentary data and young fathers' testimonies, this chapter discusses the relationship between young fathers and the Isle of Sheppey. This chapter also reflects on the significance of place for these young fathers and being able to relate to a local area in which they have lived, worked and socialised. The chapter also considers growing geographical mobility, in-migration,

lack of structural support, the changing make-up of the community and the drink and drugs culture, which have all been identified by young fathers as factors in community breakdown.

Chapter five focuses on documentary data and young fathers' testimonies related to secondary education on the Island. This chapter alongside the following chapter on employment aims to discuss how social structures shape and constrain young fathers' behaviour and identity. Documentary evidence is drawn upon to examine the schooling on the Island. Following this, the chapter discusses the transition from education to employment and how the predictability and smoothness of these transitions have changed according to the three different cohorts. Next, the chapter looks at the changing relationship with teachers and the education system in general. This section looks particularly at discipline, and the resistance as well as negotiation young fathers had with teachers and their studies. Finally, the chapter discusses young fathers' attitudes towards and in some cases involvement with non-compulsory education.

Chapter six focuses on employment on the Island begins by discussing the state of the local economy and the dramatic economic shifts that young fathers have witnessed as well as experienced. The chapter draws on the concept of social capital to help explain how established work hierarchies have affected young fathers gaining employment. Next, manufacturing and industry, which have been at the forefront of the Island's local economy, are discussed and the effects of deindustrialisation and other social factors related to employment on the Isle of Sheppey are examined. Lastly welfare dependency, which has been related to deindustrialisation on the Island, is discussed.

Chapter seven is the largest chapter and is the fourth and final chapter of main findings. It focuses on the major themes and findings associated with the personal experiences of being a young father, and examines the changing perceptions of teenage pregnancy from a young father's perspective on the Isle of Sheppey. The chapter continues by focusing on the relationship and bonding some young fathers shared with their biological father and in some instances their stepfather, which in some cases had significant impact upon how they bonded with their own child. Familial as well as personal attitudes towards the pregnancy are discussed.

Following this, the chapter focuses on the outcome of having a child and the mainly positive relationship formed between the paternal grandmother and the young father. The chapter continues to examine the changing role of the young father within the family unit. It also focuses on the priorities of young fathers within the family unit and the importance of adapting to familial needs. Following this, the discussion is focused on employment and the family. The

chapter also considers the changing dynamics of a relationship and how they can impact upon the relationship young fathers share with their children. Chapter seven then proceeds to discuss the familial and social support available for young fathers over the past sixty years. Lastly, the chapter examines the personal experiences of young fatherhood, illustrating fathers' involvement with their children, the social impact of becoming a young father and the reactions towards having a boy or a girl.

Chapter eight presents concluding thoughts about the overall thesis. The chapter shows what the thesis has added to the knowledge and understanding of young fatherhood. It also discusses how some of these major themes and findings may be developed further. The chapter also considers the strengths and limitations of the study. Finally, the chapter considers areas for further research.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

Teenage pregnancy and young parenthood have been increasingly important topics for research and academic debate in recent years, and have received increasing attention in social policy and social scientific writings (Catan, 2004; Reeves, 2006; DfES, 2006; Leishman, 2007; DCSF, 2009). There already exists an extensive amount of literature related to teenage pregnancy and young motherhood (Phoenix, 1991; Speak, 1995; Allen and Dowling, 1998), which is vast compared to the availability of literature on young fathers. Like young motherhood, young fatherhood is associated with various social risk factors such as low socio-economic status, low levels of education, failure to use contraceptives, anti-social behaviour and having a mother who had their first child at a young age (Jaffee et al, 2001; Pears et al, 2005).

In particular, there is little research on socio-historical change amongst British young fathers in socially deprived rural areas. This chapter therefore aims to examine fatherhood over the past sixty years, illustrating a clear understanding of how fatherhood has been perceived, attributes possibly related to the changing nature of fatherhood and available research on young fatherhood. This particular research gap is not only unique to the current academic field but also that it provides clear foundations and understanding as to possible variations of life experiences between rural and urban young fathers. Also, what social factors have impacted upon public discourses and how it has determined its view of fatherhood and the changing definition of becoming a father over the past sixty years.

An inclusion criterion for this study was that young fathers were aged 25 or under when they had or were having their first child. This age group was based on the literature's most recent definition of young fatherhood (DCSF, 2009). Please note that this contemporary definition of young fatherhood was applied to all participants in this study, to help illustrate how social change has affected the age at which it is considered appropriate to be a father. The definition of the age of young fatherhood has changed dramatically over the past sixty years in which this study focuses. In recent years there has been little contrast in the academic and political arena relating to the definition of young fathers being aged 25 or under (Wilkes et al, 2012, DCSF, 2009; DoH, 2004; Jaffe et al, 2001). During the past sixty years the age in which it is considered appropriate to become a father has become progressively later in life (Furlong and Cartmel,

2007). Contemporary statistics state that the mean age of all fathers at the birth of a child has increased by nearly two years over the last two decades from 30.8 years in 1991 to 32.6 years in 2011 (ONS, 2011). However, prior to this definition and statistics, it was typical of young men to have a child soon after marriage during their early twenties (ONS, 2002). This quicker transition into fatherhood was largely related to the earlier transition from education to employment where young people generally left education at the age of sixteen to begin employment.

Deindustrialisation has been identified as one of the major aspects of socio-economic change, which has affected the level of unemployment, particularly amongst working class young men. It has been argued that socio-economic change has affected what were previously relatively predictable, stable and homogenous transitions from school to work, which were considered the norm for most working class men (Furlong and Cartmel, 2007).

2.1 Accessing the literature

For this review, I identified the majority of my research articles through the University of Greenwich on-line database using Swetswise, a search engine which comprises most of the journal articles held by the University. Reference books were also identified through the integrated catalogue at the British Library. Literature was also accessed through the library catalogue at the University of Greenwich and Ethos, a thesis search engine at the British Library. The Google search engine was used to identify government reports, Joseph Rowntree Foundation reports and Online National Statistics. Based on my broad area of interest, the search terms considered as part of the literature review were: teenage pregnancy, young fathers, social change, typologies of fatherhood, communities, and social exclusion.

I reviewed the literature that included in the title, abstract or book description, at least one of the search terms above. The initial literature search was carried out in 2008 prior to undertaking the study; the review was then updated in 2011, statistics and government policy were updated in 2013. The inclusion criteria were set to incorporate:

- English language publications
- Quantitative and qualitative publications
- Publications based internationally
- Prospective and retrospective findings on young fathers
- General prospective and retrospective findings on fatherhood
- Retrospective and current findings on teenage pregnancy in the UK

- Young fathers from Caucasian and other cultural/ethnic backgrounds
- Publications incorporating at least one search term
- Publications over a period of sixty six years (1945-2011).

The large base of publications aimed to identify knowledge gaps in research findings related to socio-historical perspectives on young fatherhood in the UK. It also allowed me to consider social change and assess whether it has affected the experiences and representation of fatherhood.

By setting inclusion criteria, I incorporated literature that was sufficient and necessary to build a clear and concise picture of the research field and other related aspects. To illustrate the body of literature used in this thesis, Appendix A shows the sections in this chapter and the literature relevant to each section. It also identifies the origin and source of the literature.

2.2 Structure of the literature review

As discussed in chapter one, the focus of this thesis is to examine how social change has affected the lives and experiences of young fathers on the Isle of Sheppey. Firstly, the review discusses government policy to consider ideological, economic and political developments that have a bearing on social change. The chapter continues by discussing Anthony Giddens' structuration theory, the theoretical framework drawn upon to interpret the evidence used within this thesis, and which informs aspects of the research process. Secondly, social capital is examined, which has also been a theoretical perspective considered as part of my study, and has been of particular interest to the government in supporting those identified as socially excluded. Mostly this section discusses the concept of social capital from the perspective of the three main contributing academics; Bourdieu, Coleman and Putnam. Thirdly, the review examines how individualism and individualisation has affected the relationship of families and the importance of place to individuals from previous years. Fourthly, the chapter discusses specific places namely rural and coastal towns, and discusses the social risk factors related to them.

The review continues by examining factors affecting the male breadwinner role. Following this, the chapter discusses the social construction of masculinity and the effects it may have in education. Next, the review discusses the role of fathers within the family and how fathers perceive their role within the family. Continuing from this, the chapter examines fatherhood from the perspectives of families without a father. This section discusses the implications for the child not having a father present in their lives and possible factors inhibiting fathers from

accessing their child and the roles that the maternal and paternal families have in the couple's relationship. Then the chapter discusses the changing nature of teenage pregnancy and how the perception of teenage pregnancy has changed over previous years. Lastly, this chapter discusses social policies aiming to support young fathers, predominantly through policies issued by the New Labour government and with some acknowledgement of the current Coalition Government (2010). Finally, the literature review closes with a summary of the main debates in the review.

2.3 Developments in social and economic policy

The general consensus amongst the UK population and the government, in relation to the British welfare state during 1945-75, was that the state should be responsible for the delivery of welfare goods and services (Ellison and Pierson, 2003). This high regard for the state was due to its efficiency in economic management during World War II, and the state's intervention in a wide range of areas including medical services, food rationing and childcare. There was a general agreement that a greater degree of state economic and social management would be more efficient and equitable than market solutions (Ellison and Pierson, 2003).

During 1946 to 1949, the British welfare state developed a Social Security System designed to protect unemployed, sick and older people and the National Health Service designed to provide free medical care. In addition, the Labour government implemented the provisions of the Butler Education Act 1944, creating a system of compulsory secondary education for all children to the age of 15 (Ellison and Pierson, 2003). Although the British welfare system was essentially created under Labour's vision, the Conservative governments during the 1950s and early 1960s did little fundamentally to alter the collectivist ideals on which British social policy was based. This did not suggest that the Conservatives were entirely consensual; rather there was general agreement about the role of the state in regards to service provision (Ellison and Pierson, 2003).

Harold Macmillan became Conservative Prime Minister in 1957; his political approach to conservatism was called the Middle Way, which identified with traditions including classical liberalism and socialism. This approach was dominant in the Conservative party for most of the post-war period until Margaret Thatcher came to power in 1979. Proponents of the Middle Way believed in a free market as the basis for the economy, but they acknowledged that the market cannot be left to its own devices and therefore needs to be regulated by the state. The Middle Way approach involves promoting equality of opportunity in the sense that people should not face barriers, such as the education system, and everyone should have the same opportunities (Lister, 2010).

Some Middle Way Conservatives had concerns about the state provision of welfare; they believed it would override other sources of welfare, reduce efficiency and put strains on the economy (Lister, 2010). There was also fear that it could undermine personal responsibility and self-reliance and therefore weaken the family. It was understood that the traditional family is regarded as the basic unit of society, which must be supported. A state that places too much emphasis on rights, especially social rights, could weaken citizens' sense of obligation to society and prioritize the individual too much over the wider community (Lister, 2010).

Both the Middle Way and the social democratic approaches to welfare came under challenge during 1979-1990. The Conservative government and in particular Margaret Thatcher were highly influenced by the writings of neo-liberal thinkers such as Hayek and Joseph. These thinkers recognised the difficulties in state managed socio-economic systems, which assumed a level of collectivism (Mohan, 1999; Gough et al, 2006; Dutta, 2011). Through citing examples of where state management had led to economic failure, and recognising the rational nature of humanity, the neo-liberals came to embrace the process of individualisation and individualism, encouraging free enterprise and individual responsibility (Dutta, 2011). This assumption that only individualistic free markets can lead to economic wellbeing can be seen through the socio-economic policies of the Conservative government led by Margaret Thatcher. The Conservative government was also reluctant to return to the post-war social democratic systems of support, which they would see ultimately as leading to dependency on welfare and economic decline (Dutta, 2011).

This privatisation of resources and deregulation of the economy limited the collective capacities of trade unions and other related associations to bargain for labour rights and the wages of workers (Dutta, 2011). This has had a major impact on the agency of the worker and their understanding and interpretation of their local community[3] (Mohan, 1999). In 1979, 13.3 million people belonged to trade unions, the highest level ever reached in Britain. By the end of 2001, after eighteen years of consecutive Conservative rule and four years of a New Labour government, union membership had declined by 40% to 7.6 million (Howell, 2005).

According to Lockwood (2005), Conservative governments during 1979-1990 developed legislation that was created to undermine the collective organisation of workers and reduce trade union power. Between 1979 and 1989, five bills to reform trade union law were presented to parliament (Kingdom, 1992). As a result structural powers undermined and suppressed collective

[3]Community is a social place, which one belongs to and is greater than kinship but more immediate than the abstraction called 'society'. It is the social place where people acquire their most fundamental and most substantial experience of social life outside the confines of the home (Kingdom, 1992, p45).

agency[4] in the workplace (Musolf, 2003). Unionisation was stigmatized under the consecutive Conservative governments, with ministers speaking of union members as "anti-democratic" (Tebbit, 1989), seeking to stop collective bargaining from supposedly shutting down free market growth of industry.

It has been argued that the decline in union membership, union recognition and collective bargaining meant that collective bargaining between unions and employers was no longer the dominant system of industrial relations. In its place, management in the workplace set the terms and conditions of employment with only minimal constraint from trade unions, national or industry level agreements, or legislation protecting individual workers (Howell, 2005).

The election of the New Labour government in May 1997 brought the promise of a new era in economic and social policy in the UK. The New Labour government promised to address social and economic deprivation and committed itself to meeting the needs of wider society, implementing various policies to tackle economic inequality and social exclusion (Driver and Martell, 1998). For Prime Minister Tony Blair, the Third Way accepted the logic of neo-liberal globalisation, with free markets for goods and services and flexible markets for labour. It also recognised that because certain individuals and groups had been excluded from the success of Tory Britain, the state was required to provide support and opportunities for them to 'help themselves'. The basic ideas entailed in the Third Way focused on empowering individuals, families and communities to move out of poverty, unemployment and social exclusion by a combination of individual responsibility, education, social support and welfare to work initiatives (Finn, 2003).

Social policy under New Labour distinguished between citizens in two different ways. First, the deserving and in need, with certain vulnerable sections of the population including children and older people, being deserving while other were considered less so (Deacon, 2003). New Labour identified children from deprived areas and backgrounds as being in need of specific state support through higher child benefits, the child tax credit and extra services such as preschool education. However, benefits had become increasingly means-tested and thus selective, and were accompanied by stringent eligibility criteria. For example, unemployment benefit, where payments are conditional upon jobseekers taking up training and employment opportunities offered (Deacon, 2003).

The second type of treatment relates to the way in which the state under New Labour became

[4] Collective agency in this context refers to the exertion of power by trade unions.

involved in efforts to alter the actual behaviour of certain groups of citizens. The use of public money to encourage employment through the New Deal initiatives is an example of one method used to foster an employment-orientated culture. For New Labour, employment was very much its own reward, not just because it was considered to be the best method of enhancing social inclusion but because it also helped to create a trained and disciplined society, able to respond to the changing demands of the labour market (Finn, 2003).

Social exclusion increasingly became identified as a major policy issue during the New Labour government and can be seen to influence the thinking of the current Coalition leadership (McAnulla, 2010). Before the New Labour government, the term social exclusion was rarely discussed as part of social policy in the UK. Instead, the term poverty was generally used to describe situations where people lack many of the opportunities that should be available to the average individual. Although low income is a key factor of social exclusion, it also incorporates other risk factors relating to social disadvantage (McGregor, 2003).

The term social exclusion is understood to be a "multi-dimensional concept, which refers to a breakdown or malfunctioning of the major social structures that should guarantee the social integration of the individual or household" (Byrne, 1995 p16). Research had found that individuals with certain risk factors such as teenage parenthood, low income or unemployment, family conflict, being in care, living in a deprived neighbourhood, both in urban and rural areas, mental health problems, age and disability are more likely to suffer from social exclusion (Social Exclusion Unit, 2001). The most important characteristic of social exclusion is that these risk factors are generally linked and can combine to create a complex and fast-moving cycle of deprivation (Social Exclusion Unit, 2001).

The concept of social capital was also a key element of Third Way thinking for the Blair government. Social capital is defined as what is expected from collective and economic benefits gained through preferential treatment and cooperation between individuals and groups (Bourdieu, 1986). It is also considered a non-monetary resource, which is effective and could contribute towards supporting socially excluded families. However, a fundamental criticism of social capital theory, in the context of Third Way thinking, was that it ignored structural inequalities (McGregor, 2003). While there may have been a recognition that there were strong correlations between education, social trust and civic participation; there seemed to be a lack of discussion about structural inequality, or, indeed, social class as having a predominate effect or impact (McGregor, 2003). Educational underachievement, poverty and social exclusion were then explained in terms of family, community and values deficits. This discourse obscures the links between social class relations and educational structures and processes, which was a major

argument in regards to Bourdieu's interpretation of social capital (Bourdieu, 1986). He argued that there was unequal access to resources and differences in power, and believed that differences in power were influenced by social class, which consequently created elite powers in society (Bourdieu, 1986).

Overall, New Labour's ideology constructed the state as partner, enabler and provider of frameworks for opportunities for improved outcomes; these frameworks included the belief in education, incentives, entrepreneurial culture, flexibility, devolution and cultivation of social capital (Driver and Martell, 1998; McGregor, 2003; Finn, 2003). Like New Labour, the Conservative party under David Cameron appears to take an essentially optimistic view of human nature; favours the devolution rather than centralization of power; stresses social rather than economic progress, and places more faith in society than the state. It seems as though he denies some of the principles of Thatcherism by repeatedly emphasizing that 'There is such a thing as society, but it is not the same as the state' (*Built to Last,* Conservative Party, 2006).

Overall, the various changes and developments in social and economic policy have influenced the economic changes that have taken place in the UK during the period of this study. Political decisions based on the state of the economy have caused some dramatic changes to those once supported by Middle Way philosophies. Since the dramatic changes that took place through neo-liberalism during 1979-1990, successive governments have attempted to address those who have become disadvantaged. Some of those considered disadvantaged from policy changes, particularly during 1979-1990, are working class manual labourers, who are the main participants in this study. The chapter follows by discussing structuration theory, which examines the changing nature of social systems and practices through changing structure within a particular place and how this may affect individual actions.

2.4 Structuration theory

Giddens' structuration theory (1984) is the major theoretical perspective applied in this thesis. It has been chosen because it provides a framework for understanding social systems, how agency interacts with social systems and how those social systems are created, which then produces social change.

Anthony Giddens' theory of structuration (1984) is based on the premise that society should be understood in terms of both agency and structure. He suggests that structure and agency are not independent variables but a "duality," and are dependent on each other. Structuration theory, although relevant to research, does not discuss a particular methodology. Giddens intended his

theory to be abstract and theoretical, informing the hermeneutic aspects of research rather than guiding practice (Archer, 1996). Giddens (1984) suggests that individuals, commonly conceptualised as agents or actors, produce their own social systems by applying rules and resources. These rules and resources are created through social interaction and as a result structures are created through agents.

Giddens (1984) refers to those bodies which mainly establish patterns of behaviour as social institutions and/or social structures. Social institutions are generally constructed through powerful, and often, collective sets of agents, such as the government, who create and recreate patterns of behaviour across time and space through the law. Social institutions serve the purpose of structuring society, coordinating and regulating stable activities and production of goods across time and space. This suggests that societies, communities or groups only retain structure to the extent that people continue to behave in regular and fairly predictable ways. The continuation and reproduction of a society depends on cooperation, which in turn presumes a general consensus among its members over basic values (Giddens, 2009).

The work of Giddens can be contrasted to Durkheim (1895), a leading academic in social sciences in the 19th century who has been described alongside Karl Marx and Max Weber as one of the founding fathers of sociology. Durkheim believed that societies exert social constraint over individual actions and that social institutions such as the law, monetary system and religion are examples of "social facts," which exist independently of the individual; suggesting structure has primacy over agency (cited in Durkheim, 1982). Giddens (2009) agrees that social institutions have precedence over individuals. However, Giddens argues that whilst social facts may constrain what we do, they do not determine what we do. The relationship changes over time, such that for example, in more recent years religious institutions do not maintain the same power or constraints that they once did over social agents, particularly in western societies. This is due to what Giddens (cited in Hardcastle et al, 2005), describes as "reflexive monitoring" and "rationality," which enable social practices to be revised discursively by the agent in light of new information.

Giddens (1984) argues that every person has the capacity or agency to a greater or lesser extent, to act differently and to change and transform social practice. Giddens (1971) claims that individuals are not powerless and do have the capabilities to produce social change. However, there can be alterations in the balance of power over time between agency and structure. Control according to Giddens is the capability that some actors, groups and types of actors, such as the government and employers, have to influence the circumstances or actions of others. According

to Hardcastle et al (2005), in the context of employment, Giddens claims that the powerful, such as those at managerial level, are likely to be further up the social class system, and are generally very knowledgeable social actors. Power is considered by Giddens from a postmodernist perspective in respect of the agent's ability and capacity to reflexively monitor, expose and change assumptions, discourses, ideologies and constructions. Therefore, structures are recreated by social agents; suggesting that social rules and institutions can be transformed (Hardcastle et al, 2005).

Although Giddens' theory focuses largely on the nature of modernity[5], he does give a general account of history and social change by referring to time and space and how they are handled within differing types of social systems. He acknowledges time-space through 'contextuality.' Contextuality refers to time intersecting with space and is centred on the agent who is positioned within certain social encounters and who influences how time and space are used. Such encounters frequently create recurring patterns of social activity producing 'locales of interaction.' Locales of interaction are related to physical settings and their associated rules and regulations, which provide social structures that can enable and constrain encounters over time (Giddens, 1984).

Before the ascendency of neo-liberalism, migration of the local population was relatively rare and distances travelled were generally low, therefore most social life was localised. In more recent times place has become much less significant than it used to be due to what Giddens referred to as 'disembedding mechanisms'. Examples of disembedding mechanisms are money and advanced technological innovations, such as the rise of the Internet; these have allowed modern societies to stretch further across space and time. While the local community in which people live quite often remains the source of local attachments, place does not form the parameter of experience; and it does not offer the security of familiarity which traditional locales previously formed (Giddens, 1991).

In terms of reflexivity, a fundamental component of day to day activity is simply that of choice. Giddens (1991) discusses the plurality of choices for individuals within a postmodern society[6]. He suggests that the plurality of choices derives from living in a post-traditional society. To engage with a world of plural choices is to opt for alternatives. Second there is the pluralisation of life worlds. Whether in situations of work, family or leisure, an individual usually lived within

[5] Modernity (modern societies) means the appearance of social life or organisation, which emerged in Europe from the 17th century onwards and which subsequently became worldwide in its influence (Giddens, 1991).
[6] Post-modern societies are also referred to as late and high modernity, which refers to the 1990s to current times in western society (Giddens, 1991).

a setting that was closely connected and was regulated and dominated by the local community in most pre-modern cultures. The settings of modern social life are much more diverse and segmented. Segmentation includes particularly the differentiation between the public and the private domains.

Giddens (1991) clearly emphasises that modernity confronts the individual with complex diversity of choices; one of which is choice of lifestyle. Lifestyles can be defined as an integrated set of practices or discourses, which an individual embraces, not only because such practices fulfil specific needs, but because they give material form to a particular self-identity. A lifestyle involves a cluster of habits and behaviours creating certain unity amongst its followers. Lifestyle is also important in terms of a continuing sense of ontological security, created through ordered patterned lifestyles and routine practices. Routines of lifestyle are incorporated into habits of dress, modes of acting and favoured milieus for encountering others. The selection or creation of lifestyles is influenced by group pressures, the types of social encounters, and the visibility of role models as well as socio-economic status (Giddens, 1991).

Giddens (1991) also refers to the theory and practice of pure relationships, acknowledging the changing discourse of how society views marriage and romantic love. According to Giddens, the pure relationship is reflexively organised and no longer held in external conditions of social or economic life, which was typical of traditional contexts. Furthermore, he considers marriage in the traditional context as a contract. The contract was usually strongly influenced by economic considerations and formed part of wider economic networks and transactions, such as dowries. However, the rise of romantic love in parallel with further equality in the home and the workplace has more recently become the basic reason for marriage. It is understood by Giddens that marriage has become much more individualistic due to the marriage most likely lasting only for as long as it delivers emotional satisfaction.

The work of Giddens has not been without its critics. One of the reservations held about structuration theory is the duality of structure and agency. Archer (1996) argues that, in order to account for why things are ‘so and not otherwise,’ it is necessary to maintain the analytical distinction between the institutions of society and its people. Giddens suggests that the individual must be bound to the system through structure. He insists that it is a necessary feature of action that, at any point in time, the agent could have acted otherwise (Archer, 1996). Archer argues that such understandings are an assertion of western liberal values, suggesting that all individuals are free and autonomous, which in context of modernity is problematic in accounting for many of the real issues of power and inequality that many individuals face, such as discrimination and

exclusion.

Thompson (1989) argues that Giddens' (1984) conceptualization of structure is somewhat abstract therefore not within the structuralist tradition, which argues that structure has a far more predominant strength in constraining agency. The lack of concrete empirical examples in Giddens' work, together with its abstract conceptual focus, offers few ideas as to how to proceed in the everyday world in the gathering of useful understanding, and its reflection back into the world of practice (Thompson, 1989).

Structuration theory is one attempt to theorise structure and agency. Despite its critics, it is also useful in helping to analyse how beliefs, values and systems have changed over time in a particular geographical location, which is fundamental to this study. Aspects of structuration theory including structure, agency, reflexive monitoring and contextuality will be used as a reflective tool in analysing the data, and will help theorise changing social systems and their effects on agency and structure. The following section addresses social capital from the perspective of three major academic contributors who discuss it from the position of social inequality, as a social resource and as civic engagement, which has helped to widen a variety of social, political and economic outcomes.

2.5 Social capital

As noted in chapter one, social capital describes the pattern and intensity of networks among people and the shared values, which arise from those networks (Bourdieu, 1984; Coleman, 1990; Putnam, 2000). It is relevant for this study because it provides a framework for understanding how individuals may collectively benefit from social networks, with a particular focus on employment. In relation to the major contributors named above, the data chapters emphasized the work of Coleman (1990) in regards to the local community acting as non-monetary resource, which is built over a period of time. Also, the data chapters associated with Putnam (2000) in relation to bonding and bridging social capital.

Major academic contributors to theories of social capital have included Pierre Bourdieu, James Coleman and Robert Putnam. The influential French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu was interested in the ways in which society is reproduced, and how the dominant classes retain their position (Gauntlett, 2011). In comparison to Coleman and Putnam, Bourdieu's model is based on social elites and social inequality. Social resources, which Bourdieu felt controlled and defined the social position of individuals, were economic, cultural, symbolic and social capital (Bourdieu 1986).

According to Bourdieu (1986), social capital is a resource that is connected with group membership and social networks. Social class is an example of group membership as it allows for the development of social networks and social relations, which can improve the social position of individuals. Other examples of group membership, which may enhance social capital though social relations and networks, are trade unions, political parties and secret societies (for example freemasons). Social capital according to Bourdieu (1986) is based on group memberships, which go beyond the immediate family. Social capital gained through group memberships influences access to employment, mobility through occupational ladders and entrepreneurial success.

The family is understood to help transmit social, cultural and financial privileges; however the family is most important in relation to the development of cultural capital (Portes, 1998). Children learn the class-based cultural orientations of their parents and this shapes their class position (Bourdieu, 1984). This happens because of cultural dominance and the natural socialization into higher-status culture of children with higher-class parents. Such principles of cultural capital are regarded highly in the education system, and are rewarded through equipping children with better educational qualifications and jobs (Bourdieu, 1984). Bourdieu argues that differential educational success flows not from innate abilities but from a system instilled with class and power inequalities, with classed assumptions and control over what is valued as knowledge (Bourdieu, 1986).

Fundamentally, the basis of Bourdieu's work on social and cultural capital was to demonstrate how social advantage and disadvantage are historically based, and how power is maintained amongst social elites (Bourdieu, 1984; 1986). Bourdieu has been criticised for not developing a typology to represent aspects of social change. Another criticism could be based on the limitations he places on individual attributes, such as creativity and initiative, which are major implications in an increasing individualistic society (Gauntlett, 2011).

James Coleman’s approach in comparison to Bourdieu leads to a broader view of social capital, where it is not seen only as an asset held by powerful social groups, but of value for all kinds of communities, including the powerless and socially marginalized (Coleman, 1990). James Coleman, an American sociologist with strong connections to economics through rational-choice theory, draws together insights from both sociology and economics in his definition of social capital. Coleman has two approaches to his development of the concept social capital. The first is sociological, which sees the individual in a social and cultural environment subject to norms, rules, and obligations. The second is the economic approach, which is about self-interested, independent individuals seeking to fulfill their goals (Coleman, 1990).

Coleman proposes a model in which social capital is one of the potential resources an individual can use, alongside other resources such as their own skills and expertise (human capital), tools (physical capital), or money (economic capital). He suggests that social capital is not necessarily owned by the individual but instead arises as a resource, which is available to them. He suggests two ways in which social capital is developed. The first is trustworthiness of the social environment and the second is through the family and education (Coleman, 1990).

Trustworthiness within the social environment may include the street that an individual lives on. Local inhabitants may ask a neighbour on that street to look after their children, which is a form of social capital with other people. Social capital in this instance can only exist if there is an element of trust in the local environment whereas in less trusting or well-bonded communities, there is less chance of forming such social capital (Coleman, 1990). This is a resource which has arisen in the local environment and is not necessarily accessible to everyone. To get access to it, would involve living on the same street and forming trusting relationships with others, taking time and effort. This is because social capital is a resource based on trust and shared values, and develops from the inter-relationship of people in communities (Coleman, 1990).

Secondly, Coleman does not distinguish the differences between social capital and cultural capital. Unlike Bourdieu (1986) he applies social capital to all social networks. Coleman suggests that social capital is developed in the family through involved and supportive parenting, functioning as investment in children and contributing to their educational achievement or human capital (Coleman, 1990). Social capital is further developed when families are linked with each other in a variety of community networks, which share and reinforce common values. Coleman also points to a number of features of contemporary life as undermining social capital both within and outside 'the family'. He argues that changing family structures leads to a deficit of social capital, specifically in terms of increasing lone mothers, 'absent' fathers, and mothers working outside the home, and decreasing extended family households (Edwards et al, 2003). Overall, Coleman highlights the usefulness of social capital as part of a potential solution for marginalised individuals, and its importance in parenting, for people of any social class (Coleman, 1990).

However, Tilly's (1997) criticism of Coleman's perspective of social capital suggests that Coleman has not adequately explained the causal mechanisms featuring in the deployment of social capital; suggesting that we are no better placed in explaining how social capital works or exists. Furthermore, Gauntlett (2011) suggests that Coleman's view is also overly optimistic as a public good; for example providing for a set of norms and sanctions that allow individuals to

cooperate for mutual advantage and with little application of the possible disadvantages.

Since the publication of Robert Putnam's *Making Democracy Work*: *Civic Traditions in Modern Italy in 1993,* the concept of social capital has gained new understandings within the field of social sciences and also political studies. In his book, Putnam evaluates the institutional performance of twenty Italian regional governments using surveys, interviews and drawing on a diverse set of policy indicators. From his research he argued that a democracy which works, is the outcome of local networks of active citizens. Putnam (1993) understands civic community to be based on the premise of social capital, and consisting of networks of trust, norms and habits of cooperation. The basic idea of social capital is collaboration in local associations or other less formal contexts, formulating interpersonal relations that create better citizens in the process. Trust for Putnam is a form of capital, which can be saved and employed in new circumstances. Trust is part of a bargain that also includes other human qualities. One is tolerance or the ability to live with difference. Another is solidarity or the will not just to do things for others, but also to feel obligations to a concrete group of others (Putnam, 1993).

In *Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital*, (2000) Putnam develops these ideas through considering problems arising from a decline of civic society in America. In this book, he argues that the problem of declining social capital goes beyond political involvement. Putnam identifies a number of organisations in America that have experienced a decline in membership including labour unions, religious associations and parent-teacher organisations. He suggests implicitly that the problem is linked to individualism and that people are now less likely to become collectively involved in organisations and are therefore less likely to confer with others in small groups.

It has been argued by Portes and Landolt (1996) that in some cases, social capital can become a constraint to individuals' actions and choices. This is because social capital may stem from excluding others from access to resources. Putnam addresses this issue by conceptualising two forms of social capital, bridging (inclusive) and bonding (exclusive) (Field, 2003). Bonding social capital is defined as a localised form of social capital and is found amongst a homogenous group such as those who live in the same local community. Bridging social capital is defined as extending to individuals and organisations that are more removed from localised groups (Putnam 2000).

Bonding social capital is often limited in its outlook and only benefits those with internal access. While it can act as an effective resource for particular groups such as ethnic minority groups who create niche economies, its benefits are limited (Field, 2003). The factors that promote its development such as tight bonds of trust and solidarity may ultimately prevent its entrepreneurial

members from reaching their full potential. Also, in order to create peaceful societies in a diverse multi-ethnic country, there needs to be some link between homogeneous groups. This Putnam refers to as bridging social capital, which helps to create a more prosperous, tolerant and accepting community. However, with the decline of bonding social capital, there may be a decline in bridging social capital, which may form tensions amongst social groups (Field, 2003).

Putnam (2000) gives some suggestions as to why there has been a decline in civic engagement and declining aspects of social capital in the US. He implicitly refers to the process of individualisation and the growth of individualism in the US through technological advancement culture. He also suggests that more women entering the workforce and increasing average number of hours in the working week have decreased the amount of time and energy available to put toward civic engagement. Also, Putnam discusses the level of mobility, which allows people to move from place to place and move house more regularly. This makes it less convenient or even practical for them to join local organisations (Putnam, 2000).

Putnam (2000) also discusses the changing structure of the family, which includes a higher number of divorces, fewer children and decreased number of marriages as other possible reasons for the decline in social capital in the US. He also implicitly suggests that the changing structure of families is not an isolated issue of the US; in fact it is evident throughout many western societies such as the UK, which are technically and economically developing. He believes that individualism is a contributing factor towards people spending more time alone, watching television and searching the internet, instead of engaging with their neighbours and friends, which was much more evident in previous years. In summary, the US is showing more signs of an individualistic society where individuals have become more introverted, self-centred, less concerned about collective interests and are less likely to become members of local and general interest organisations.

There have been further criticisms of Putnam's work, for example there has been scepticism about whether social capital is produced through the kinds of activities in which Putnam is interested. Putnam's argument is that social capital is produced through participation in a range of voluntary associational activities through which individuals encounter their fellows on equal terms and learn to interact with and trust them (Field, 2003). Precisely how social capital is created through participation in what may be considered mundane associational activities is not made clear (Field, 2003).

These three academics have identified various key social locations for the development of social capital, which are in the interconnected social institutions of families, particularly in parent-child and family-school relations; communities with strong norms, values and obligations; generalised

cultural norms of reliability, reciprocity and accountability; dense social networks; and civic engagement. Also, Bourdieu argues that fathers, in particular, can play a major role in transmitting social capital to their children. Social capital has been described as being most effective whilst maintaining networks within a closely knit community, therefore mobility can have a negative impact upon the extent in which social capital can support individuals. Furthermore, rural and coastal towns have been described as being socially deprived areas, which may affect the quality and extent to which social capital may be a useful resource; this will also be examined in the study. One of the major factors that have been highlighted in regards to maintaining social capital is the importance of local communities and maintaining some attachment to them. Therefore, the following section examines how individualisation and individualism has impacted upon how individuals relate to families and place in modern society.

2.6 Individualisation, individualism and place-attachment

Individualisation has marked an important and fundamental shift in how society views social structures, particularly in the works of Ulrich Beck. Beck and Beck-Gurnsheim (2002) suggested that individualisation is a process, which aids the individual in creating their own individualistic lifestyle. Individualism has been favoured amongst various politians including Ronald Reagen, George W. Bush and principally in the UK under Margaret Thatcher. Individualisation can be seen as the process of removing the individual from pre-existing social discourses, shifting them away from their traditional social identity and encouraging them to develop their individualistic self. Beck and Beck-Gurnsheim describe this sense of individualisation as "the increasing fragility of such categories as class and social status, gender roles, family, neighbourhood etc" (p2, 2002).

Changes in the patterns of marriage, divorce and cohabitation have had implications for family formation, which has many forms in addition to the traditional nuclear family. The UK population has become more culturally diverse in recent decades; changes also include increased mobility, changing employment for both men and women and changing living patterns, leading to a decreasing number of nuclear families in contemporary society (ONS, 2003). Giddens (1998) suggests that living in a post-traditional society has encouraged new forms of family, recognising and acknowledging the social, cultural and moral diversity evident in modern societies. Giddens argues that this should be encouraged to build flexibility, choice, encourage equality, democracy and tolerance of family diversity in a post-traditional society.

The contemporary family has been described as becoming more individualistic, suggesting that the family is more loosely tied together than in previous years. The family unit is now

considered to be a relationship between individual persons who each bring to the family their own interests, experiences and plans (Giddens, 1991) Giddens (2009) suggests that in many modern contexts[7], individuals were more powerless than they are in postmodern[8] settings as people previously lived in smaller groups and communities, which encouraged collective ideas, rather than personal choice. In many small group settings individuals were relatively powerless to alter or escape from their surrounding social circumstances.

Individualisation also limits interference from social structures to allow for further individual choice. In a postmodern society, the individual is no longer committed to one tradition, nor restricted to ascribed social relations (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002). Giddens (1971) refers to the concept of the pure relationship, suggesting that individuals are no longer bound to each other by social and moral obligations but only by their personal needs and pleasure. Post-traditional societies facilitate the development of individual reflexivity. Since it is no longer obvious or predictable what individuals should do or be, they must consider their options and make choices about what they should do.

Increasing globalisation, individualisation and mobility are argued to have had a fundamental impact upon place attachment. Increasing social and spatial mobility has challenged the traditional links between identity and place leading to new approaches of identity formation and attachment (Giddens 1991). Collective identity building and attachment is based upon shared geographical and social experiences, which have become both fragmented and individualized in recent years (Giddens' 1991). Livingston et al (2009) suggest that in an economically changing society, place attachment can have detrimental effects if it prevents individuals from seeking out new experiences and new opportunities for personal development, and for some possibly prolonging hardship or stigma. Hence, the advantages of place attachment have to be balanced against the advantages of spatial mobility for people at particular times, in particular places.

There has been debate in regards to the extent social change has impacted upon individuals' attachment to place and its effects on identity. It is suggested that aspects of social change have failed to acknowledge the importance of everyday environments and their richly symbolic, aesthetic, moral, and identity-relevant meanings (Burholt and Naylor, 2005). It is argued that place[9] plays a significant role in self-identity and is a vital source of emotional meaning for the inhabitant (Burholt and Naylor, 2005). Indeed, there are significant associations between people's bonds to the communities in which they live and desirable quality of life outcomes such as lower rates of violence, stronger mental health, better physical health, and greater civic

[7] 1650-1950.
[8] 1980's to present.
[9] Place refers to space, which is culturally meaningful (Hoey, 2010).

engagement (Sundblad and Sapp, 2011). Furthermore, encouraging place attachment has been fundamental to the government's aims relating to social capital and the empowerment of communities (Livingston et al, 2008).

According to Dallago et al (2009), strong place attachment is constructed during middle adolescence[10], which is considered an impressionable and identity forming period. During early adolescence,[11] children are less mobile and independent, and late adolescence[12] is a time when they are focused more on people than place, become independently mobile and exploring beyond their home territory or community. Place-attachment is considered particularly challenging for adolescents growing up in rural areas. Young people interviewed in Glendinning et al's (2003) study suggested that while rural areas were good places in which to live as children, as well as being good places to be an adult, they were not necessarily good places to be a teenager or young adult. This was due to the lack of local resources such as transport and shops, which at this stage of life were important over rural communities being 'good places to live'.

According to Glendinning et al (2003), research in the UK would suggest that life is problematic for young people who live in rural areas, particularly in socio-economic terms. Consequently, out-migration from rural areas has been growing in recent years due to changing economic opportunities. Migration is seen by rural youths as an obvious step to financial independence and is regarded as part of growing up. It is concluded by Glendinning et al (2003) that young people are not as firmly tied to their community as previous generations. This is due to economic change and rural youth reflecting upon and evaluating their situation as to whether there is a place for them in the community in the future.

Gender has also been identified as a significant factor in young people's feelings about self, place, and out-migration. According to Glendinning et al (2003), young women are more enthusiastic and willing to detach themselves from the rural area than boys. Generational differences are also considered a significant factor in migration for young women. In recent years, women are aware that the world they will live in as adults is significantly different from that of their parents, who may have had more limited alternatives.

As a consequence of individualisation and mobility, the level of place-attachment for many young people has decreased. Gendered roles within the family have become blurred largely due to women entering the workforce, which is believed to have resulted in greater marital instability because of women's decreasing need for being financially supported (Beck and Beck-

[10] 14-16 years old.
[11] 11-13 years old.
[12] 17-19 years old.

Gernsheim, 2002).

Pahl (1984) argues that women taking part in paid employment is not a new phenomenon, and that women throughout many generations have often contributed their earnings to their families and households. Before marriage young women either gave most of their earned income to their mothers or, if they were living elsewhere, sent home all but a small subsistence income. Alternatively, they saved for their own marriages and their new homes and families. After marriage their pattern of work was structured but not necessarily stopped by their commitments to child rearing and their roles as wives.

Pahl (1984) demonstrates through case studies, carried out in the rural locality on the Isle of Sheppey, how women in their adolescence during the 1950's were socialised into casual employment through hop picking. Domestic roles were generally described as a partnership, rather than a rigid categorization of "gendered" domestic roles. Pahl concludes that historically, women have been flexible in engaging in all forms of work and should not be perceived in a narrow or limited way in terms of employment.

Hughes (2004) suggests that rural communities tend not to acknowledge diverse families including lone parent families and gay families in the area. Such family types are perceived as being more prevalent in urban areas. The family, according to rural ideology is the nuclear family with a married heterosexual couple bringing up their dependent children within the same household. Hughes suggests that there is very little room for other less traditional family forms such as one-parent families, lesbian or gay families. Such rigid constructions of family types in rural localities can potentially conceal social issues such as poverty, social exclusion and homelessness in the countryside (Hughes, 2004). On the other hand, it may be argued that rigid constructions of family types are part of maintaining stability and homogeneity in the community (Dixon and Durrheim, 2004). Neighbourhood stability, as previously mentioned, facilitates social capital and also place attachment, because it is more likely to maintain well-developed local social relations, but also because the individual is more likely to feel safe and in control and thus to participate in such local interrelations (Livingston et al, 2008).

The extent in which individuals are attached to a specific place is related to the duration of time spent there (Livingston et al, 2008). Consequently, older inhabitants who have lived in a particular place for most of their lives and have experienced being part of a traditional society, which encouraged a collective identity, are more likely to experience displacement in the community due to the process of individualisation and mobility (Dixon and Durrheim, 2004). Displacement is based on factors undermining an individual's sense of place. An individual's

ability to relate to stable reference points for experiences, values, relations and actions secures their feeling of place (Dixon and Durrheim, 2004). This may be threatened by high levels of residential turnover, which may undermine social and neighbouring relations by increasing the number of unknown neighbours (Livingston et al, 2008).

Displacement can have effects on the individual including disorientation, isolation and alienation. It may also take the form of a 'bodily' confusion as the tangible routines, gestures and orientations that once gave meaning to life in a particular place has decreased (Dixon and Durrheim, 2004). Displacement may also lead to a powerful sense of 'place nostalgia', expressed through narrative, yearning for a cherished environment that has been relinquished, lost or destroyed. Under such circumstances, a place that was formerly central to self may lose its capacity to provide identity-related meaning and value (Dixon and Durrheim, 2004).

This section has shown how individualisation, geographic change and mobility have all contributed towards the changing perception of place and the attachment that individuals sustain to a place, particularly if it is rural, which may be a factor in terms of my place of study. It also discusses how different ages may interact and connect with a particular place, which is also important to consider given the variation of age of fathers who took part in interviews. This section has also briefly considered how sustaining family types, such as the nuclear family, might maintain stability in the local community. The following section continues by focusing on aspects of place through examining the changing nature of rural and coastal towns, which are characteristics of the place of study.

2.7 Rural and coastal towns

Research has identified some concern related to the representation of rural areas, commonly identified as being idyllic and problem free. This idealistic notion of rural areas can give little regard for those who may be socially excluded in such areas (Cloke and Little, 1997; Lowndes and Pratchett, 2008). Phillips and Williams (1984) noted that policy initiatives aiming to support socially excluded young people often favour concentration of services, typically located in urban council estates, rather than the dispersal of services throughout socially excluded rural areas. The main elements of rural social exclusion are a lack of sufficient basic services and opportunities such as education, health, social services, employment, transport, shops and information (Cloke and Little, 1997; Glendinning et al, 2003; Lowndes and Pratchett, 2008).

According to Gough et al (2006), nearly a third of rural settlements have no public transport at all and 75% are without a daily bus service, despite rural residents having to travel on average

40% further each week that those in urban areas. Monk et al's (1999) study suggested that some firms provided a works bus, offering people a solution to a lack of transport. However, this limited people's range of job opportunities and led to dependence on a particular employer. Reliance on lifts to work was another strategy but it was often problematic. In some cases, people felt that they lost the chance of employment because employers considered them potentially unreliable if they had no car and had to rely on public transport. Other employers based their recruitment decisions on how far away people lived from work.

As well as being a rural area, the Isle of Sheppey has seaside towns. Seaside resorts tend to share a number of features that distinguish them from other places. This includes a specialist tourist infrastructure including promenades, piers and parks, holiday accommodation including hotels, boarding houses and caravan sites and a distinctive resort character that is often reflected in the built environment (Beatty and Fothergill, 2003). Coastal towns have suffered decline since the 1960s, which has affected seasonal employment. Since the 1960s, a growing number of holidaymakers began taking holidays abroad instead of by the sea in Britain, resulting in the decline of the tourist economy in Britain's seaside towns (Beatty and Fothergill, 2003).

The physical isolation of many coastal towns is often a significant barrier to economic growth, development and regeneration. The Isle of Sheppey has been identified as a physically isolated area. This is related to limited public transport and only being able to access the mainland by the Kingsferry Bridge, the ferry service which is now not in operation and more recently the Sheppey Crossing. One of the main aims of opening the Sheppey Crossing in 2006 was to make the Island more accessible to outside investors. However, outside investors establishing themselves on the Island have been minimal and there is little evidence of a significant economic impact on the Island (Swale Borough Council, 2002).

Beatty and Fothergill (2003) suggest that seaside towns are the least understood of Britain's 'problem' areas. For some years it has been apparent that towns around Britain's coastline are affected by welfare dependency that is nearly always higher than in surrounding areas and sometimes well above the national average. Incapacity claimants are the largest group of non-employed working age claimants in coastal areas. In England's smaller seaside towns they account for 8.7% of the working age population, which includes nearly one in eleven of all adults aged between 16 and state pension age.

According to the Communities and Local Government Committee (2007), Kent's coastal towns face major social problems including higher than average benefit dependency, in-migration of

benefit dependents, higher than average proportion of elderly people, higher than average unemployment, low qualification levels, frequent dependency on a single industry, low seasonal wages and declining tourism. Kent coastal towns have also suffered from their proximity to London and have not yet benefited from the combination of faster rail links and low property values, which should give rise to a growing demand for middle class second homes and growing cultural capital.

Rural areas in the UK have been depicted as places that are generally overlooked when considering socially excluded individuals, which may suggest an oversight of rural young fathers. This is due to stereotypical understandings of rural areas being understood as idyllic and problem free. Coastal towns have experienced an increasing decline in seasonal visitors, affecting seasonal employment, which may be of concern on the place of study. The following section examines further how these policy changes may have impacted upon working class males and their identity.

2.8 Challenges to the male breadwinner model

Social shifts in the economy discussed above, most notably deindustrialisation, have affected the male breadwinner role. The breadwinner role is typically defined as the male member of a family who earns the money outside the home to provide the family with an income. The concept of the breadwinner is based on patriarchal norms with the male being the main, or in most cases, the only financial provider of the family whilst the female stays and takes care of children and older people (Edley and Wetherall, 1999). Economic shifts, which are believed to have negatively impacted upon the male breadwinner role are understood to have led to uncertain ideas and less explicit understandings of the normative roles of being a father (Edley and Wetherall, 1999). Before the 1980s, the term "economic provider" was traditionally linked to masculinity. This constitutes part of the hegemonic ideal of masculinity (Connell, 2005), which it can be argued that young fathers partake partially in as complicit[13]. Complicit masculinity can be seen as being exhibited by those males who are unable to meet the standard set by the hegemony, despite being advantaged through being males. The young fathers could be argued to partake in complicit masculinity in the sense that they are not able to satisfy the criteria of actually providing for their families, but are not willing to abandon the provider as an ideal. As discussed further in section 2.11, the typical role of the male can be seen as socially constructed. The social situation young fathers have seen themselves in, in relation to their own fathers, can influence them to subscribe to the hegemonic gender stereotype of the man as the economic provider for the family (Connell,

[13] See chapter one, section 1.4 for Connell's four definitions of masculinity.

1995; Frosh et al 2002; Kane, 2006). An important social and cultural component of what it means to be a man included earning a wage in the public sphere and thereby breadwinning for a dependent nuclear family. However, due to social shifts in the economy men's ability to live up to this provider image, particularly working class men, has become more difficult (Willott and Griffin, 2004).

Since the 1980s, significant social shifts in the economy such as the loss of manufacturing have encouraged new ways of representing western masculinity. The "New Man," a contemporary formation of masculinity, is commonly conceptualised in the media as men being domesticated and emotional suggesting more feminine attributes to masculinity (Willott and Griffin, 2004). Despite this, Nayak and Kehily (2008) suggest that the current frustrations of manual labouring working class men have led to what is commonly conceptualised as a crisis in masculinity. This has derived primarily from the impact of neo-liberalism in the 1980s, which has encouraged technological, economic, occupational, spatial and cultural change.

Economic restructuring in the 1980s is believed to have resulted in young working people facing poorer economic prospects than their parents did at the same age. The unemployment rate for 16-to 24-year-olds has risen sharply in the current recession, from 15% in 2008 to 19% in 2009 and then to 20% in 2010 (The Poverty Site, 2012). Recent statistics show that the unemployment rate in 2011 for 16-to-24-year-olds stood at 20.6% in the UK (ONS, 2011a). Structural shifts in the economy in western societies have witnessed a move away from primary and secondary industries to tertiary industries, particularly the service sector. These shifts have often included the closure, restructuring and downsizing and in some cases off-shoring of heavy manufacturing industries (Kenway and Kraack, 2004).

Between 1970 and 1981, a net loss of one million jobs was recorded in manufacturing. These were in the traditional manufacturing industries such as engineering, textiles and shipbuilding where the jobs lost were full time jobs and usually occupied by working class men (Ashton, 1986). Employment in manufacturing continues to decline whilst the service sector has become increasingly significant. These changes represent an important development in neo-liberal society (Musolf, 2003).

Unemployment has been identified as a major aspect of social exclusion (Social Exclusion Unit, 2001). Since the 1980s, educational options have become more attractive amongst young people. Remaining at school for longer periods of time and entering university have become increasingly common amongst young people. As a result, the number of young people leaving school to enter

the labour market at the minimum age has declined heavily (Cartmel and Furlong, 2007). Since the 1990s, the transition from education to employment has relied on individuals making personal decisions and directing their own transitions to adulthood (Hubbard, 2000).

Bowlby et al (1998) discussed the transition from school to employment as being part of a young person's development and the creation of a new adult identity. For every young person the process of transition takes place in a specific social and physical context, strongly influencing the transitional experience and its outcome. For most it is the spaces of home, school, the local community and the local labour market, which are critical to a smooth transition. Through these particular spaces and experiences, young people develop their job aspirations, attitudes towards their experiences of education, training and employment and gain ideas about the opportunities available in the locality.

Evidence has suggested that in spite of policies to introduce small manufacturing and service firms to rural areas in recent years, in an attempt to replace jobs lost in the primary and secondary sector, employment opportunities remain restricted especially for the younger and older members of the workforce (Meek, 2008). Within rural areas, females are less likely than males to experience prolonged or continuous periods of unemployment and are more likely to find work quickly after a period of unemployment. This is likely to be a result of a higher demand for female labour in service or tourist-related services, which are often part-time. Rural females tend to have stronger educational qualifications than rural males, which has advantages in a knowledge led economy (Meek, 2008).

According to Giddens (1991), the knowledge economy should be viewed as an advantage to the individual. For example, markets operate without regard to pre-established forms of behaviour, which previously restricted the power and control of personal agency. Free markets promote individualism in the sense that they stress individual rights and responsibilities. Neo-liberalism mainly concerns the freedom of contract and mobility, which is fundamental to capitalist employment. Further to this, individualism is linked to consumerism, an essential component of capitalism; individual self-expression through consumerism allows the continuity of the capitalist system.

Various government initiatives have aimed to support young people into employment. The Job Creation Programme, the first national scheme specifically aimed at young people was introduced in 1975, in order to provide temporary work experience for school leavers without jobs (Cartmel and Furlong, 2007). At this stage, only a small minority of young people had

experienced schemes, but with the introduction of the Youth Opportunities Programme (YOP) in 1978, which provided six months of work experience for those who had been unemployed for six weeks, levels of participation grew. In 1981, YOP was succeeded by the year long Youth Training Scheme (YTS) and in 1986 YTS became a two year programme (Cartmel and Furlong, 2007).

Training programmes were implemented in 1998 with the introduction of the New Deal, which differed from earlier programmes. Firstly it targeted an older age group (18+), many of whom had experienced recurrent problems in the labour market. Secondly it offered a degree of choice and made an attempt to tailor interventions much more closely to individual needs and aspirations (Cartmel and Furlong, 2007). The current Coalition Government have made youth unemployment a key priority by introducing the Supporting Youth Employment initiative, encouraging educational attainment and offering more work experiences, apprenticeships and internships to young people (HM Government, 2011), although the latter are often unpaid.

At the end of 2011, 154,900 (8.1%) of 16-18 year olds were not in education, employment or training, otherwise known as NEET (Department for Education, 2011). Teenage fathers are more likely to be not in education, employment or training than their peers (Barnardos, 2012). McNally and Telhaj (2010) suggest that the cost of young people not in education or employment goes beyond the financial. Unemployment has a huge emotional impact on young people across the UK as well as their families and the communities they live in. Young people in such circumstances all too often face depression, poverty, drug addiction and other health related risk factors.

Charles Murray (1990), an American academic and journalist, has examined the effects of economic shifts on behaviour and moral responsibility. He identifies long-term youth unemployment as a definitive feature of what he conceptualises as the underclass. He suggests that the notion of the underclass is becoming more transferable to the UK due to such diverse changes to employment, which have led to a counterculture within society who have very little stake in social order. The counterculture is considered to be welfare dependent and a major source of crime, deviancy and social breakdown. Murray identifies this counterculture as consisting of the long term unemployed, communities with statistically high levels of crime, and illegitimate children living in lone parent families. He claims that long term unemployed young men have a lazy personal ethic and do not even consider particular jobs if they are deemed by the young man to be menial employment.

Rather than framing aspects of social exclusion for young mothers around structural causes such as inadequate childcare and low wages, Murray identifies this counterculture as being responsible for their own situation. He describes lone parents in particular as young mothers who are no more than feckless teenagers who are welfare dependent and who intentionally get pregnant by unemployed welfare dependant young men to gain social housing (Hayward and Yar, 2006). This representation of young single parents has been popular amongst Conservatives and has been acknowledged and rhetorically reproduced through popular media, particularly during the 1990's and into the 21st century (Hayward and Yar, 2006).

Murray (1990) describes social networking as vital for gaining employment, suggesting that by not participating in the workforce during such crucial formative years, young men are reducing the time in which they need to have been acquiring an identity, further aspirations, skills and establish suitable networks to help sustain full time employment. Similarly, Halpern (2005) focused on long and short-term unemployment showing that the probability of leaving unemployment is strongly affected by the individual's social capital. It is understood that a large proportion of jobs are filled by applicants who heard about the vacancy through word of mouth and personal contacts. Estimates according to Halpern (2005) suggest that the proportions of jobs filled by word of mouth vary based on social cohesion in geographical areas, but are almost universally high. For example, Janger (2009) stated that 70% of jobs are found through networking. Investing everything into simply sending applications to companies with no networking follow up lowers an individual's chance of getting a job to 30%.

This section has discussed the changing nature of employment amongst young working class men. The literature has debated aspects of social change, most notably deindustrialisation as a predictor of unemployment amongst working class young men. Economic shifts have contributed towards the breakdown in the breadwinner model, which identifies the male as the main financial provider for his family and in turn provides him with a clear role and identity with the family unit. There has been little attempt at understanding how young men perceive social change and how that has impacted upon their working lives throughout a period of time. This aspect will be taken into consideration as part of my study. The following sections discuss the masculinity of working class young men before family life; and how they are related to early sexual practices, peer pressure, lack of attainment in education and potential unemployment, which may in some circumstances lead to young fatherhood.

2.9 Young masculinities

Connell (1995), a key theorist in masculinity research, describes masculine identities as socially constructed rather than biologically constructed. She describes the characteristics of a certain group of males as being hegemonic. Connell defines hegemonic masculinity as a culturally normative ideal of male behaviour. Hegemonic masculinity is generally based on social class, ethnicity and cultural factors. Frosh et al (2002) describe hegemonic masculinity in the context of middle class boys who are more likely to value leadership, sociability and intelligence as characteristics defining middle class masculinity. In comparison, working class boys are more likely to determine their masculinity as having strength, attracting girls and "looking cool."

Gender stereotyping and gendered treatment by parents have also been associated with the construction of masculinity and femininity. Heterosexual fathers conform to hegemonic masculinity, playing a significant role in creating their sons' masculinity, which generally derives from the fathers' own masculinity and their conformity to the pre-existing social structure (Kane, 2006). Fathers generally appear to engage in more differential treatment of sons and daughters and more enforcement of gender boundaries than do mothers. The analyses presented by Kane (2006) are based on data from 42 interviews with a diverse sample of parents, each of whom had at least one preschool-aged child (three to five years old). Interviews focused on parents' perceptions of their children's gendered attributes and behaviours. It was found that most parents made efforts to accomplish, or felt accountable to achieve an ideal of masculinity, which was based on having limited emotionality, being active rather than passive and rejection of material markers of femininity (Kane, 2006).

According to Clare (2001), more actively involved fathers lead to less gender-role stereotyping behaviour in children, through illustrating less traditional views about gender stereotypes, dual earner parents and both parents sharing childcare. Nylund (2006) examined young fathers' perception of fatherhood. Through a narrative process, young fathers noted the negative effects of traditional masculinity, based on limited emotionality and rejecting attributes of femininity, and how this affected their parenting. Nylund often began by asking them about their ideas of manhood such as 'what ideas do you have about what it means to be a man?' and 'where did you learn these ideas from?' Frequently they spoke about where and from whom dominant masculinity was sustained and reproduced. Some of the most prevalent places were school, the family and wider culture. Nylund asked a number of questions based on their experiences of masculinity and manhood. The questions encouraged discussion about the negative effects of traditional masculinity, which included how culture idealized forms of manhood, limiting men's

ability to connect to others, restricting emotional expression and reinforcing violent masculinity as a cultural norm. Many of the young men in response to these questions said that their father, or another older man helped reinforce such traditional ideas about manhood through various practices of intimidation and ridicule.

Holland et al (1998) conducted a research study over a 10-year period, exploring the complexities of gendered and sexual identities of young people in the UK. The study suggested that men channelled their masculinity and superiority through sexual encounters. They suggested that young women's sexual risk-taking was based upon a man's sexual pleasure including sex without protection, illustrating femininity as an unsafe sexual identity leading to higher rates of teenage pregnancy. Similarly, Spence (2007) found that many black young men believed that birth control might negatively affect one's sexuality, condoms spoiled the pleasure of sex, and being daring and aggressive in sexual encounters was an expression of masculinity.

More recently, Richardson (2010) carried out a qualitative study with young white men in working class close-knit communities. The focus was on cultural and social attitudes towards sexuality and sexual practices in the North-East of England. She found that the most common reason given for having sex was in order to be accepted by one's peers. Being sexually active was perceived as a marker of acceptance and belonging, which was an important way of establishing one's popularity and credibility with peers. Such peer pressures are intensified by the cultural expectation that young men will always 'be up for it' and should aim to have sex early with as many different partners as possible. In the study this was not what most of the young men themselves said they wanted; however, it appeared to be difficult for a young man to avoid being labelled gay if he said he didn't want or like sex. Consequently, many of the young men felt they could not talk about their displeasures, anxieties or concerns in relation to sex (Richardson, 2010).

2.10 Young masculinities in education

Working class adolescents have often been found to have a problematic relationship with academic success, which according to Jaffee et al (2001) has been a likely risk factor amongst young men who have become young fathers. Boys who become fathers as teenagers have been found to be three times more likely than non-fathers to fail to complete secondary education, and also tend to be far less satisfied with their educational experience (Barnardos, 2012). The concern often expressed by the media and often conceptualised as moral panic, has characterised much of the debates about boys' educational issues in the UK. This has led to fears about

"underachieving boys," which have continued to shape educational discourses in the UK. Consequently, attempts have been made to explain 'laddish' behaviours in school, which have drawn almost exclusively upon sociological theories of masculinities (Jackson, 2003).

It is consistently argued amongst policy analysts that a good quality of education for children and young people is a vital necessity within contemporary society. The *14 to 19 Education and Skills* White Paper set out the New Labour Government's ambition to ensure that post-16 participation rates rose from 76% to 90% by 2015 (DfES, 2005). In 2010, the Coalition Government published a new skills strategy, *Skills for Sustainable Growth.* It outlines the Coalition's plans to address 'current failings' in England's further education and training system. One of the main aims is to create an additional 75,000 adult apprenticeship places on top of the previous governments' plans, with 200,000 adults expected to start an apprenticeship by 2014–2015 (Department of Education, 2011).

Despite education alone being perceived as insufficient to eradicate serious inequality and social exclusion, it still represents the single largest social policy investment in poor neighbourhoods (MacDonald and Marsh, 2004). A longitudinal study carried out by Wadsworth et al (2006), discussing findings on health, survival, growth, development, and morbidity, and its association with family circumstances and health services suggests that there are considerable geographic and socio-economic status (SES) differences in health and survival. A range of other life course determinants were investigated, including educational attainment. One of the major findings presented from this study was based on educational attainment, showing the power of parental interest and concern for their child's education independently of school and SES related factors. It was also clear that adverse SES circumstances reduced longer-term educational opportunity and attainment, even of children with high measured cognitive ability. Behaviour problems in adolescence were more frequent in those who had experienced long or repeated hospital admission by age 5 years; and disruption of family life through parental separation was also a risk factor for poor educational attainment.

Paul Willis's study, "Learning to Labour" carried out in the 1970's, followed a group of 'working class lads' as they went through the last two years of secondary school and into employment. The ethnographic account explained that for 'the lads', it was their own counterculture which blocked teaching and guided working class lads on to the shop floor (Willis, 1977). However, the context in which Willis's lads found themselves was during a period of economic security and predictability; when there were steady jobs available even for non-academic, low achieving, school-disaffected, white working class boys (Kenway and Kraack, 2004).

Willis (1977) constructed the term "counter school culture" and defined it as the zone of the informal, where the demands of the formal were denied. The informal group was the basic unit of the counter school culture and its fundamental source was its resistance to the institution. The formal zone was associated with conformists, otherwise known by the working class lads as the "ear-oles, poofs, poofters or wankers" who were likely to be regarded as effeminate and passive cissies by the lads (Willis, 1977, p32). Willis found that the "lads" automatically assigned themselves to manual labour after their secondary education, as it was associated with the social superiority of working class masculinity. Mental labour was associated with the social inferiority of femininity and middle class values. Willis suggested that the "brutality" of manual occupations was no more than a heroic exercise of manly confrontation with the manual task (p34). Manual labour offered difficult, uncomfortable or even dangerous conditions, allowing the lads to initiate masculine readiness and hardness due to the level of toughness required to survive them.

Since Willis's study, there has been little evidence of ethnographical studies carried out in UK secondary schools, illustrating the changing nature of transitions from education to employment, which makes this study unique. However, there has been interest in relation to what has happened to working class boys since the economic shifts that had taken place in the 1980s. Nayak (2006) carried out an ethnographic study in the late 1990s in North-East England, focusing upon leisure lifestyles and the increasingly fragile, complex and contradictory choices open to working-class young men as they sought to make the transition from formal education to employment. The north-east of England is a region previously associated with shipbuilding, coal mining and heavy engineering, which most local young working class men would join. Since the 1980s, young boys in this particular region have found themselves employed in part-time, service sector work typically supermarkets, sport shops, petrol stations, record stores and cafes. In the absence of manual work, Nayak describes other forms of 'grafting' through crime, which encourages 'macho' forms of masculinity through gaining credibility on the street; and a fierce commitment to traditional masculine notions of 'respect.'

More recently, Jackson (2003) highlighted how almost all the boys interviewed in her study did recognise the value of education and wanted to do well in school. This was to increase their chances of securing employment or further education at sixteen. However, many of her participants felt they had to tread a careful line. They had to be seen not to work hard whilst actually doing enough work to attempt to do well at school. There were many examples in the interviews of boys who talked about the ways in which they hid their work and effort in order to

avoid being picked on and bullied. Therefore achievement is not usually a problem but working hard to achieve may be problematic (Jackson, 2003).

Mac an Ghail (1994) presented ethnographic research findings over a three year period between 1990 and 1993. This study investigated the social construction and regulation of masculinities in a state secondary school. The primary objectives were to explore the processes involved in the interplay between schooling, masculinities and sexualities. One of the main findings was how the curriculum created different versions of masculinity that the students could adopt. For example, at Parnell school a system of academic bandings was in place. All of the macho lads were in the bottom two sets for all subjects. For some this was a result of demotion while others were placed there on their arrival at school. The macho lads came together as they found other male students with similar negative responses to the curriculum, the banding system and the institution as a whole.

Their shared view of the school was of a system of hostile authority and meaningless work demands. Teachers and students viewed them as the most visible anti-school male sub-culture. Key social practices for the macho lads were "looking after your mates", "acting tough", "having a laugh", "looking smart" and "having a good time" (Mac an Ghail, 1994, p42). Their vocabulary of masculinity stressed the physical (sticking up for yourselves), solidarity (sticking together) and territorial control (teachers thinking they own the place). Like Willis's lads (1977), the macho lads at Parnell School were similar in terms of academic work being inferior and effeminate and referring to those who conformed as "dickhead achievers." In both cases, they overtly rejected school work as being inappropriate for them as men (Mac an Ghail, 1994).

Connell 's (2000) approach to masculinity was to identify some key moments in the collective process of gender construction and the social dynamic in which masculinities are formed. Connell suggests that masculinity is strongly structured by relations of power. Like Mac an Ghail (1994), Connell concludes that through competitive grading and streaming the school forces differentiation of the boys, suggesting masculinity is organised around social power. Social power in terms of access to higher education and entry to professions is being delivered by the school system to the boys who are academic successes. The reaction of those young men in lower bandings is more likely to be a claim to other sources of power, even other definitions of masculinity such as sporting prowess, physical aggression, or sexual conquest.

More recently, Reay (2002) has focused on the troubling experiences of working class masculinity and how it may affect the academic achievement of white working class boys. Reay

tells a story about 'Shaun.' Shaun is a hard-working, well-behaved, poor, white, working-class boy trying to achieve academically in a failing inner-city boys' comprehensive school, whilst simultaneously trying to maintain his credibility within the male peer group culture. According to Reay, his narrative suggests that the problem of 'failing boys' is often linked to masculinity, which cannot be solved through school-based initiatives. If part of 'normal' male development involves the exclusion of the feminine, therefore learning and in particular literacy-based subjects considered feminine will continue to be disregarded by the white working-class boys who are the main focus of concern within the 'failing boys' discourse.

Reay (2001) examines the relationship young working class boys share with education. She argues that the educational system in the UK is still largely based on social class and in particular the values of the middle class. Reay suggests that in recent years, particularly during the period of the New Labour government, the stratification of social class has broken down, resulting in a larger number of working class pupils entering university. However, working class pupils, regardless of what level they enter education, still struggle to relate to the middle class academic, which is likely to lead to educational failure amongst the working classes.

In a recent newspaper article; '*Universities should target working-class white boys, Minister says'* (Guardian, 2013), David Willetts, Minister for Universities and Science, stated that there is an under-representation of working class boys in university, and argued that universities should be doing more in terms of strategic planning to encourage more young working boys into university. It is apparent that government ministers are striving to support equality of opportunity; however policy makers fail to recognize the connections between educational and wider social contexts, which inhibit working class boys entering further into the education system (Reay, 2000). Furthermore, she argues that by listening to the working classes we might be in a better position to develop more accurate, and necessarily complex and highly differentiated, representations of working-class lives. This in turn might contribute to the making of informed rather than uninformed policy decisions (Reay, 2004).

In conclusion, the discourse that it is 'uncool' to work hard academically has emerged as dominant in much school-based research on working class masculinity. If pupils want to be regarded as cool or popular they must avoid displays of overt hard work, even though they understand working hard at school is fundamental in gaining secure employment. Based on young working class boys' understandings of economic change, there is limited evidence discussing the economic choices they make and the overarching factors which impact upon those choices. This study will consider the factors which impact upon the economic choices made by young fathers. The following sections examine further how academics have discussed the

various identities related to fathers and how they have been perceived in western culture.

2.11 The changing role of fathers

The literature has identified a series of social changes in the western world, believed to have impacted upon the roles, representations and meanings of parenthood and the family structure. These social changes have included feminism, the gay movement and changes in religious values (Lupton and Barclay, 1997). This section includes international research as well as UK based research to illustrate debate, variations as well as similarities in understanding fatherhood, which may relate to young fatherhood in this study. In the above it has been suggested that discourses on fatherhood and fathering have changed primarily due to structural change; I shall examine further this shift in emphasis.

Pleck (1987) identified categorizations of 'good' fathers and how their representation has changed over time. He identified four phases of fatherhood typologies. First, the father as an authoritarian (18^{th}-19^{th} century); second, the father as distant breadwinner (late 19^{th} to mid 20^{th} century); third, the father as a gender role model (1940-1965); and fourth, the nurturing father, who is interested in and engaged with his young children as well as engaged in paid work (late 1960's to present).

In contrast, Elder, who assisted with the research cited in Hill (1949) challenged the rigid categorizations of 'fatherhood.' She believed that categorizations gave an unclear picture of fatherhood due to models not necessarily being so rigid and static in society. Elder based her qualitative study on interviewing thirty two fathers in Des Moines, Iowa, who were all veterans of the Second World War, focusing on their perceptions of their roles within the family, including the nature and variety of what they did with their children. Elder defined 'traditional parenthood' as emphasizing discipline, obedience, and a rigid division of domestic labour between man and woman. This demonstrates the shift away from the historically rigid roles described by Pleck, towards a more fluid understanding today.

She also defined 'developmental conceptions of parenthood', which emphasised emotional wellbeing and more equal perceptions of roles within the household. Nearly 75% of the fathers interviewed gave primarily developmental conceptions of fatherhood. 70% of the developmental fathers said that husbands should help regularly with the housework; however only 20% indicated that they might help on a regular basis. Elder also reported that about a third of fathers tried to be like their own fathers, another third tried to be better than their fathers and a third tried to be different from their fathers. Elder concludes from the findings that new conceptions of

nurturing fatherhood were already emerging during a time period which traditional fatherhood was allegedly the social norm.

Similarly Galasinski (2004) attempted to critique portrayals of unemotional fathers and their apparent inability or reluctance to embrace the emotional obligations of fatherhood, which have been commonplace within the literature. He discussed how his participants were quite happy to construct fatherhood in terms of emotionality. He spoke about one particular participant, born in 1933, who discussed fatherhood as a caring and also worrying prospect in regards to his children. Worrying seemed to be a necessary as well as a natural aspect of fatherhood, illustrating emotions as being quite an important way to describe fatherhood. The participants constructed their emotions towards their children as shared with their wives, occasionally blurring gender differences and constructing the man's identity as a parent rather than a father. Galasinski concluded that emotions are constructed as a general process of fatherhood. Furthermore he spoke about a gender free construction of parenthood, acknowledging that either parent worries about their children regardless of whether the parent is a father or a mother; fathers often positioned their emotions the same as those of the mothers of their children. Again, this sees a contemporary understanding of fatherhood moving away from even being a 'traditional parent' as discussed by Elder.

Smith (2009) focuses on the changing nature of fatherhood. He challenges the notion of distant, remote and uninvolved fathering by suggesting that such descriptions of the father are typical stereotypes of many poor working class fathers. Previously Griswold (1993) suggested that the nurturing father, who is understood to be an engaged and emotionally supportive father, was a middle class phenomenon due to engagement and emotionality being a sign of the sensitivity and refinement commonly associated with middle class men. It was further suggested by Griswold (1993) that middle class men were more willing than working class men to incorporate the ideals of liberal feminism.

Smith (2009) suggests that the notion of the 'distanced father' was for many working class fathers based upon the amount of working hours committed to employment rather than the family. He reports that for many years, before industrialisation, the vast majority of families worked together as a single economic unit rather than a single male earner, growing their own food or managing family businesses in small towns or villages where they were born, lived and died. Like Galasinski (2004), Smith suggests that the image of the family patriarch blurs the emotional importance of fathers within the family. He describes the economic family unit, before the industrial revolution, as having an emotional and nurturing relationship particularly between

father and son. Fathers and sons worked side by side on farms and in artisanal shops, while daughters may have run the family business with their mothers and helped serve meals in the family kitchen. This reiterates the fluid understanding of fatherhood developing over time. Fathering can be seen to include traditional elements such as economic support and being a gender role model, but further these aspects can satisfy the caring emphasis assumed by Griswold to be the domain of the middle classes.

In contrast, more recent findings by Hauari and Hollingworth (2009) have suggested that despite the numbers of working mothers in their research sample (14 out of 29 were in work, 8 of whom were full time), many of them considered the father to be the main financial provider. Indeed for some fathers, across all four ethnic groups considered in this study (Pakistani, White British, Black Caribbean and Black African), financial provision was seen as their defining role as a father. Furthermore, across all ethnic groups and amongst both parents, the view was commonly held that mothers are naturally better equipped than fathers to fulfil the responsibilities of providing physical care and nurturing children. This suggests that although in some sense the contemporary understanding of fathering may have shifted away from traditionally defined roles, these roles persist in at least some segments of society.

Strong beliefs were expressed regarding biologically determined reasons why mothers were better suited to this role. They were frequently viewed as more emotionally available, loving, physically affectionate and more patient than fathers. It is also believed that mothers often have a closer bond with their children and are more 'instinctively' aware of their children's needs. There was however evidence of complementary parenting, where parenting was understood as a partnership. It was understood that to be successful as parents, the partnership involved providing back-up for one another and being prepared to cross the gender role boundaries when necessary.

Similarly, Brannen and Nilsen (2006) suggested that in retrospect, fatherhood was typically defined as being a sole or main breadwinner. Men used paid work to exempt themselves from childcare at least in children's early years. Yet Brannen and Nilsen found in their study that sole breadwinning was not a typical aspect of more recent families, which they concluded represented change in the identity of fatherhood. It has also denoted a cultural change since breadwinning is no longer seen to legitimise a form of fathering whereby men are exempt from active involvement with children. Therefore, fathering relates to the practice and relational aspects of parenting (Brannen and Nilsen, 2006).

In summary, there have always been differences in how a man identifies himself as a father. It has been established that the classification or categorised image of fathering is problematic due to contrary research suggesting that some fathers have always been caring and engaged parents (Elder cited in Hill, 1949; Galasinski, 2004). In terms of identifying a research gap, there still remains limited, if any literature, that relates specifically to the changing nature of young fathers experiences from a historical perspective. The following section aims to explore the changing nature of families and in particular fatherless families and the possible effects on their children.

2.12 Fatherless families

The current debate on fatherhood has emerged from various political positions. One area of debate has been the liberal policy changes made during the 1960's[14], which some believe have led to declining paternal authority, higher divorce rates and a greater number of single mothers (Murray, 1990; Bedarida, 1991; Popenoe, 2009). This is believed to have led to an increasing number of children growing up without a father (Lupton and Barclay, 1997). Statistics show that the number of opposite sex cohabiting couples in the UK was 2.9 million in 2011 compared with 2.1 million in 2001, while at the same time the number of married or civil partner couples dropped from 12.3 million to 12.1 million. Lone parents with dependent children were 2.0 million (rounded from 1.96) in 2011 compared with 1.7 million at the turn of the century (ONS, 2012). Further economic and social changes are believed to have weakened the link between parenthood and partnership, particularly for men. For example, it has become more common for women to raise children without men and for men not to be involved in the nurturing role, or the responsibilities of fatherhood (Clare, 2001).

Jaffee et al (2001) in a longitudinal study investigated the amount of time a young father had spent living with his first-born child, which according to statistics, decreased as the number of risk factors he experienced increased. These risk factors were related to familial, behavioural, educational, sexual and economic aspects and included such things as unemployment, low education levels, young parenthood being intergenerational, family breakdown, time spent in prison and having sex before the age of 16. These risk factors were all considered before the birth of the baby as to whether absent fatherhood would occur after birth. The risk factors were selected in concordance with the literature on child development (Jaffee et al, 2001). On average, a father who experienced none of the risk factors was resident for 72% of his child's life,

[14] Reference to the introduction of the contraceptive pill in 1961, the Abortion Act 1967 and the Divorce Reform Act 1969.

whereas a father who experienced at least five risk factors was resident for only 34% of his child's life.

Murray (1990) focuses his concerns on fatherless families; he emphasises the importance of fathers as role models, which he believes are less likely to be present if the couple is unmarried. He suggests that without the support and guidance of the male role model, young boys in particular cannot develop into responsible fathers and husbands and that the nuclear family encourages social order in society by enforcing moral guidance and responsibility in their children, subsequently preventing adolescents from taking social risks.

Murray challenges the notion that social institutions, social support and prevention, such as social workers and teachers, can intervene at later stages to support the notion of being a "good father;" simply because it was not modelled to the child in the early formative years. Murray concludes that the formation of the underclass is not an individual instance, but a situation where a very large proportion of an entire community lacks fathers, which is far more common amongst poorer communities than more affluent areas. Similarly, according to Clare (2001), children who grow up in a one parent family are at greater risk of a disadvantaged life in terms of education, employment, personal relationships and their own parenting skills.

Bengtson et al's (2002) study investigated the importance of family influences on youths' developmental outcomes across two recent generations, looking at their educational and career aspirations, their self-esteem and their pro-social values. The second objective of the study was to examine whether familial influences on achievement orientations of youth have weakened in recent generations, particularly in the context of family structures and roles as well as in the economic structures of American society. This study attempted to challenge Murray's argument relating to role models and poor social outcomes for adolescents who had not necessarily grown up in a nuclear family or were undergoing changes in family structure. Bengtson et al (2002) noted similarities between the UK and US society at the start of the twenty first century. They described similar characteristics such as economic uncertainty, having marital instability, an array of family forms, and conflicting cultural values.

In comparison to Murray, Bengtson et al's (2002) findings showed that children who were close to their parents, regardless of family structure, had higher self-esteem and educational and occupational aspirations than those who were not close to their parents. Social standing and resources of families continued to be crucial predictors of what youth came to aspire to for themselves. Parental education and occupational status also had a strong effect on the aspirations

of youth in both generations. Emotional closeness and support from grandparents were shown to compensate for divorce-related family processes that could have a negative impact on the wellbeing of both adult children and grandchildren. For example, greater grandparental involvement with children could compensate for the temporary decline in the mother's attention and time with their children immediately following divorce. In this situation, children would continue to receive an adult family member's time that is believed to be essential to their development. This type of compensation may ameliorate the risk of negative outcomes for children within divorced families.

Unlike Murray's (1990) discussion regarding the need for fathers within a nuclear family unit, the findings from Bengtson et al's (2002) study suggest that contemporary families, despite changes in family structure, have not lost their functionality; and that families continue to influence and transmit to their children the achievement orientations that children need to effectively function in society.

Allen and Hawkins (1999) consider absent fathers in their conceptual definition of maternal gatekeeping, based on a collection of beliefs and behaviours that inhibit fathers in family work and childcare. This potentially limits fathers' opportunities to experience childcare, housework and develop parental skills. They give potential explanations as to why mothers may wish to maintain control in allowing access to their child and the involvement of the father; and suggest that mothers have been culturally identified as the centre of nurture and care in family life. Therefore, doing the caring and nurturing family work allows a woman to affirm to herself and to others that she is a good mother. Mothers hesitate to share their responsibility for family work because they perceive paternal involvement as a threat to the way that they validate their identity as a mother (Allen and Hawkins, 1999).

Research has shown that young fathers often expressed regret about becoming a young parent due to the mother controlling access to their child. This was often related to a turbulent relationship with the mother and breakdown in their relationship (Cater and Coleman, 2006). Many young fathers felt that their partners had little respect for their rights as fathers and had low confidence in their ability to care for a child properly (Cater and Coleman, 2006). Mothers not allowing paternal involvement can have a fundamental impact upon young fathers developing a successful role as a father, and creating an intimate relationship with their child including fully adapting their parenting styles (McBride et al, 2005).

Research findings have also represented maternal grandparents as being potential gatekeepers to paternal involvement (Bunting and McAuley, 2004). They found that maternal grandparents often represented the young father as unpredictable and immature. While maternal family members agreed that the baby's father should provide financial and emotional support, it appeared difficult for some of them to accept him. Paternal grandparents on the other hand are often represented as helping to develop father-child relationships and giving practical, financial and moral support to the young father (Speak et al, 1997; Herzog et al, 2007)

Gavin et al (2002) investigated young fathers' involvement with their children using a social ecology model, examining the environment and the influences that various people have on the young father and his child. The study's primary objectives were to describe the characteristics of young fathers whose infants were born to low-income, urban, African American adolescent mothers. It also considered the ways in which fathers were involved with their children and identified factors associated with fathers' involvement. The results showed that paternal involvement was predicted by the quality of the parents' relationship together; the father's employment status; the maternal grandmother's education and the father's relationship with the baby's maternal grandmother.

Roy and Vesely (2009) conducted a qualitative study, using participant observation and life history interview data from thirty five young, low income African American fathers. The study considered how fathers' involvement was shaped by the support and expectations of kin systems. The research questions considered were; how do young men learn about caregiving from their kin networks; and how do young men use kin networks to secure their place as fathers for their children? They noted that success in fathering roles for non-residential fathers was almost impossible without adequate support. They also suggested that supportive kin systems were some of the most vital supportive systems for low-income fathers. Young men learned to use kin networks to build shared understanding about their own roles as fathers. Family members confirmed and legitimised men's paternity status; facilitated the father's involvement with a child, or potentially with multiple children when the father attempted to bring together children from different households. Kin systems, particularly paternal grandmothers, are believed to help support fathers in their fathering roles and to help maintain the young fathers' relationship and involvement with his child as in the study above.

In summary, this section has shown how the phenomenon of fatherless families has created some moral concern. Young men, who have been linked to young parenthood, as well as long-term unemployed men in high crime rate areas, have been considered most likely to become absent

fathers. Nevertheless, comparative studies have illustrated how family diversity is not necessarily a leading cause of fatherless families or feckless teenagers. The following section discusses the changing discourses of teenage pregnancy, which illustrates how social change has influenced choices and the attitude towards teenage pregnancy.

2.13 Changing discourse on teenage pregnancy

It is understood amongst academics that teenage parenthood has been a long-standing social phenomenon (Bunting and McAuley, 2004; Duncan, 2007). It has been suggested that what makes teenage pregnancy a social issue is the changing age of marriage and childbirth (Robb, 2004). In the UK, the average age of first time marriage in 1961 was 23 and childbearing tended to follow soon after that (ONS, 2002). In 2010, the age of first childbirth was on average 29.5 years and the highest number of marriages was at age 25-29 for men and women. Most recent statistics show that the number of under 18 conceptions in the England was 32 552 in 2010. However, there are no statistics to show the number of teenage fathers, and local authorities do not collect data on the number of young fathers in school (Barnardos, 2012). Childbirth in later life has been linked to women's participation in further education, establishing a career and ensuring that they are financially stable before beginning a family (ONS, 2010). Therefore, shifts in social norms and conventions largely affect the public reaction towards social transitions.

Before the 1960's, it was considered socially unacceptable to have a child out of wedlock (Kiselica, 2008). This led to many teenage girls undergoing public shame and ridicule due to the understanding that pregnancy should take place within marriage. Some young unmarried girls underwent the dangers and risks of backstreet abortions, which in some instances led to their death. Adoption of the baby was in many cases the decision of the young mothers' parents, leaving many undergoing the traumatic ordeal of parting with their baby immediately after childbirth. Not only was there very little decision-making by the mother, there was often very little input from, or with regard to, the expectant father (Kiselica, 2008).

Historical change is considered in Formby et al's (2010) study on young parenthood, which also included fathers throughout three generations (over a period of sixty years) in South Yorkshire (UK). They found that for most young parents, throughout all three generations, pregnancy was generally unplanned. Both mothers and fathers recalled how shocked they were, however two of the middle generation mothers wondered, with hindsight, if they had 'subconsciously planned' their pregnancy as they took no action to prevent it. A mother from the oldest generation actively planned the pregnancy following the termination of her first pregnancy, which was due to pressure from her mother. Formby et al (2010) also discussed that fathers did not recall having

much input into decision-making about the pregnancy, whereas for all mothers, the initial sense of shock at being pregnant was followed by a clear and immediate decision to reject abortion and take responsibility by progressing with the pregnancy. For mothers and fathers in the oldest generation who became pregnant outside of wedlock, marriage tended to be the next step as it was regarded as more socially acceptable.

During the late 1960's, teenagers began to engage in more explicit and consistent discussions about sex whereas it was once considered a taboo subject (Kiselica, 2008). Forced marriages, commonly referred to as shotgun weddings, became less common; increased numbers of divorces were also occurring due to the Divorce Reform Act 1969 in England and Wales, contributing towards decline in social stigma associated with unmarried births (Lupton and Barclay, 1997). The launch of the contraceptive pill in 1961 and abortion being made legal in the UK in 1967 played a major role in social change, introducing the second wave of feminism and women's sexual freedom (McRobbie, 2007). Increasing availability of birth control and abortion as well as financial support for unmarried mothers had also reduced social stigma and shotgun marriages for many unmarried, teenage mothers. Over the course of the next several decades, the acceptance of premarital sex in western culture spread to the majority of young people (ONS, 2002; Kiselica, 2008).

More recent public discourse has identified young parents as being purposefully reliant on welfare, social housing and having little aspiration or future prospects (Pears et al, 2005). Nevertheless, more recent qualitative studies have shown that young fathers who have led criminal lifestyles have in some cases left their past lifestyles behind and focused upon being a good father and in most cases a good partner as well (Reeves, 2006; Cater and Coleman, 2006; Duncan, 2007). Research findings have also shown elements of maturity in young men making an early transition to young fatherhood as many realised that it was time *"to grow up."* This often coincided with other important steps in other areas of their life, such as returning to education, training and employment (Catan, 2004; Reeves, 2006; Cater and Coleman, 2006; Chase and Knight, 2006; Henderson et al, 2007; Duncan, 2007).

In summary, discussion about young fatherhood before the 1960s has been largely absent from academic literature. This absence has been explained by having little input in the decision-making about the pregnancy. Young mothers have also been portrayed as having little input into the choices regarding their unborn child with decisions mostly being made by the maternal grandparents. However, due to changes in social policy, particularly family planning in the late 1960s, women have gained more choice in having a child. More recent social concern with 'teenage pregnancy' has been discussed in relation to young parents being unmarried. The

following section examines the support available to young fathers in the UK and whether support from these family services has been widely accessed and supportive towards fathers and young fathers.

2.14 Policy supporting young fathers

Professional practice and policy regarding young fatherhood have become areas of concern over recent years (ONS, 2007; Sherriff, 2007). Until recently, fathers in general have been absent from policy initiatives aimed at parents. According to Sherriff (2007), when attention has occasionally fallen on young fathers it has been more likely to focus on what they are failing to do, or are not doing properly. This has been influenced through economic factors, whereby young fathers are seen to not contribute, relying on the state to support their family (Popenoe, 2009). Social, economic and moral concerns have all added to what is described as a deficit model of fatherhood (Doherty, 1991). Moral panic in the media has emphasised young fathers' lack of moral fibre by portraying them as deadbeats, absent and uninterested (Murray, 1990). This leads to young fathers feeling that they are under constant scrutiny and judgement, being classified negatively without warrant (Duncan et al, 2010).

In the last few years, there has been an increased emphasis on fathers within the context of family-friendly policies, such as paid paternity leave, working hours and attempts to restructure the Child Support Agency (Sherriff, 2007). Indeed, the need to engage with fathers has been a growing theme in government policy. For example, the Sure Start Children's Centre practice guidelines in 2006 discussed the need to develop personalised services for fathers, male carers, and other male relatives. These services included supporting fathers to find work, help with benefits and housing and supporting fathers in developing positive relationships with their children (Sherriff, 2007).

According to Sherriff (2007), national policy frameworks such as the Department of Health's (2004) National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services emphasised the need for greater engagement with young fathers by health professionals. Similarly, Sherriff (2007) discussed the Social Exclusion Unit's (2005) report: *Transitions, Young Adults with Complex Needs*, which also acknowledged the need for improved assessments of the needs of young fathers. In September 2006, the Department for Education and Skills published *Teenage pregnancy: accelerating the strategy for 2010*, which announced that the Department for Education and Skills would be issuing guidance on all aspects of delivering support for teenage parents (Sherriff, 2007).

Guidance was delivered in the report *Getting maternity services right for pregnant teenagers and young fathers (DCSF, 2009)*. This guide was first produced in 2008 by the Department for Children, Schools and Families and the Department of Health. It was then revised in 2009 with the help of the Fatherhood Institute, following feedback from midwives and other maternity workers who wanted more guidance on engaging young fathers. The *Teenage pregnancy: accelerating the strategy for 2010* report also focused on how young fathers could be supported to engage in education, employment and training and how best to support them to take greater responsibility for contraception to help reduce second and subsequent unplanned pregnancies (Sherriff, 2007).

The introduction of Children's Centres in the early 2000s created a catalyst for continued and focused interaction with young families. Parenting and family support remains one of the key services underpinning the core purpose of Children's Centres. Children's Centres have often taken the lead in pioneering ways to engage fathers, such as Saturday 'dads' clubs' or activity-orientated play days for fathers and children (Barnardos, 2012). According to Potter and Carpenter (2010), a total of 524 Sure Start local programmes were established in areas of high deprivation to deliver a wide range of support services to families with children under four. Programmes were locally run and were required to involve parents, grandparents and other carers in ways that built on their existing strengths (Potter and Carpenter, 2010). However, Potter and Carpenter highlighted a report produced by the National Evaluation of Sure Start (2005), showing that the majority of Sure Start service users were women who were unemployed. They judged this to be unsurprising given that a previous review of the programme's work stated that only 12% placed a high priority on working with fathers.

Similarly Page and Whitting (2008) showed that father inclusive practices were not seen to be routine or mainstream in family services. Whilst widely recognising the importance of supporting fathers, interviewees in local authorities and family services described services as being 'neutral' towards them, rather than pro-actively father friendly. Teenage pregnancy services were the family service most likely to be identified as being discouraging of fathers. However, the survey of local authorities identified Sure Start Children's Centres and parenting support services as being the family services most likely to be father friendly.

Staff in local authorities and family services suggested several ways in which national policy might potentially better support fathers in family services (Page and Whitting, 2008):

- Making support for fathers a more explicit national priority across all family services by developing an 'Every Father Matters'
- Training for managers and practitioners in family services focused specifically on engaging with fathers
- Specific guidance and best practice documents for family services
- Policy co-ordination with other bodies such as health services and the courts to ensure that fathers are involved
- Promoting positive images of fatherhood through a national media campaign

Based on their qualitative fieldwork, Page and Whitting (2008) suggested that managers in different family services had varying levels of awareness of national policies that recognised fathers. From the policy review, recognition of fathers in national policy was found to be greatest for Sure Start Children's Centres and schools. Yet whilst Sure Start Children's Centre managers were aware of relevant policy documents, senior staff in schools were less so. This was seen to be the case in schools partly because they faced 'policy overload', with a high number of centrally determined priorities, targets and requirements which demanded their attention in which fathers were not one of the priorities.

According to Pollock et al (2005) and Tyrer et al (2005), young fathers felt that there were very few services or groups set up specifically for young men and their children. Father support groups tended to attract older men and some of the younger fathers who attended parent and toddler groups with their children had found the situation uncomfortable or unhelpful. Research findings have also suggested that there is a tendency amongst some professionals to believe that young fathers are only present for a short period of time before they become absent (Pollock et al, 2005; Kiselica, 2008). This assumption of young men not 'staying the course', or not seeing themselves as a necessary part of the parenting equation, has potentially led to young fathers feeling discriminated against by professionals (Robb, 2004; McAdoo 2007; Spence 2007). Similarly Tyrer et al (2005) reported that young fathers had received hardly any professional support with their parenting, relating to professionals adopting a mother-focused model.

While the Coalition Government has committed to many initiatives supporting the role of parents, relationships and the early years, there remains a lack of focus on fathers as a distinct policy area (Barnardos, 2012). In 2011, the Government announced its commitment to Sure Start Children's Centres, but introduced a requirement to "focus much more effectively on those families who need them the most" (Department of Education, 2011). This marked a clear policy shift towards 'targeted' services. Recent policy developments have also emphasised the

importance of early intervention and focusing on outcomes. While the Coalition Government wishes local authorities to continue to prioritize funding for early years provision, it has removed the 'ring fence' on funding for Sure Start Children's Centres (Lord et al, 2011).

Prior to the General Election in May 2010, a new strategy *Teenage Pregnancy: Beyond 2010* was published, outlining the next steps and guidance for reducing teenage pregnancy rates and supporting teenage parents. To date, the new Coalition Government has not issued a policy on their approach to teenage pregnancy (Corlyon and Stock, 2011). In the meantime, the Coalition Government has focused on revising policy around child poverty and on increasing the life chances of all poorer children. The Coalition has argued that reducing poverty by fiscal means has not been the solution to determining children's potential and future outcomes in adult life. Rather, factors such as family background, 'good' parenting (not defined) and opportunities for learning and development are more important in increasing the life chances of poorer children than money in preventing poor children from becoming poor and possibly young parents (Corlyon and Stock, 2011). The Framework for Sexual Health has identified directly with young parents, discussing how the rates of teenage pregnancy are currently at the lowest since records began. Therefore, the intention from the Department of Health is to work on the number of unwanted pregnancies, especially those which result in terminations (DoH, 2013)

This section has shown how social policy initiated by the New Labour government attempted to create a more collective family environment, which aimed to engage all family members. However, in practice young fathers are not necessarily taking full advantage of supportive family services. Young fathers who have experienced family services tend to suggest that such environments can be unsupportive, mother focused and intimidating.

2.15 Conclusion

This chapter has provided context in terms of what the literature suggests have been major factors affecting rural young people, young working class men, and fathers in general as well as young fathers. The findings of this review will help form the areas of interest in which to investigate in the field. The findings have shown that rural areas in the UK have been depicted as places that are generally overlooked when considering social exclusion. This has been linked to stereotypical understandings of rural areas being idyllic and problem free. Socially excluded individuals are more likely to be isolated in rural areas and therefore not as visible or easy to target for support in comparison to urban areas (Phillips and Williams, 1984; Cloke and Little, 1997). Evidence has shown that rural areas tend to lack basic public services and opportunities;

and are less likely to receive specialised support in comparison to concentrated areas such as urban council estates.

A number of social changes have affected the role of the father, particularly economic change (Lupton and Barclay, 1997; McRobbie, 2007; Kiselica, 2008). Social and economic shifts by various governments have influenced the roles within the family. During 1979-1990 the political concepts of neo-liberalism, deindustrialisation individualisation and individualism were insisted upon, resulting in major socioeconomic changes. There has been much debate in regards to whether these socio-economic changes have impacted upon the motivation and agency of an individual, or whether social institutions are responsible for the individual as well as social circumstances (Giddens, 1984). From a structural point of view, socio-economic changes are thought to have contributed towards signs of social exclusion evident today such as unemployment, benefit dependency, community breakdown and crime. Social shifts are believed to have limited the individual as well as collective benefits of social capital as well as impacting upon the dominant model of breadwinning fathers, which is believed to have affected the identity of working class heterosexual fathers and their role and position within the family (Kiselica, 2008).

Public discourse on families has suggested that the traditional model of western families has been the nuclear family. Before the 1960's fathers were supposedly sole breadwinners and were authoritative towards their children. However there is some evidence to suggest that the distant breadwinning father is a false perception, particularly amongst working class families (Hill, 1949; Pleck, 1987; Brannen and Nilsen, 2004; Hughes, 2004; Galasinski, 2004; Hauari and Hollingwoth, 2009). Instead many fathers were engaged with their child but engagement was constrained by their long working hours. Fathers and sons were particularly engaged in an economic context and placed emphasis on emotional wellbeing and equal roles within the household (Pahl, 1984; Smith, 2009). However, the research on masculinity tends to contradict this by suggesting that working class boys in particular are limited in emotionality and tend to resist feminine attributes (Nyland, 2006; Kane, 2006). Although it may be argued that the transition to fatherhood leads to changes in identity, encouraging what may be considered feminine characteristics to adolescent boys.

Perceptions of masculinity have been described as a key factor in determining choices made by young men. Young men's sexual practices, attitudes and investment in their education were often linked to gaining acceptance amongst peer groups (Holland et al, 1998; Frosh et al, 2002; Jackson, 2003; MacDonald and Marsh, 2004; Spence, 2007; Richardson, 2010). In some cases

young men spoke about disregarding their emotions and efforts in education in order to achieve a credible masculinity amongst peers (Richardson, 2010). Nevertheless, research findings has found that young fathers who had previously maintained a deviant form of identity were likely to make positive changes to their lifestyles and aim to achieve a positive identity as a father (Catan, 2004; Reeves, 2006; Chase and Knight, 2006; Cater and Coleman, 2006; Duncan, 2007; Henderson et al, 2007).

Fatherless families have been associated with illegitimate births, high crime rates and high unemployment levels amongst young people today (Murray, 1990). This is often debated by academics who suggest that social changes, such as deindustrialisation, individualism, geographic mobility, breakdown of local communities and social networks have affected the levels of unemployment and crime, particularly amongst young men (Dixon and Durrheim, 2004; Meek, 2008; Livingston et al, 2009). Indeed, it is suggested throughout much of the literature that shifts in family structures have led to ambiguous ideas and less explicit understandings of the normative role of fathers (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002; Halpern, 2005; Nayak and Kehily, 2008).

Evidence has suggested that a number of social risk factors in a young man's life not only determine the likelihood of him becoming a young father, but also the likelihood of the father maintaining residency with the child (Jaffee et al, 2001). Non-residency and limited access to the child have also been related to fragile relationships with the mother and the maternal family (Allen and Hawkins, 1999). Evidence has shown the importance of maintaining a harmonious working relationship with the child's mother and maternal grandparents to help ensure access to the child. The paternal family also plays a significant role and is an invaluable resource to help build and maintain a strong relationship with the child and the mother (Speak et al, 1997; Gavin et al, 2002; Bunting and McAuley, 2004; Cater and Coleman, 2006; Herzog et al, 2007; Roy and Vesely, 2009).

Policy supporting young fathers as well as fathers generally has not been vast. However, in recent years, policy has begun to demonstrate the importance of fathers in the family and has begun to introduce a number of father friendly policies to help to maintain father involvement. Sure Start Centres have been the main focus in engaging fathers with their children and delivering a wide range of supportive services to enhance the lives of young fathers in particular (Page and Whitting, 2008). Examining the recent progress of these initiatives has suggested that the majority of these services are used by unemployed mothers (Potter and Carpenter, 2010). Findings have noted that there is still a lack of services specifically designed for the needs of

young fathers. Young fathers tend to feel intimidated by services that generally attract older fathers; and interactions with professionals tend to suggest a stereotyped perception of young fathers and their commitment to the mother and child (Tyrer et al, 2005; Pollock et al, 2005).

This review has examined some of the main aspects of this study including the theoretical perspectives related to social change, the changing nature of place, changing nature of fatherhood and experiences of young fatherhood. This review has also helped to identify limitations as well as sociological concepts and major terms associated with these specific areas of interest for this study. For example, individualisation, individualism, geographic change and mobility have all contributed towards the changing perception of place and how different ages may interact and connect with a particular place. These terms will be incorporated to help examine place attachment and significance of place for young fathers living on the Isle of Sheppey. These terms will also be applied in context to the participants in order to illuminate the application of structuration theory at a macro-level. Secondly, the literature has discussed how rural areas in the UK have been generally overlooked when considering socially excluded individuals. This may suggest an oversight of rural young fathers, illustrating strong rationale for this particular study. This study will seek to examine such a rural area to address this oversight. Furthermore, this review has set into context the problems associated with coastal towns, which will be considered whilst carrying out research on the Isle of Sheppey.

The review has examined the various changes and developments in social and economic policy, which have influenced the economic changes that have taken place in the UK. Terms including free market culture, individualisation and neo-liberal principles, related to the Conservative government in 1979-1990, have been described as having a fundamental impact upon economic change and have been related to unemployment amongst working class men. Such economic shifts have contributed towards the breakdown in the breadwinner model, which is a major aspect of identity for these men. Manufacturing and industry have largely provided most of the employment available on the Isle of Sheppey. Therefore, the ascendancy of free market culture, indivdualisation and neo-liberalism during 1979-1990 will be examined in relation to its effects on employment and young fathers on the Island. Also, the review has shown limited evidence on the economic choices made by working class young men and the overarching factors which impact upon those choices since deindustrialisation took place in the 1980s. This study will consider the factors which impact upon the economic choices made by young fathers on the Isle of Sheppey, assessing whether the policies and movements associated with neo-liberalism and changing government policy has been efficacious in the lives of participants.

One attempt to support those who have been affected by economic change, particularly during the 1980s, has been through policy attempts to develop what has become conceptualised as social capital. Social capital has been described as being most effective whilst maintaining networks within a close-knit community. The Isle of Sheppey has been described as having a close-knit community and limited mobility, therefore social capital will be examined to evaluate whether it is a key factor in helping young fathers find employment.

The review has clearly shown that there is a gap in the research in relation to young fatherhood. The review has found little evidence which has discussed young fatherhood from a socio-historical perspective; their absence from the literature has been related to the little input they had in the decision-making about the pregnancy. In recent years, young fathers have been more prevalent in the literature, although it has been mostly describing the negative discourses about them. Fatherless families have been related to young fathers who are likely to be long-term unemployed, live in high crime rate areas, and are most likely to become absent fathers. Consequently they are a matter of social concern and are discussed in social policy literature. Based on the evidence from the literature, which illustrates negative discourses on young fatherhood, which young fathers themselves feel judged; this study will examine how possibly these negative discourses impact upon how they discuss, perceive and identify themselves as fathers.

Chapter Three

Methodology

3.0 Introduction

Chapter two demonstrated that there was a lack of evidence from a socio-historical perspective, which considered young fatherhood in rural areas of the UK that are suffering from social deprivation. In response to this research gap, my study addresses the social realities and experiences of three cohorts of young fathers on the Isle of Sheppey. This study is not only unique in the field of young fatherhood, but important in terms of representing social change over a period of sixty years, and analysing the effects it has had on the lives of young fathers in a rural closely knit community.

This chapter is largely presented in the form of an audit trail and discusses the methodological decisions that were made to collect data for this study. It also discusses how methodological decisions were influenced by research strategies found in previous works of scholars, most notably the works of Ray Pahl and Claire Wallace who have carried out several studies on the Isle of Sheppey. Firstly, this chapter sets into context the social characteristics and understandings of the Island. Further to this, the chapter will consider the rationale for incorporating documentary data. Thirdly, the process of how I found and recruited my young fathers, sampling strategies and building a contact base will be discussed. Fourthly, young father profiles are displayed using pseudonyms and identifying which cohort they belonged to.

Following this, life story interviews are examined including the ethical implications involved. This section also considers the importance of prepared discussion points. The chapter follows by discussing issues concerning confidentiality and anonymity. The interview process is then discussed, followed by how young fathers presented themselves during the interviews and the potential effects on interview data. Memory and nostalgia is then discussed followed by applying thematic analysis to the data. Lastly, the research experience is briefly discussed.

3.1 The Isle of Sheppey: setting the scene

My interest in the Isle of Sheppey came from carrying out Internet research on socially excluded areas in Kent. The local literature describes the Isle of Sheppey as being a predominantly working class, closely-knit community, containing high levels of teenage pregnancy and social deprivation. From a practical point of view, these social factors identified the Isle of Sheppey to

be a readily identifiable community to study. The Isle of Sheppey is a rural island, situated off the northern coast of Kent, England, in the Thames Estuary, thirty eight miles to the east of central London (Wallace, 1987, p11)[15]. To ensure that the Isle of Sheppey was an appropriate place to carry out my study, I made regular visits to the Island to gain a better understanding of the area and its local culture.

On my first visit to the Island, I noticed its uninviting landscape containing broken down buildings and factories. This suggested a lack of investment on the Island and a place still suffering from the effects of deindustrialisation and unemployment. During my frequent visits to the Island I noticed that it was connected to the mainland by only two bridges, the Kingsferry Bridge and the Sheppey Crossing. During my conversations with people I met on the Island I discussed mobility and accessing the Island by only two bridges. They claimed that some "Islanders", also known as "Swampies" had never been off the Island. Also past disasters concerning the Kingsferry Bridge in particular had in the past prohibited inhabitants on the Island from accessing the mainland. Sheppey thus represented a possibly self-contained Island, heightening the possibility of a closely-knit community.

I regularly visited Sheerness local history library, a major site on the Island that contained local documentary evidence regarding the Isle of Sheppey. I also made several visits to Bluetown Heritage Centre and Sheerness Heritage Centre to keep updated on any local events that were taking place on the Island. Whilst talking to librarians and managers of the heritage centres it became clear that they had been locals on the Island for many years and in some cases all their lives. They also discussed with me the lack of historical awareness of the general public as well as the locals in relation to the Island. Given the current statistical data on teenage pregnancy and social exclusion on the Island[16], as well as other factors highlighted to me by locals, it was decided to choose the Isle of Sheppey as my area of investigation.

3.2 Understanding the Isle of Sheppey

Before I carried out my documentary research, which was the first phase of my study, I wanted to gain an overview of life for many people on the Island, and how the literature has portrayed the Island. The local data considered in this study was from 1945 to the present. The sources considered as part of my general overview were local newspaper articles (Sheerness Times Guardian), local textbooks (Judge, 1997; Judge, 2003; Rymill, 2004) and academic research

[15] See Appendix B for map of the Isle of Sheppey.
[16] See chapter two, section 2.7, for information on social risk factors related to the Isle of Sheppey. See chapter seven, section 7.1, for statistical information on teenage pregnancy on the Isle of Sheppey.

carried out on the Island (Wallace, 1981; Pahl, 1978, 1980, 1981, 1984; Wallace, 1987). Articles from local authors and local newspapers were mainly positive about the Island during the period of 1945-1970 (Judge, 1997, 2003; Bygone Kent, 2005). Much writing during this period reflected proudly upon local customs and traditions, particularly local festivals, local social activities and local myth. Sheerness Dockyard was also described during 1945-1958 as the "pinnacle of Sheppey life and employment"; it was closed down in 1958 (Pahl and Wallace, 1985).

From 1958, local newspapers in particular emphasised the high numbers of unemployed people on the Island due to the dockyard closure (Sheerness Times Guardian, 1958a; 1958b). The media together with local council surveys have in part helped to construct the negative image of the Island, by focusing largely on a number of social issues related to welfare dependency and social deprivation on the Island (Sheppey Gazette, 1978; Sheppey Gazette, 1980; Swale Borough Council, 2002; The Sun, 2010). Since the 1990s, there was evidence of a negative outlook on education, concerns regarding drugs and criminal activity, welfare dependency on the Island, lack of transport and not being served effectively by local authorities, for example the lack of planning control and regulation (Sheppey Gazette, 1997a, 1994a, 1993; Swale Borough Council, 2002; Sheppey Gazette, 2005; Economy and Administration Scrutiny Panel, 2008). It became apparent whilst carrying out my interviews that familiarity with and understanding of the Island were vital in building a rapport with the participants. The initial reactions of the participants during the interviews were quite sceptical in the sense that they assumed that because I was not from the Isle of Sheppey[17] I lacked knowledge about the Island. Participants were pleasantly surprised by my general knowledge and as a result young fathers felt more inclined to discuss in further detail the social issues affecting themselves and their local area.

I understood my position in the field as being an outsider due to my limited association with the Island. Being an outsider can have a number of ethical issues related to power relationships and negotiating a level of trust between the researcher and participant. Being considered by the participant as an outsider may limit the detail of their testimony based on the belief that the researcher would not be able to grasp the participant's interpretations and instead might exploit and possibly twist narratives to serve the needs of the researcher (Merton, 1972). From an ethical perspective it was essential that the participant viewed me as an impartial seeker of information. Furthermore aiming to equalise the relationship between the participant and myself through briefly discussing my own personal background, which has some associations with living in a socially deprived area helped towards becoming more of an insider.

[17] This was highlighted in the initial introductions, before the interview was arranged.

3.3 Documentary research

Phase one of the research was comprised of documentary research, an approach strongly influenced by previous studies carried out by Pahl and Wallace from the late 1970's to late 1980's. They also incorporated various research approaches including in-depth interviews, case studies, participant observations, surveys and documentary research (Pahl, 1984; Pahl and Wallace, 1985). Similarly, Pahl and Wilsons's 1981 study, *Industry and Employment on the Isle of Sheppey*, was largely based on documentary research, mainly carried out in the Sheerness Times Guardian offices where a mass of local newspaper articles were collected over twenty years. Like Pahl and Wilson, I acknowledged that the potential weaknesses of collecting newspaper articles were unreported events and some articles being potentially based on rumour.

According to the literature, some of the problems that researchers deal with include conflicting stories, missing pieces of the documentary data, personal and professional bias, also the genuineness and authenticity of the primary sources (Lewnson, 2008). When discussing primary resources, researchers must also think about what types they will use as well as the location of those records (Lewnson, 2008). Nevertheless, Pahl and Wilson felt that local newspaper findings as well as other local documentary data had highlighted the state of the economy and industry in Sheppey during 1960-1981.

Primary sources include autobiographies, memoirs, journals, diaries, memos, transcripts, manuscripts and any other written first person accounts (Tosh and Lang, 2006). Secondary sources, which include magazines, newspapers, textbooks, reviews and journal articles also supply evidence of past experiences. These sources can provide the social historian with important insight into particular periods, events and local inhabitants' lives (Tosh and Lang, 2006). Yet, primary sources such as diaries, letters and minutes of meetings lack scrutiny and often contain the bias of the original author (Tosh and Lang, 2006).

The rationale for adopting documentary research was based on research strategies employed by previous researchers on the Island and carrying out research in an unfamiliar environment, time constraint, specific requirements for participant recruitment and lack of personal contacts on the Island. Also with support of the literature, I felt that documentary evidence would help to bridge potential gaps in my interview data, support major themes identified within the analysed data and place the interviews in the context of the Isle of Sheppey (Meyer, 2001; Parry and Mauthner, 2004; Punch, 2005; Holiday, 2007; Earthy and Cronin, 2008).

Considering where primary sources are located and accessing these collections is central to the research process (Lewnson, 2008). I had previously located Sheerness library as the main depot that contained most of the historical documents during my initial three week search to familiarise myself with the Isle of Sheppey. Sheerness library contained many of the primary resources that researchers use such as letters, memoirs, diaries, organisational minutes and speeches. I became aware of other possible depots by speaking to librarians who suggested Kent County Council, the Albert Sloman Library at the University of Essex and the Templeman Library at the University of Kent. Whilst collecting data as part of my overview, I recognised that there were various data related to family, social life, lifestyle, local current affairs and local history on the Island. As a result I set out criteria, which included:

- Titles containing search terms: family, society, local, history, employment, industry, events, festivals, Isle of Sheppey, Sheppey, Sheerness, Queenborough, Rushenden, Minster, Leysdown
- Paper-based evidence only (excluding video recordings and tape recordings)

All the documents were hand filed except for data collected at the Albert Sloman library and the Templeman Library, which maintained an integrated library catalogue of material on the Isle of Sheppey. Due to the lack of computerised systems I was unable to carry out specified searches and as a result I searched through most of the available data by hand. Documents were collected from various archiving depots both on and off the Island. Those depots that have not been identified in the above include the British Library, which contained scholarly literature from R.E. Pahl and Claire Wallace and Colindale library, which contained newspaper articles from the Isle of Sheppey. The following sources of historical data were based upon the criteria and included: council reports, journal articles, transcripts, local academic research, PhD theses, public reports, personal memoirs, local newspaper articles, government documents and local reference books[18].

The first phase of my documentary research took in various locations identified above for over a year; throughout the duration of my study I regularly visited them to follow up my notes. This included focusing on new social aspects and participant perspectives that were not previously considered during the first phase of documentary research. Local newspapers, local academic research and journal articles have formed a large basis of my documentary data and findings. Local newspaper articles in particular have been readily available at most depots; they have been collected for over sixty years (1945-2011), highlighting various aspects of social change related specifically to the Island. Few researchers would deny the bias in newspaper reports or accept

[18] See appendix C for collection of documentary data.

what the press presents at face value, but in using newspapers to reconstruct the past much less caution is usually shown (Thompson, 2000). Equally, participants referred to the local newspaper to discuss, highlight and support different points made as part of their own testimonies.

3.4 Finding and recruiting young fathers on the Isle of Sheppey

Before the fieldwork could commence I had to gain ethical clearance from the research ethics committee at the University of Greenwich. According to Guillemin and Heggen (2008), the approval process from the university requires the researcher to consider potential harm to participants and to ensure that the benefits of the research outweigh the risks. The main issue raised from the research ethics committee was the possible sensitivity of the research. Therefore I had to provide contact numbers for local counselling and support services in case a participant might wish to seek advice or support after discussing in depth aspects of his life during interview. Ethical decision-making was a continual process throughout this study, methodological decisions and contextualised judgements, particularly whilst in the field were made after considering the ethical dilemmas possibly attached to choices (Kaiser, 2009). Once I had gained ethical approval I began collecting documentary data and began attempting to recruit young fathers for my life story interviews.

There were a number of factors I needed to consider in terms of finding eligible participants to take part in the study; therefore I formulated inclusion criteria. Firstly to fit the inclusion criteria, young fathers had to be 25 or under when they had or were having their first child. This age group was based on the literature's most recent definition of young fatherhood (DCSF, 2009). As discussed in chapter one, there has been minimal deviation in terms of the definition of young fatherhood within recent political and academic spheres (Wilkes et al, 2012, DCSF, 2009; DoH, 2004; Jaffe et al, 2001). However, over the past sixty years there has been a dramatic change in this definition of age, which has been related to the timing of changing life transitions, particularly for young people (Furlong and Cartmel, 2007). Economic change has been identified predominantly as being a major factor in the changing nature of youth transitions and when it is deemed appropriate to begin a family. Significant changes in political discourses in the 1980s initiated longer periods in education, longer dependency on parents and therefore having the financial means to begin family life occurred at later stages of life. Before such political and economic changes, earlier transitions to employment occurred. It was typical, particularly for working class men, to leave education at the age of fifteen and begin working in a manual role. Due to young people beginning work at an earlier age this led to having the financial means to

begin a family at an earlier age (Furlong and Cartmel, 2007). Please note that this contemporary definition of young fatherhood (DSCF, 2009) was applied to all participants in this study, to help illustrate such significant changes discussed in the above as well as other social factors, which have affected the age at which it is considered appropriate to be a father.

To ensure that the participant could speak in-depth about social, cultural, economic and familial factors regarding the Isle of Sheppey, they had to have been living on the Isle of Sheppey for at least ten years and to have had or be having their first child whilst living on the Island. A minority of participants had spent time living off the Island; these participants were interesting in terms of giving perspectives about the Island and the contrast and/or similarities to the mainland. According to Shopes (2006), interviewing different cohorts of residents, including those who moved away from the area as well as those who lived there all their lives, extends the study further than the local community. This helps the researcher to understand both the community under study and its relationships to a broader context.

I initially set out to recruit at least five young fathers per decade from the 1950's to 2000+. This aimed to generate a reasonable sample size that was representative of the local population, and practical within the time allocated to the field (Cohen et al, 2007). Therefore the initial aim was to recruit thirty participants into my study. I began the recruitment process by building contacts. I approached local institutions that might have been interested in helping me recruit for the study. According to Sixthsmith et al (2003), when considering who might be eligible contacts, it is useful to think in terms of the social contexts within which people are located. Therefore, formal and informal group leaders, service providers, and local businesses working on the Island were most useful. Indeed, anyone who has an interest in the community can be defined as a possible contact that can offer links into the community and potential participants (Sixthsmith et al, 2003). According to Sixthsmith, et al (2003), dealing with gatekeepers can have great benefits. They have local influence and power to add credibility and validity to the project. However, they can cause barriers by refusing access and effectively shutting the project down before it has even begun (Sixthsmith et al, 2003). From my experience most of the gatekeepers were very enthusiastic, helpful and were happy to receive regular visits from me regarding my study. Paramount within qualitative research is a need to balance establishing rapport and developing rich relationships with participants and gatekeepers (Guillemin and Heggen, 2008).

My first contact was through my previous supervisor who introduced me to a young dads worker on the Island. Although the young dads worker was able to introduce me to some current (2000+) young fathers who did fit my criteria, he found it more difficult to facilitate me in terms

of young fathers from previous years. As a result, I began to utilise other strategies, which I felt might be useful for recruiting young fathers from previous generations. Sixthsmith et al (2003) suggest that advertising for participants offers an explicit strategy for recruitment. In response to this I began placing posters in local libraries, the local health centre and the Children's Centre[19]. I also contacted the local newspaper (Sheerness Times Guardian) in October 2009 and placed an article in the paper, discussing my study and my request for participants[20]. Disappointingly I received only one email and I had no response regarding my posters; however I managed to gain one current young father from that one email. Due to such a low response rate from the local newspaper and posters, I contacted the local radio station (BRFM) who agreed to have a pre-recorded interview with me discussing my study, however there was no response to my radio interview.

I then got in contact with a local health centre on the Island who sent out letters to over thirty potential participants who they thought may have fitted my criteria during the 1950's to 1980's. There was very little response to the letters. I did receive one phone call from a person who unfortunately did not meet the criteria. According to Sixthsmith et al (2003), advertising as a recruitment strategy may produce positive results for some research projects; however its use in a socially deprived area might not be so successful. For example, local inhabitants might feel that such appeals are not relevant to them and be unwilling or unable to pursue the opportunity, perhaps due to lack of self-confidence and resources.

Finally, I paid a visit to a large supermarket on the Island, where I was able to speak to a member of human resources (HR) about my study. As a result of this discussion the member of HR posted my participant information sheet around the staffroom, as well as making personal contact with members of staff that she thought might meet the criteria. Sadly, two potential participants who got in contact were not eligible for the study.

After three months of interviewing at a local Children's Centre, as well as my main contact being a young dads worker at the Children's Centre, staff members at the Centre became familiar with me and began to show an interest in my study. As a result staff members contacted relatives who were eligible to participate in the study. It became apparent that familiarity and being introduced by someone who was trusted by the participant made young fathers feel much more inclined to take part in the study. According to Clark (2010), there are various reasons why participants become engaged with research. Typical factors include economic gain, expressions

[19] See appendix D for recruitment poster.
[20] See appendix E for first newspaper advertisement.

of citizenship, personal satisfaction, activism and assistance, as well as the desire to help others and the therapeutic benefits of being interviewed.

Initially I had employed purposeful sampling to recruit eligible participants. Purposeful sampling includes individuals who fit a criterion and who have personal knowledge of the event or phenomenon (Boschma et al, 2008). Purposeful sampling was used across the Isle of Sheppey to obtain a rich and varied representation of young fathers' experience over a period of sixty years. However, as a strategy it did not gain particularly large number of participants. Overall purposeful sampling only gained five participants for the study, therefore I decided to mix sampling strategies and include snowball sampling, suggested by other academics who have similar research interests (Brannen and Nilsen, 2006; Formby et al, 2010).

Snowball sampling is a recruitment method that offered a way to overcome many of the recruitment challenges associated with difficult to reach groups (Sadler et al, 2010). According to McKee and O'Brien (1983), fathers as a research group tend to be less accessible and conspicuous than mothers who tend to be more obvious to researchers through their involvement in antenatal and child health clinics, maternity hospitals, nurseries and toddler groups. As a result of snowball sampling, four participants introduced me to their fathers and in one case their friend. Although my study does not claim to be inter-generational, it does contain four cases of father and son perspectives[21].

Initially, I thought the difficulties would be gaining access through the gatekeepers rather than recruiting my participants, particularly as I was offering an incentive of fifty pounds cash per participant. Morton-Williams (1993) found that a cash incentive encouraged a higher response rate. When research requires a lot of hard work on the part of the respondents, a financial incentive is generally appropriate and effective (Mitchell et al, 2007). However, in this study it became apparent very early in the recruitment process that participants were not as encouraged by the financial incentive as originally thought. In fact they were quite sceptical about the financial incentive of fifty pounds cash because it was interpreted as "too much money for a quick chat!" However, some interviews had already been carried out, therefore I was unable to reduce the incentive.

By March 2010 I had gained only eight participants for my study. Table 3.0 shows the distribution of young fathers at this point:

[21] George and Robert, Harry and Frankie, Barry and Jay and Bobby and Sam were fathers and sons. His friend Joshua introduced his friend Lewis to me. (Also refer to table 3.4.)

Table 3.0: Distribution of young fathers (March 2010)

Decades	Recruited young fathers
1950's	0
1960's	1
1970's	1
1980's	0
1990's	2
2000+	4

By March 2010 I was aware that I might not reach my target of thirty participants due to the time constraints of my study and exhausting possible contacts. Therefore, I reconsidered how many participants were practical by September 2010 as I had only allocated a year (Sept 2009-Sept 2010) to the field. I decided to aim for at least twenty participants with three-four participants per decade. This may be considered a small number of participants to be able to discuss young fathers from a socio-historical perspective. However the majority of my participants gave detailed testimonies that lasted 1 ½-3 hours.

In May 2010, I placed another newspaper article in the Sheerness Times Guardian aiming to recruit participants into my study[22]. My second newspaper article received a good response rate compared to the previous one with at least eight phone calls and three eligible participants from various decades. Reflecting back on the description given in my previous newspaper article, I feel I was not entirely clear regarding my criteria. For example, I did not clearly define who might be eligible to partake in the study from previous decades, whereas the second advert clearly states the requirements of participants[23].

I also visited the local college, another local supermarket, the local jobcentre, Bluetown Heritage Centre, local working men's clubs and a local pub in Bluetown. From these local establishments I was able to gain another three more participants. From my experience, a combination of techniques was necessary to generate a sample, which gave voice to more vulnerable and marginalised members of the community (Sixthsmith et al, 2003).

[22] See Appendix F for second newspaper advertisement.
[23] See Appendix E and F for comparisons.

Table 3.1 Places of recruitment

Recruitment strategy	Number of participants collected
Young dads worker (Children's Centre)	5
Staff members (Children's Centre)	4
Bluetown Heritage Centre	1
Posters	0
Local newspaper	4
Local radio	0
Local health centre	0
Local supermarkets	0
Local college	1
Local job centre	1
Working men's clubs	0
Local pub	0
Snowballing sampling	5

Finally by September 2010 I had collected twenty one participants; Table 3.2 shows the distribution.

Table 3.2: Young fathers recruited by September 2010

Decade	Recruited young fathers
1950's	3
1960's	3
1970's	2
1980's	4
1990's	4
2000+	5

Based on my distribution of young fathers (as above) I was aware that I could not discuss young fatherhood in terms of decades as the numbers were too small. Therefore, I linked decades together to form three cohorts.

Table 3.3: Revised distribution of young fathers

Decades	Recruited young fathers (cohort)
1950's-1960's (1st cohort)	6
1970's-1980's (2nd cohort)	6
1990's-2000+ (3rd cohort)	9

One of the intentions for this study is to understand social experiences of young fathers. Further shared experiences become important reference points to signal belonging and participation in a community attached to a place. Participants were grouped into certain cohorts, based on the participants sharing similar experiences, similar age and the nostalgic memories collected and upheld by a particular group of people.

The cohorts were grouped based on aspects of social change. For example, there was much social change between the 1950's and 1960's particularly in regards to family planning and youth culture; this identified the first cohort. Furthermore, there were a number of social changes, predominately political and economic that took place between the 1970's and 1980's. This second cohort was of particular interest in regards to their experiences of employment and the comparisons they might make in reflection of social change. Lastly, the third cohort was grouped, based on their predicted reflections that may be associated with the social changes taken place since the 1980s. Due to these cohorts representing collective experiences and ideas about social change, the data are in some cases presented collectively. This allowed me to examine clearly how social changes on the island affected the life experiences of the participants, by building a picture of how each set of social changes impacted upon a number of individuals, rather than examining each social change only in the context of one individual. However, there is a possible disadvantage here in that by using cohorts defined by decade with more participants, I would have been able to examine more gradual and detailed accounts of social change and how this impacted upon lives. Nevertheless, as cohorts did not present deviant cases from the general collective shared experiences within each cohort, I do not feel that grouping into the three cohorts distorts the research significantly.

Further to the commonalities present within testimonies justifying the collective presentation of the cohorts, the participants required protection and anonymity in the presentation of their life story. The interviews given went into great depth in the lives of the fathers, and with the island being such a small community, there is a danger that detailed presentation of the individual details of participants' lives would have jeopardised the anonymity of the young fathers involved. As one participant commented – "everyone knows everyone around here". For this

reason also, I have not presented individual accounts and analyses of lives, detailing for example differences between participants who have lived in different towns on the island. Therefore below, general details only are provided in profiles due to confidentiality being a key concern of the participants.

3.5 Young father profiles

In total, there were 21 participants who contributed to the study. I have presented their testimony in this thesis according to similar experiences and thematic commonalities rather than discussing the individual life stories of the participants. In table 3.4 I have included general details of each participant.

Table 3.4 young father profiles

Cohort and decade	Name (Pseudonyms)	Age at the time of interview (estimate)	Age at the time of first child	No. of children by age 25	Age started living on the Isle of Sheppey
First (50's)	George	Late 60's	20	1	19
First (50's)	Harry	Early 70's	22	1	19
First (50's)	William	Early 70's	23	1	All his life
First (60's)	Jack	Mid 60's	22	1	5
First (60's)	Robert	Early 60's	21	1	All his life
First (60's)	Nicholas	Early 60's	17	2	Left the Island during early thirties to Sittingbourne
Second (70's)	Barry	Early 50's	22	1	All his life
Second (70's)	Charlie	Mid-late 50's	24	1	All his life
Second (70's)	Edward	Mid-late 50's	23	1	All his life
Second (80's)	Frankie	Late 40's	17	1	All his life
Second (80's)	Tim	Early 50's	17	2	8
Second (80's)	Bobby	Early 50's	20	1	11
Third (90's)	Oliver	Early 40's	19	4[24]	All his life
Third (90's)	Sam	Late 20's[25]	16	3	All his life

[24] Please note that Oliver was a stepfather to three children at age 19. He biologically became a young father at 22.
[25] Please note that Sam had his first child in 1999 and was just about eligible for the 90's bracket.

Third (90's)	Joshua	Early 40s	19	1	8
Third (90's)	Lewis	Early 40's	19	1	All his life
Third (2000+)	Carl	Early 20's	19	2	4
Third (2000+)	Daniel	Early 20's	17	4	9
Third (2000+)	Jay	Early 20's	21	1[26]	All his life
Third (2000+)	Ryan	Early 20's	20	1[27]	All his life
Third (2000+)	Chris	Early 20's	21	2	All his life

3.6 Life story interviews

The second phase of my study was conducting life story interviews with young fathers. As stated previously in the literature review, many scholars in the field of young fatherhood have approached their studies qualitatively using some form of interview (Reeves, 2006; Cater and Coleman, 2006; Duncan, 2007; Roy and Vesely, 2009). Life story interviews are based on the collection and analysis of stories that speak of turning point moments in people's lives and focus on the respondent's interpretation of a sequence of chronological events significant to the narrator (Hubbard, 2000). Life histories have the ability to show people making decisions and choices within specific socio-historical circumstances, providing an opportunity for researchers to locate personal experiences within the wider social context (Hubbard, 2000).

Giddens (1984) suggested that interviews are a critical method believed to increase researcher-participant awareness. He believes that critical researchers need to listen to the dialogue of participants and follow an all embracing methodological approach in order to gain meaningful and rich data. Furthermore, Abrams (2010) and Squire (2008) suggest that by being reflective throughout the study, I have gained a greater self-awareness throughout the research process. Self-awareness is illustrated to the reader of this thesis by including my own perceptions and understandings in the research and the social spaces in which the research knowledge was produced, creating a much clearer and fuller understanding of the Isle of Sheppey.

Life history interviews enable researchers to explore how far social structures provide opportunities as well as constraints on human agency. They also establish how individuals, with their own beliefs and desires, take action despite the social structures that underlie their experiences (Hubbard, 2000). Recently, life history interviews have come under scrutiny. It has been argued that life histories are 'dreamt up' by the researcher and have no grounding in the

[26] Jay's partner was pregnant with their first child at the time of interview, he was going to be a father at the age of 21.
[27] Ryan's partner was pregnant with their first child at the time of interview, he was going to be a father at the age of 20.

real lives of respondents because reality does not exist beyond the text (Hubbard, 2000). In regards to my experiences and position as a researcher carrying out life story interviews, I disagree with this claim. In response to dreamt up stories, I felt that the telling of a story and gaining the reality of a young father was a two way process; without the interaction with a researcher the story would not have unfolded. In regards to the reality of these stories not existing beyond the text, the amount of time spent with these young fathers enabled me to become a part of what they have experienced and with it their feelings and emotions towards aspects of their stories, which allowed for the story to be related to the researcher in the way in which it was felt and meant.

In agreement with this, researchers maintain that narratives are used to create and give meaning to our social reality and make our lives important and relevant (Rymes 1995); a view espoused in this thesis. Stories are used to construct identities for others and ourselves and to locate the self within these ‘‘imagined maps’’ (Green et al, 2006). Sedikides et al (2004) identified that participants may use either ‘contamination’ or ‘redemption’ as a way of instilling their life stories with meaning and coherence[28]. Young fathers in the first and second cohort largely progressed toward contamination, which was made evident through nostalgic reflections, illustrating a shift from a good or uncomplicated life situation to a problematic or uncertain one.

The third cohort on the other hand showed signs of redemption, presenting nostalgic reflections as redemption progresses from a bad or difficult past to a good or triumphant one. This was made evident through some young fathers in the third cohort discussing particularly negative past experiences or behaviours prior to becoming a father, which was considered a good or triumphant end to past events (Sedikides et al, 2004). Life story interviews are grounded in the subjective understandings of an empirical reality, suggesting that although participants may not draw on the theoretical sources available to the researcher when describing their experiences this does not necessarily mean that their versions presented in the life history interview are any less accurate (Rymes 1995).

Narratives may also include moral discourses[29] as well as the subjective morality of the participant. Thus they provide insight into the construction of self-identity and morality, which are major elements of my study. According to Green et al (2006), the events recounted in personal narratives often include times when the participant has at some point not conformed to public norms and expectations. Therefore, the participant offers a rationale for their actions,

[28] Contamination, where the story progresses from a good or uncomplicated life situation to a problematic or bad one, which may in turn provoke nostalgic memories. Redemption is where the narrative progresses from a bad or difficult life scene, to a good or triumphant one (Sedikides et al, 2004).
[29] See chapter three, section 3.9 for further discussion on moral discourses.

explaining their socially unacceptable behaviour. Participants tend to discuss such socially unacceptable behaviour in a moral light, that is, evaluate and judge their own actions in relation to commonly held moral standards. Therefore, the telling of a personal narrative can be understood as a portrayal of how one ought to live, an interpretation which is of interest in this thesis and has been applied to some of the main findings.

In relation to the arguments presented by Hubbard (2000) and Green et al (2006), moral discourses not only provide accounts of a young father's life experience, but how and why they have lived their lives in the way that they have and the thoughts and ideas that have guided their everyday behaviour and interaction with others. Life story interviews can empower participants, by providing them with an opportunity to talk for themselves in their own voices, about their life experiences and the thought processes involved in their decision-making. Young fathers reporting upon their own lives allows them a greater degree of control over narrative direction and offers them a unique opportunity to present their case. In reflection, life story interviews have given me a first person account of a young father's life, highlighting various life transitions, morality and elements of social change within the social context of the Isle of Sheppey (Maynes et al, 2008).

Three life story interviews were carried out in the participant's home, one home which was in Sittingbourne, and eighteen were carried out in meeting rooms at a Children's Centre on the Island. On two occasions, the wives of the participants were at home when the interview was taking place[30]. Boeije (2004) highlighted that the participant's home is not an isolated setting; therefore interviewers may have problems with controlling the presence of other persons in the interview setting. This study does not attempt to make claims based on young motherhood or young parenthood. However, in these two cases the understandings and perspectives of two young mothers during the 1960's were included in the transcripts, and the analysis considered how they may have influenced or encouraged the testimonies given by the young fathers (Boeije, 2004).

The interviews that were carried out within the home were because two participants had long working hours and one participant had difficulty walking. A potential problem of having a third person at the interview is that less information is gathered about the interviewee when an actively involved third person is present. Furthermore, people may change the tone of their answers or accentuate different parts in their stories (Boeije, 2004). However, in the context of my study, it was decided that in the home setting I would not exclude third persons from the

[30] Wives of Jack and Nicholas were at home when the interviews were taking place.

interview. This decision was based on building rapport with the participant and being appreciative of the participant agreeing to carry out an interview.

To ensure my safety and apply ethical procedures, I sent my supervisor and my contact on the Isle of Sheppey (young dads worker), the participant's name, address, time of meeting and estimated finish time for the interview via email. Exchange of the participant's personal details was firstly agreed by the participants who were being interviewed at home. It was also agreed that if the interview overran the estimated time by an hour I would have to stop the interview and contact them both to confirm my whereabouts and give them a new estimated time for completion of the interview. Once the interview was finished and I had left the home, my supervisor and the young dads worker received a text message to confirm that I had left the home. There were limitations of carrying out interviews in the home; for example there were a number of distractions, the main one being the participant's wife as at times they interrupted the participant's testimony. These interruptions led to some testimonies going off the topic area and forgotten thoughts on the subject.

I employed some of the research ideas of Pahl and Wilson's study carried out in 1981; they suggested that as preparation for the interviews, broad, pre-designed discussion points should be set to encourage narrative from the participants. In practice most qualitative researchers utilising interviews as a data collection method include a question sheet with headings and key words, otherwise known as the interview guide (Howarth, 1998). An interview guide is usually required by the research ethics committee but is also essential to a successful interview and the preparation of an interview guide is particularly helpful for novice interviewers such as myself. My interview guide was based on the social risk factors identified in the literature review and was broken down into related sections (childhood, education, employment, relationships, fatherhood and community)[31], which according to Earthy and Cronin (2008) would help to present personal and social change.

After carrying out my first five interviews, it became apparent to me during the interviews that the discussion points were enabling participants to speak in depth about various aspects of their lives. From my observations, the discussion points prompted young fathers to speak in-depth about their various experiences, their interpretations of society and how those experiences had defined them as a young man and as a young father living on the Isle of Sheppey. These discussion points also raised important changes in terms of local culture and community and how

[31] Please see appendix G for interview discussion points.

young fathers from different cohorts associated themselves with the Island. Furthermore, it enabled me to assess the ethical issues as well as my immersion into the field (Orb et al, 2000).

As part of immersing myself into the field, I ensured that the participants accepted my presence as a researcher and that there was a strong and positive interaction between the participant and myself to build rapport. I also wanted to identify whether the research setting was tolerated by the participants due to the interviews taking place in a Children's Centre, which in hindsight is understood by young fathers to be a female dominated environment. Social scientists have considered how contextual details, such as interview settings and the interactions between the participant and the researcher may influence their data (Richards and Emslie, 2000). However, none of the participants made any negative comments on meeting at the Children's Centre and some spoke about being personally involved with the Centre. I had also gained relevant local knowledge about various social issues on the Isle of Sheppey to help ensure that I was not entering the field blind or ignorant of local culture (Sampson, 2004).

On three occasions, careful consideration of ethics was needed. Participants spoke in depth about the integration of an Eastern European community on the Island, voicing their agreement with a racialised discourse influenced by moral panics in the media, which may be considered as controversial. The ethical issue was related to participants wanting me to show some sign of agreement or at least accept their testimony to be understandable and reasonable, thus validating their acceptance of the discourse. It is important to note that the literature could not have fully prepared me for the practical stages of interviewing participants and the controversial testimonies and grey areas that were discussed by some participants. Kaiser (2009) discusses how procedural ethics, although useful for prompting researchers to think about ethical issues, is largely a formality that cannot address the specific ethical dilemmas that arise in qualitative research. However, I was made aware of certain social disputes on the Island that were discussed in later interviews. Therefore, I was prepared to handle such situations by acting naturally towards the participant to allow them to feel comfortable about giving their testimonies. I also responded neutrally to avoid any deception (Sampson, 2004).

3.7 Confidentiality and anonymity

One of the main concerns reported by participants was being identified in the study due to the sensitivity and explicitness of some of their testimonies. Confidentiality was crucial to prevent consequential harm associated with the disclosure of identifiable research data. Not only is confidentiality an important ethical principle in research, maintaining confidentiality is important

in terms of demonstrating trust and maintaining integrity in the researcher-participant relationship (Yu, 2008). According to Boschma et al (2000), some qualitative researchers go to great lengths to change the occupation, age, location or residence and even gender of the participant if needed, although this can remove important contextual information. In order to protect participants' identities, information disclosed in the interview that could suggest the identity of the participant has not been discussed with others. Also, the transcripts and analysed data have included pseudonyms, which were discussed with the participant before the interview and were highlighted in the participant information sheet[32] (Boschma et al, 2000).

Another concern whilst transcribing was participants being identified through local establishments. Pahl and Wilson (1981) expressed the same difficulties on the Isle of Sheppey, stating that confidentiality was difficult to maintain in such a small community. As a result there were some aspects of the study that they felt were just too apparent to many in the community and therefore breakdown in confidentiality and anonymity was inevitable. Equally, Squire (2008) suggested that reproducing larger amounts of data and discussing life histories can make it harder to guarantee anonymity, especially when researching an understudied topic within a small community of potential respondents. Squire (2008) suggested not to state specific local areas where the participant or establishment is based. In line with the recommendations of Squire, I have not included the local neighbourhood in which the young father lived. Also I have not named specifically local establishments, which fortunately has not been at the expense of the data's richness.

3.8 Interview process

During my initial introductions with the participants I asked them specific questions to confirm whether they were eligible for the study. For example, how old were you when you had your first child; how long have you lived on the Island; and did you have your first child whilst living on the Island? If the answers I gained to these questions were suitable I would then tell them where the interview would take place, potential duration of the interview, at the participant's discretion, a recorded interview and possible areas of discussion which would be covered as part of the interview; and lastly a financial incentive of fifty pounds at the end of the interview. The participants then confirmed whether or not they still wished to take part in the interview.

Eighteen life story interviews took place in meeting rooms provided by a Children's Centre on the Isle of Sheppey as discussed in section 3.6. I chose to interview in meeting rooms in the

[32] See Appendix H.

Children's Centre, firstly as a safety measure for myself and secondly to ensure to a reasonable extent the quality of the recordings and that my participants were not distracted. In regards to the interviews that took place in the Children's Centre it was difficult at times to secure a meeting room. Young fathers had only limited time which they could take part in the study, which was a concern if a second interview was needed to confirm statements in the testimony[33]. Also as a consequence of limited times from participants, in a number of cases I secured an appointment with the participant without confirming the availability of a meeting room. Due to such circumstances, the interviews took place in a very small meeting room generally used for storage. It did not have any windows, was quite cluttered, and may have even been considered by the participants as quite claustrophobic.

In the interview room I gave the participant a copy of the participant information sheet and simultaneously gave a verbal explanation of the study. My reasons for giving a verbal account simultaneously were related to the literature, identifying that some young fathers may have difficulties reading (DCSF, 2009). Also a verbal account helped to ensure that they were aware of what the participant information sheet was stating. Participants tended to ask questions after I gave them a verbal explanation rather than reading a complete copy of the participant information sheet.

I gave the participant useful local contact numbers and a copy of the discussion points. I also explained where and how their data may be disseminated and how I intended to ensure full confidentiality and anonymity for the participant. Confidentiality and anonymity were guaranteed for as long as there were no concerns related to significant harm or illegal activity, of which I gave an example to the participant[34]. Also, before the interview proceeded participants were asked to look through the discussion points and point out any topics that may have been too sensitive to discuss. This coincided with Miller (2000) who suggested that allowing participants to reflect upon the topics of discussion enables the participant to feel more comfortable and at ease with the process of the interview. Only one participant pointed out a topic that he did not wish to talk about[35]. However the remaining participants had no major concern regarding the list of discussion points and most participants structured their responses to what felt most comfortable for them.

[33] Only one participant, "Charlie" returned at a later date to finish his interview, as he had to leave earlier than expected on his first interview.
[34] The main example was forms of abuse towards their child.
[35] The topic of discussion Barry did not want to discuss was 'what was the relationship like with your parents?'

Before the interview took place, a reasonable estimate of time anticipated for the interview was given during my initial introduction with the participant. The participant needed to guarantee at least two hours availability on the day of the interview, to ensure that the interview was not rushed and full detail and explanation was given as part of their testimony. This was also noted as a concern by Miller (2000) who suggested that a gross underestimation or no time estimation for the interview may potentially lead to participants feeling deceived and wishing to terminate their interviews early. I also considered body language, after the interview had reached an hour and a half. After an hour and a half, three young fathers in the third cohort were becoming fidgety and were becoming brief in their answers to the questions. Any significant body language, which made it obvious that a participant wished to terminate the interview, or take a short break meant the interviewee was asked whether he wanted to continue the interview. Most young fathers wished to take a ten minute cigarette break and then resumed the interview in which they the gave more informed answers.

All twenty one participants agreed to a recording being taken of their interview. According to Miller (2000), tape recording is a necessity in qualitative research as generally a full verbatim account is required to develop data analysis and to provide an invaluable backup for note-taking and memos. Digital recording was also made clear within the participant information sheet. I also discussed with the participant that they could make a request at any point during the interview to switch the Dictaphone off. However, throughout the interviews, most participants quickly lost their inhibitions about being recorded and forgot the Dictaphone was present (Miller, 2000). If participants wished for something to be kept “off the record”, they would state this whilst the Dictaphone was recording.

Finally during the initial introduction of participants it was made clear verbally, as well as formally within the participant information sheet, that each participant would receive fifty pounds cash at the end of the interview. According to Hollway and Jefferson (2000), by paying participants for their time, the relationship between researcher and participant can be equalised. Nevertheless, the timing of payment at the end of the interview may have induced participants to continue when otherwise they would have wished to withdraw from the interview. According to Mitchell et al (2007), it is difficult to determine how much money is enough to compensate participants for their time and encourage participation without being coercive. My decision to pay fifty pounds per participant was based on the highest amount allowed for those participants who may have been receiving social benefits. My study included three pensioners and nine participants who were unemployed of which four commented on being long-term unemployed.

Therefore I felt that the financial incentive showed a mark of respect for their participation as well as their financial circumstances.

3.9 Self-presentation, discourse and morality

Discourse is understood by Giddens (1991), from a post-modernist perspective[36]. He argues that discourse in a post-traditional western society is reflexively organised in context with social systems. The reflexivity of modernity operates not in a situation of certainty, which was typically related to traditional discourses of self-identity, but in one of uncertainty and doubt. Even the most reliable authorities or structures that regulated traditional discourses can only be trusted "until further notice;" and the abstract systems that affect our day to day lives normally offer options rather than fixed guidelines for action.

In the context of young parents, research has highlighted that the relationship between the couple is most likely to break down in the first two years of their child being born due to personal difficulties encountered in the relationship (Fagan, 2008). This illustrates Giddens' concept of the pure relationship, discussed in chapter two, section 2.4, by highlighting that those relationships only exist for their own sake; anything that goes wrong between the partners essentially threatens the relationship. In comparison to traditional discourses of marriage or relationships, it is difficult in postmodern times to "coast along" in the way in which one could in a relationship that was dominated by wider social institutions (Giddens, 1991).

As discussed previously in chapter two, the meanings and expectations associated with fatherhood in the western world have shifted dramatically in recent decades (Pleck, 1987; Willmott and Griffin, 2004; Brannen and Nilsen, 2006). Many authors attribute public interest in fathering to the rise in divorce rates in western societies, creating a ''discourse of crisis'' around fears of social disintegration, caused by the absence of paternal figures and financial responsibilities for children of lone parents. Social constructions of fatherhood have derived from public discourses related to what constitutes ''good'' fathering, creating powerful pressures on fathers who feel the need to respond to these discourses[37] (Gregory and Milner, 2011).

There were concerns regarding the initial introductions and my self-presentation, when introducing myself to the participant as a PhD student at the University of Greenwich, living in

[36] A postmodernist perspective suggests that sociologists can no longer claim to produce expert, concrete knowledge because in postmodern societies, uncertainty has replaced absolute judgements about how society should be (Swingewood, 2000).
[37] Discourses are described as culturally recognisable societal visions of how things should be (Miller, 2011, p56).

London. Although there was no significant sign that participants felt overwhelmed or intimidated, I was concerned that my self-presentation may have been interpreted by the participant as an educated, employed, childless, middle class young woman, who was not from, or even resident on the Isle of Sheppey. This may have been perceived as a symbol of power or authority and may have affected their attitude towards me, and the type of information they wished to tell me (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000). There is wider literature that discusses the insider/outsider debate in research, which suggests that regardless of the researcher being an 'outsider', as individuals we all have distinct personalities and identities which at times connect and disconnect with people; therefore groups defined by culture, place, age or gender do not necessarily cause a significant barrier for the outsider (Merton, 1972). From the debate, it is understood that what is important for the researcher to acquire is the working relationship between the individuals involved and build upon the moments of acceptance through identity markers, which helps to create and sustain rapport (Merton, 1972). For example, identity markers or connections in the context of this study were being white British and having had experience myself of living in a socially deprived community, which was briefly discussed to help build a mutual relationship as well as rapport. Sharing experiences of living in similar environments, I felt allowed me to associate with the participants on a cultural level. This was crucial in establishing empathy and trust between the participant and myself (Sixthsmith et al, 2003).

It is understood that within in an interview context, interviewees' behaviour can be enacted to meet the demands of a given circumstance and the perceived expectations of others. They may formulate a number of identities fitting with popular discourses at the time (Green et al, 2006). Indeed, Giddens (1984) in his discussion regarding structuration theory, talks about how a person is socially positioned during time-space encounters. Giddens regards social positions as being contextualised, which produces social identity and carries certain obligations. How one perceives their own position is in relation to how they perceive their position to others, a position that is constantly renegotiated through time, space and social interaction.

Some participants had a protective self-presentation, where they avoided discussing negative images or impressions. Young fathers, particularly in the third cohort were initially quite evasive about their use of marijuana, suggesting that they were trying to present good moral behaviour within the social norms of popular discourse and may have had some concerns in relation to the disclosure of possible sensitive information. Nevertheless, as the interview proceeded most current young fathers lost their inhibitions and stated that they smoked marijuana at some point.

From my observations, it seemed that young fathers, particularly in the third cohort, were attempting to present themselves as maintaining good moral standards (Sedikides et al, 2004), a particular norm being that adults who are responsible for a small child do not take drugs. There was some underlying suggestion that young fathers in the third cohort tended to identify themselves as being another person before the birth of their child. Green et al (2006) suggests that ‘‘the other’’ represents the participant’s past and shows how they could look back on their previous lifestyle and consequently accept their actions and consequences. May (2008) comments that behaving in a morally acceptable way ensures that the individual is an accepted member of a social group. If an individual’s adherence to social norms is less than perfect, for example delinquency, they may attempt to repair their potentially spoiled identity by only discussing their behaviour within cultural expectations and norms, therefore allowing them to present a morally acceptable self. Wider research on young fatherhood has also discussed significant changes in identity from the perspective of transitions, which lead to a more responsible and socially acceptable identity rather than trying to rehabilitate a previously spoiled identity. For example, Reeves (2006) discusses how the transition to fatherhood for some young men, particularly those who are involved in criminal and anti-social activity, is more likely to construct a socially acceptable and responsible identity by becoming a father, which leads to the young father leaving his delinquent lifestyle behind.

Giddens (1991) discusses self-identity, which is consistently altered in view of reflexive monitoring. According to Giddens (1991) self-identity becomes a reflexive project as we create, maintain and revise a set of biographical narratives. Self-identity is not a set of traits or observable characteristics; it is a person’s own reflective understanding of their lives. Self-identity is a continuum based on the person’s reflective beliefs about his or her own life story.

Peniston-Bird (2009) cites Alistair Thompson in her account of memory and self-presentation during oral history interviews. According to Peniston-Bird (2009), Thompson argues that memories are an ethical concern since they may cause risky and painful thoughts, particularly if they do not conform to public norms. Participants are likely to compose their memories so that they will fit with what is publically acceptable, or, if they have been excluded from general acceptance they may identify others who may be commonly associated with their identities. This can have an effect on the richness of the data from the silencing of certain memories due to conformity to public discourses. Exaggerations can be a consequence of promoting a desired self within the social constraints of society. However, self-presentation through narrative still reflects the participant’s own values and highlights certain characteristics that they deem to be important (Leary, 1995).

Evasive forms of self-presentation in some cases were the preferred manner in which older participants (aged 41-74) dealt with what could only be described as embarrassing topics, such as pre-marital sex, contraception or conception. McKee and O'Brien (1983) discuss the "legitimacy of the topic" and how fathers are not used to discussing issues such as pregnancy, conception and children, particularly with a non-family member. Men's difficulties in talking about pregnancy and/or babies may be a clue to wider cultural understandings of masculinity and suggest some boundaries of male preoccupations and orientations. Nevertheless, being a woman interviewer may have some advantages; cross gender discussion regarding pregnancy and parenthood may be easier, more appropriate and less threatening to the participant (McKee and O'Brien, 1983). Older participants tended to be brief about such topics, which could be based on the acceptable and dominant discourses of their time (May, 2008).

Younger participants (aged 20-40) were happier to give a more explicit account about pre-marital sex and conception. It had become increasingly evident that sex had become much more liberalised and therefore easier to discuss over time, and in the younger cohorts fatherhood was discussed less through references to employment and more as an engaged and emotional father. For example, young fathers in the first cohort spoke about how swearing around a woman was considered immoral and women who actually used such language themselves were considered 'slags'. Therefore, conversation about sex, whether married or unmarried, was deemed immoral, which was not the case in the third cohort. My initial thoughts were that participants would not discuss certain aspects of their life in detail simply due to gender differences. It became apparent that the main determinant was age in terms of how open and explicit the testimony was. It seemed that some participants spoke to me in relation to how they would position me within the family context. For example, young men who became fathers during the 1950's-1980's would generally discuss topics as if they were discussing issues with their daughter or granddaughter, which was less explicit. On the other hand young men who were fathers from the 1990's onwards would discuss issues as if they were talking to a friend, which was much more explicit. For example the use of swearing in the interviews, particularly amongst the third cohort was widespread in comparison to the first and second cohort. This suggests that there has been a change in attitudes towards different genders during the past sixty years.

3.10 Interviews

In only one instance was a second interview carried out with a participant. The duration of the interviews was an hour and a half to three and a half hours. According to Slim and Thompson

(2006), an average life story interview may need two or three sessions and can take anything from one to eight hours. For most people, recounting their life story is a positive, if emotional experience from which they can gain much satisfaction and a renewed sense of perspective. I employed a conversational approach to my interviews and began my interviews by asking each participant whether they had lived on the Isle of Sheppey all their life, which twelve of them had.

I then proceeded to ask what life was like living on the Island. Participants discussed at length a number of social issues that were affecting their lives, which were specifically related to living on the Isle of Sheppey. Young fathers in the first and second cohort gave useful comparisons between lives lived as a young father in a particular decade, compared to those in the third cohort. Interestingly, those in the third cohort made comparisons by discussing their life on the Isle of Sheppey as a young man and then as a young father, which denoted different social issues during different phases of their lives.

Maintaining the flow of the interview was not difficult. However at times, I felt that some from the first and second cohort diverted from the original discussion point on average for five to seven minutes. Giddens (1984) refers to inconsistencies in truth claims as the messiness of social life, which should not be considered by the researcher as a weakness.

Whilst considering research approaches, Wallace (1987) commented that she had concerns about having pre-set ideas due to documentary research as well as her own subjective experiences of the research process, which may be imposed on participants and influence their original thoughts. Therefore, it was vital that I allowed the participant to talk freely about the discussion point and when appropriate I relayed the discussion point back to them if I felt that the question wasn't answered fully. Once I began to transcribe the interviews it became apparent that young fathers were in fact mapping a number of themes that were related to a particular discussion point rather than diverting from the discussion point. For instance, some young fathers, particularly those who had lived on the Island all their lives, when asked about their experiences in education also discussed aspects of peer pressure and drug and alcohol misuse as aspects of their education.

Some young fathers disclosed controversial topics as part of their testimonies, which was discussed in section 3.6, and an ethical concern. For example, a number of participants made reference to an Eastern European community on the Isle of Sheppey. Some participants spoke cryptically about how "they" were taking our jobs now, and it not being right or fair as "we have families and we can't do it at a minimum wage," again forming a racialised discourse. It was

clearly a growing theme amongst the testimonies and one that I wished to pursue as part of my research due to its apparent effect on some young fathers. Therefore, I aimed to encourage the participants to speak freely and openly about the subject by naming the particular group who I felt they were relating their testimonies to. I based my assumption on local documentary data and my own personal experience of the Island. Local documentary data highlighted that local businesses were being replaced by large multi-national companies from Eastern Europe (Brown, 2008). Perhaps it could be critiqued that I was in fact helping to propagate the discourse of racial threats to the labour market, supporting the moral panic found in the media related to "immigrants". However, this did allow me to discuss the issue with the participants; when I showed understanding of the issue of immigration, many participants become more expressive of their opinions, which I suggest therefore were already firmly held.

Giddens (1971) suggests that the researcher looks for moments of consensus and conflict during social interaction, noting similarities and differences. Some interviewees appeared slightly uncertain about pinpointing Eastern Europeans on the Island, consequently I did have slight concerns that I may have misjudged or interpreted their testimonies incorrectly. Also, I felt I might have encouraged participants to diverge from their original thoughts. However, all of them confirmed that my interpretation was correct in which case I encouraged the participant to discuss further by reminding them how I intended to keep his testimony confidential and anonymous.

Some young fathers began to feel more comfortable with discussing the subject; however there were personal concerns about deceiving the participants in terms of my responses. After discussing the subject, some participants asked me if I understood, or could relate to the points that they were trying to make. I tried to respond as neutrally as possible by remarking upon their tone of voice and body language and that it had clearly made them angry and upset, which they accepted as a fair response. Like Josselson (2007), I found that the concern was not so much deceiving the participant, but maintaining attentive listening and containing the emotional experiences being told by the participant, regardless of the grey area being discussed by the participant.

Furthermore, a number of participants who were young fathers between 1960 and 1980 tended to display feelings of nostalgia related to employment and the local community. According to Pahl (1984), those with long memories on the Isle of Sheppey will almost certainly perceive the present day on the Island as a decline from a better-ordered and more proactive past. Similarly, Gabriel (1993) suggested that in most cases, nostalgia appears to make the present more

bearable, but in some it highlights despair when compared to contemporary realities. At times I felt nostalgic memories may have exacerbated the negativity shown towards contemporary situations and social circumstances on the Isle of Sheppey. However, these accounts also hinted towards the deep emotionality hidden behind some social changes that had taken place, particularly economic changes, which indicated the extent that some social changes had impacted upon their lives. Nevertheless I attempted to place their emotional understanding of their experience into a historical context by taking written notes on aspects of the young fathers' testimony and referred back to the documentary evidence to help gain context for the area of concern. An example of this includes participants discussing the lack of care, unemployment in the 1980s, consideration and intervention given by the local council to the Isle of Sheppey.

3.11 Memory and nostalgia

In the 1960's social historians began to examine popular memory as a way to write history, particularly that of working class women and other marginalised individuals in society (Maynes et al, 2008). According to Abram (2010) and Slim and Thompson (1993), oral testimony is a body of information that belongs to a particular group of people. Through word of mouth, collective understandings and interpretations in a local culture or community are constructed and accepted throughout generations. This study has aimed to assess trustworthiness by taking into account young fathers' perceptions of social facts on the Isle of Sheppey. For example, the participants interviewed have constructed their testimonies on how they view and interpret the social conditions around them, which may not necessarily be a universal truth for all young fathers. Consequently, this study does not offer generalisations. Instead it attempts to understand the social meaning young fathers on the Isle of Sheppey attribute to their experiences, circumstances and situations; as well as the meaning that the local community has embedded into texts and local ideologies.

Memories of my participants have been a key factor in accessing their identity. Participants have gone through a process of remembering and have identified particular images, stories, experiences and emotions that they have constructed, which have helped generate their identity within the social and cultural context of Sheppey. Nevertheless, all the young fathers spoke about their personal experiences, which often operated in a wider social context; their memories were contextualised but were also informed by various public representations that were relevant during that particular time period (Abrams, 2010).

Nostalgic memories were encountered during some of the interviews, particularly amongst the

first and second cohort. Nostalgia is a universal experience and can include all persons regardless of age, gender, social class, ethnicity, or other social groupings (Sedikides et al, 2004). Nostalgia is a based on personal emotions that involve reliving one's past, and in particular events involving one's important but bygone relationships. Alternatively, nostalgic memories have been understood by academics as disjointed, abstract and largely false perceptions of the past, which as a result exaggerate perceptions of the present and future (Sedikides et al, 2004).

From my observations of the interviews, nostalgia for the first and second cohort was based on sentimental attachments to the past; it became apparent that social and political change for these cohorts had uprooted them from a traditional, collective society, which some, I felt, found difficult to accept. It was evident to me during the interviews that the future held a number of uncertainties for these cohorts. As a result, it seemed that nostalgic memories were comforting and allowed them to hang on to what they understood as the certainties of the past.

Nostalgia was triggered through reflection. This reflection, I found, was one of the positive implications of having older participants in that they were able to reflect and give a stronger evaluation of choices and experiences, which had occurred over a longer period of time. Although nostalgic memories may be identified as possibly glorifying the past, it may be suggested from my experience that nostalgic memories possibly build towards present wisdom.

Nostalgia has been depicted as frustrating in gaining objective truths; however the focus in this context is not on the recovery of what is perceived to be an absolute truth. In fact nostalgic memories can encourage participants to establish important benchmarks, indicating key aspects of social change in one's biography (Gabriel, 1993; Sedikides et al, 2004; Pickering and Keightley, 2006). Also, nostalgia can encourage the participant to narrate the relationship between past, present, and future, which helps the individual construct continuity of identity (Gabriel, 1993).

3.12 Trustworthiness

In interpretive research, trustworthiness has developed to become an important alternative for measuring the value of research, as well as providing for rigour in the research process (Collier-Reed et al, 2009). In many traditional research approaches, validity, reliability, and individualisation are taken as the philosophical constructs that signify rigorous research. Making use of trustworthiness as an alternative construct, rather than adapting the meanings of validity and reliability makes explicit some basic differences in the assumptions of how the world is constructed (Collier-Reed et al, 2009).

Lincoln and Guba (1985), in their seminal work *Naturalistic Inquiry*, argue that rigour can be appropriately reported on in interpretive studies. The premise of Lincoln and Guba's argument was that it is not appropriate to argue for the positivist standards of validity, reliability and objectivity in measuring the value of interpretive research; rather 'trustworthiness' of the investigation should be employed. To argue for trustworthiness, they suggested that 'credibility','transferability', and 'dependability' should be included as part of the criteria in order to build trustworthiness into a study and judge value. Lincoln and Guba argue that trustworthiness on the basis of these criteria is equivalent to the traditional research concepts of internal validity, external validity and reliability.

To maintain credibility I endeavoured to gain a true perspective of my participants. To establish this, I attempted to breakdown possible power relationships, which may limit rich, meaningful data from which credible categories and themes can be gained during analysis (Collier-Reed et al, 2009). There is some suggestion in the literature that power relationships are to some extent inevitable due to the differences in social positions (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000; Sixthsmith et al, 2003). However to overcome this issue to the best of my ability, I tried to build rapport with the participant and showed respect for autonomy by making structural allowances that took the independence and desires of the participant into consideration. For example, articulating that this was a voluntary study where they could leave the interview at any time, identifying possible questions that they did not wish to discuss before the interview began and asking their permission to have a recorded interview.

As well as maintaining credibility as part of the interview, it is also important to maintain communicative credibility. To illustrate the truth value of these testimonies I have provided direct quotes from the data to give a verbatim account of the young fathers stories. However, I have also provided a critical analysis of the stories told. This is not to say that I am attempting to construct some 'true' objective narrative through critiquing the perspectives of the participants. As Silverman (1985) notes, I am not assessing whether the interviews were true or false reports on reality in some external sense, but whether the display given by the participants is a full reflection of their experience. By discussing, in previous sections of the thesis as well as within the data chapters, the possibilities of some participants succumbing to public discourses and nostalgia, I am critiquing whether the stories which they have told may have been informed by preexisting discourses, whether their display of reality, as Silverman puts it, is constructed to conform to some normative ideal, or is their true perception. Miller and Glassner (2011, P133) comment that the qualitative researcher is accepting of the fact that "interviewees sometimes

respond to interviewers through the use of familiar narrative constructs, rather than by providing meaningful insights into their subjective view;" I am not attempting here to undermine the testimony provided, simply to provide some analysis of whether events may have occurred. The data chapters provide some general overviews of what the participants have proposed within the data, as well as providing direct quotes from the data to support these general overviews. I have also given my own impressions and suggestions about the data, which form further analysis of the data (Collier-Reed, 2009).

Transferability draws on the notion of "applicability" of research outcomes. To enhance transferability of findings, I provided sufficient detail in this chapter to enable the reader to make judgements, to determine the degree of similarity between the Isle of Sheppey and the receiving context[38] (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The data has been analysed with consideration of the origin, context, and structure of the research situation, so that it is possible for similarities and differences to be seen in relation to other situations where the results are potentially of relevance (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

Dependability is underpinned by the idea of "consistency" of research findings and is employed to show the quality and appropriateness of the inquiry process (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Dependability is of most concern during data collection, transcription of the interviews and during analysis. During the data collection process, I was conscious of the fact that to maintain dependability, I needed to ensure that I did not include any leading questions as part of interview conversations (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). To help limit the possibility of leading questions and as discussed in section 3.6, broad, pre-designed discussion points were used as preparation for the interviews to encourage open narrative from the participants.

After the interviews were complete, I decided the degree of accuracy of the transcripts to maintain dependability. My study did not focus on any linguistic elements; therefore transcripts did not include tonal inflection, verbal utterances or pauses, which I felt allowed me to be consistent and more likely to ensure accuracy of data. Also, I attempted to put in place some form of dialogic dependability check in accordance with Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria. This was done by developing draft categories and themes of the transcripts, which then I discussed with my supervisors these chosen categories and themes. The analysis was largely solitary; however during many of my supervisions, themes and categories were compared and discussed throughout this research process to help ensure consistency (Bossier-Reed et al, 2009).

[38] Detail on the research site has been provided in section 3.1 and 3.2.

3.13 Thematic analysis

After all twenty one interviews were carried out I began transcribing. Whilst analysing the transcripts I simultaneously listened to the recording of the transcript, which I felt brought life to the transcripts. This is encouraged by Abrams (2010) who suggests that without the recordings, the transcripts tend to be cold and flat and unlike the actual interview, which took place in a specific social setting, time and space.

Representation and interpretation were a concern due to gender differences, age ranges and nostalgic memories; therefore my analysis required reflexivity. Giddens (1984) proposes that any sociological approach to understanding society is inherently critical and adopts the methods of reflexivity and dialogue to examine social life. He argues that all humans are inherently reflexive at a subconscious level, which forms practical everyday knowledge; and at a conscious level, enabling social practice to be revised discursively in light of new information.

Life story interviews and historical documentation have been analysed according to the principles of thematic analysis. My understanding of the process of thematic analysis was based on a key text from Boyatzis (1998). According to Boyatzis (1998), thematic analysis is a process for encoding qualitative information, which can be used with most, if not all, qualitative methods. Researchers incorporating thematic analysis in their study generally see a pattern in raw data; the perception of this pattern begins the process of thematic analysis. Thematic analysis allows a researcher using qualitative methods to easily communicate their findings and interpretations of meaning to others from varying orientations and fields. This increased ability to communicate to various others allows more comprehensive understandings of the phenomenon (Boyatzis, 1998).

Although documentary evidence was collected first to gain a general understanding of life on the Isle of Sheppey, it was not analysed. Life story interviews were analysed first in an attempt to approach the raw data with as few preconceived ideas as possible from the documentary data. Then I analysed the documentary evidence to support and give context to the themes and categories found in the interview data. All twenty one interviews were recorded and from the transcribed conversations, patterns of experiences were coded. Thematic codes were created to capture the phenomena, which were illustrated in the presentation of the research findings. My codes were data driven, constructed inductively from the raw information. As the codes were

data driven it was my task to interpret the meaning after obtaining the findings and to construct meaning after the discovery of results (Boyatzis, 1998).

An example of analysis is the topic of young fathers and their perception of the community. I listed the main codes that a young father highlighted in regards to the category community such as authority, security and local myth, derived from direct quotes. I then identified all the data in that transcription that were set in the context of that category and were related to those particular themes described above. I then referred to the documentary evidence to support and build context around the category and the themes. I then began to expand on these categories and themes by applying my own brief interpretations from memos and hunches; I also applied to categories and themes, scholarly literature and structuration theory. These interpretations and descriptions were not concrete until the later stages of my analysis in which time I continued to build and develop new themes, ideas and perspectives on the data.

One of the major challenges to using thematic analysis effectively in research is projection, which is based on the researcher reading into or attributing to the participant's testimony, something that is their own characteristic, emotion, value or attitude (Boyatzis, 1998). Familiarity with the phenomenon being studied and the source material being collected and transcribed is likely to encourage personal projection. For example, when researchers have too much familiarity, it is often difficult for them to resist their own typical response to the situation (Boyatzis, 1998). However, the way in which I dealt with this issue was to provide direct quotes to help illustrate the interpretation and I have been clear in terms of discussing my own impression and opinion of the findings as well as theoretical perspectives.

After the initial open coding I began to form relational coding where I assessed whether there was a relationship between other categories and themes in one transcript, and then I searched for relational codes within other transcripts. For example, it became apparent in one particular transcript that the category education shared a common link with other categories, which in this instance were parent relationships, parental interest and educational background, which were then fused together. I also made links between other transcripts from the same cohort. This was done by identifying common themes that were evident in both transcripts under the same categories and within the same context. Relational coding, open coding and interpretations have continually been adjusted and re-thought throughout the analysis process and during the course of writing the thesis.

Whilst writing up my findings, the documentary data has been included primarily to support, possibly oppose and give context to interview findings. The interview findings have also informed particular themes that were already apparent in the documentary data such as the importance of Sheerness Dockyard and unemployment linked to deindustrialisation on the Island. Also carrying out a literature review previously to my research has instigated initial ideas and potential themes within the interview data. However, by referring back to the literature and the documentary evidence, I have made inferences from the interview and have continued to formulate narrative, which has developed story lines[39].

3.14 The research experience

Here I take this opportunity to be reflective and outline general thoughts, and reasons for choices made in this thesis. Before undertaking my PhD in 2008 I had only recently became a graduate in Childhood Studies at the University of Greenwich. I had always maintained as part of my degree a keen interest in academic research, teenage pregnancy and social history. Whilst discussing these interests with my supervisors who were extremely supportive of my position as a recent graduate, I became increasingly interested in drawing on some of the literature, which looked at structuration theory, social capital, public discourse and masculinity.

The majority of the scholarly research findings that I located used a qualitative approach and were collected via interviews (Reeves, 2006; Cater and Coleman, 2006; Chase and Knight, 2006; Pollock et al, 2009). Therefore, as my focus was exploratory of young fathers' experiences I included interviews, which aimed to encourage young fathers to tell their story (Reeves, 2006). This study aimed to exclude all potential bias including interview bias, however it should be noted that as an individual I have my own belief and value systems, which may impact upon my perspective of the testimonies (Collier-Reed et al, 2009). The research was also undertaken during a time that seemed to offer more possibilities and opportunities to men as fathers, in terms of more egalitarian policies and familial discourses. Some of the young fathers gave very emotional and at times distressing accounts regarding a number of issues, such as redundancy, fragile family relationships and difficulties gaining access to their children.

I felt I had a good relationship with most of the young fathers, which was extremely positive in terms of gaining explicit and valid testimonies, although as discussed in section 3.9, there were on occasion some older participants who did not give explicit detail on aspects they considered private. In respect of gender differences, I felt it was important to consider how I dressed, how

[39] See appendix I for examples of themes constructed from the data.

much make-up I wore, and where the actual interview would take place[40]. Lee (1997) stressed that when women are interviewing men, they should do so in a setting that is as public as possible without compromising the interviewee's confidentiality and openness with the interviewer.

I also had some concern about possible gender differences during the interview process. Hutchinson et al (2002) suggested that participants are more inclined to share information with others like themselves. They also believed that the gender of the interviewer becomes crucial as the subject matter becomes more sensitive. I attempted to be gender appropriate, by not explicitly discussing sex, contraception or procreation. My interview guide remained broad and did not violate gender norms, however the guide allowed for autonomy and to some extent power by giving the participant the opportunity to discuss such topics if they so wished. Gender performances were not unique to the men. We both performed gender during the interview process by allowing the participant to take charge of the conversation, interrupt, and myself laughing, nodding, or remaining silent or neutral if a comment was made that I didn't personally agree with[41] (Gailey and Prohaska, 2011)

Naturally there were variations in the detail and richness of individual testimonies, which is illustrated in the extent that particular participants are incorporated to support arguments in the findings of the study. Nevertheless, I ensured that all testimonies were included at some point in the findings of this study. Despite forming a positive relationship with participants, there was some concern regarding interview bias and potentially taking particular statements out of context, which may have affected my analysis and final write up. To resolve this issue, I had regular supervisions to discuss the above concerns with my supervisors, I ensured consistency of codes throughout the transcripts; I regularly consulted the documentary data, my supervisors and scholarly literature relating to my transcriptions, to maintain the context to which some young fathers were relating. Secondly I found it helpful at times just to refer to the transcripts and not the recordings as the recordings contained the young fathers' emotions and cast my mind back to the place, time and setting of the interview, which may have brought emotionality and potential bias through reminding me of specific incidences in a young fathers life, which I may have agreed with or had felt equally emotional about, which possibly could have swayed my interpretation.

[40] The majority of interviews took place in a local Children's Centre.
[41] Examples include discussions on migration, discussed in section 3.6.

3.15 Conclusion

This chapter has described my methodological approach and data collection based on the works of Pahl and Wilson (1981) and Wallace (1981, 1987) who carried out a number of studies on the Isle of Sheppey. From their studies I made links, which have supported my choice of collection methods, aspects of confidentiality in a small community and preparing for interviews.

I have clearly shown in this chapter a concise and rigorous audit trail, demonstrating practical decisions, based on supportive evidence. It has also highlighted a number of difficulties as well as successes throughout the research process. Many of the difficulties were related to unforeseen circumstances that may be considered typical of a novice researcher. I have shown persistence in my data gathering and delivered supportive arguments for my use of thematic analysis; although it may be considered as a simple and basic approach to analysing data it has helped towards producing a clear map of the lives of young fathers throughout sixty years.

The methodology and data collection method discussed here as part of my research illustrate typical choices made within socio-historical research. Many scholars discuss the use of in-depth interviews in young fatherhood research (Reeves, 2006; Cater and Coleman, 2006; Chase and Knight, 2006; Pollock et al, 2009); however documentary evidence employed in this study is not typical of young fatherhood research generally. Furthermore, mapping the lives of young fathers through various ages has not previously been considered in the research field of young fathers.

Chapter Four

Local community on the Isle of Sheppey

4.0 Introduction

Chapter four is the first main findings chapter, and draws on evidence from interviews and documentation. The content of these sections aims to illustrate the relationship between young fathers and the Isle of Sheppey, demonstrating ascribed social meaning and attachment to their environment, which is a particular focus of this thesis. This is highlighted through young fathers' experiences, feelings and understandings since the 1950s. All of the participants in this study discussed young fatherhood during the time period in which they became fathers. In some cases, young fathers made comparisons between the time period in which they became fathers and the present day. This chapter highlights various experiences of community life, in which young fathers believe have had a significant impact on their personal lives and how they identify themselves as a young father. To illustrate the extent in which community life can be an advantage or a disadvantage, identifying bonding and bridging capital discussed by Putnam (2000) will be demonstrated. Bonding social capital has been described as quite limiting in the sense that it is often exclusive to a homogenous group such as those inhabitants who have lived their lives on the Isle of Sheppey.

Firstly this chapter describes the Isle of Sheppey in terms of place, by examining significant, representative and symbolic structures and practices associated with the local community. Secondly, the chapter focuses on how young fathers have perceived the Isle of Sheppey and how in their view those living on the mainland view the Island. Thirdly, this chapter discusses various aspects of a closely knit community and how different cohorts of young fathers relate to and describe the community on the Island. The chapter follows by examining how young fathers have perceived the Island to have fragmented in recent years. This chapter then focuses on the various factors that have impacted on community breakdown which include the misuse of drugs and alcohol. Lastly the chapter focuses on the changing nature of gang culture on the Isle of Sheppey, including the Mods and Rockers and the punk movement. The conclusion will briefly illustrate how these themes and findings relate to aspects of structuration theory and socio-theoretical perspectives identified in chapter two.

4.1 Local history

The Isle of Sheppey is a rural and industrial island, which has been inhabited primarily by a white British working class population (Pahl, 1984; ONS, 2011b). The current population on the Isle of Sheppey is 40,300 with an estimated 12,000 living in Sheerness, the main town on the Island (ONS, 2011b). The Island has had almost three hundred years of industrial history and is situated off the northern coast of Kent, England in the Thames Estuary, thirty eight miles to the east of central London (Wallace, 1987). Alongside the Island's manufacturing industry, Sheerness dockyard was one of the main sources of employment for many inhabitants and both the dockyard and local tourism largely supported the local economy (Wallace, 1987; Swale Borough Council, 2002). Since the closure of the naval dockyard in 1960 it has been suggested by various local sources that the Island has formed a negative image related to a number of social risk factors such as inhabitants being predominately unemployed and welfare dependant, crime and delinquency and low educational levels (Pahl and Wilson, 1986; Swale Borough Council, 2002).

One particular example illustrating the general social perception of the Island, often quoted by local inhabitants and neighbouring areas is; "*If Kent is the garden of England then the Isle of Sheppey must be its compost heap!"* (Pahl, 1984, p26; Swale Borough Council, 2002, p14). In spite of this negative image, the Isle of Sheppey is rich in naval and aviation history. In 1901, Lord Moore Brabazon and his Royal Aero Club set up in Leysdown to popularise balloon flying, which led to the area being used as the first airfield in England (Bignell, 1999). Not long after, the Short brothers bought 4000 acres of Sheppey marshland and built the first British aircraft factory. Later that year, the factory, also commonly known as the aerodrome, moved to Eastchurch. The Wright brothers visited the aerodrome and chose the Short brothers' factory to build six planes (Bignell, 1999).

Queenborough, a small town on the Isle of Sheppey is believed to have had connections with Sir Francis Drake, Lord Admiral Nelson and Lady Hamilton. It is understood that Lord Admiral Nelson was a communicant at the local parish church. In 1805, after the battle of Trafalgar, his body was returned in a barrel of alcohol to Sheerness from Gibraltar, and was later transferred to Chatham in a yacht before being taken to Greenwich (Bignell, 1999)

According to local documentation, Sheerness Dockyard is rich in local symbolic meaning. The dockyard represented not only a major employer on the Isle of Sheppey but families and the local education system encouraged local boys to pass the entrance exam for the dockyard. This

formed a collective identity, status and upward mobility in the local community at the time (Buck, 1980; Wallace, 1984). A strong sense of social cohesion existed due to the dockyard, based on the pride of craftsmanship and the patriotism associated with working for the army and navy (Pahl, 1984). During the period of 1950-1980 the Isle of Sheppey experienced a dramatic change in state investment. After World War II, the admiralty rationalised its shipbuilding and repairing, which resulted in the closure of Sheerness dockyard in 1958, displacing 2500 employees (Pahl and Wallace, 1982).

According to local documentation and interpretations of some young fathers, Sheppey has been accustomed to casual labour. The closure of Sheerness dockyard marked the point at which unemployment became a growing concern and continued to rise to its present high levels (Swale Borough Council, 2002; Pahl and Wallace, 1982). The first and second cohort of young fathers discussed how the closure of the dockyard after 290 years had *"ripped the heart out of the community;"* that the *"Island never really recovered"* and "*from the time they closed that dockyard down the Island has always been a blackspot."* These comments suggest that the dockyard was a main focus of the community's identity. Also, the dockyard was a key element of place, not only a physical landmark in a familiar landscape but a powerful local symbol and identity.

From the examination of the analysed data, from the first cohort of young fathers and local documentation, the yearly carnival was deemed symbolic and a local event that connected the current generation with previous generations who lived on the Isle of Sheppey (Kingsnorth et al, 1992). It also linked local inhabitants to local industries and employers, which also shaped the Island:

"I mean at our carnival, it used to be a tremendous carnival and it wasn't just the local people either we use to have Warners holiday camp here and they always used to put in a big display and everything you know you don't get none of that now I mean it's hard to get anybody to do anything really only because I think the people on the Island they just aren't bothered not like they used to." ("Robert": 1960's young father, 19.01.10)

This statement suggests that the involvement and engagement of local industries in the carnival was associated with a level of interest and commitment towards the local community as well as local inhabitants. However, young fathers viewed the carnival today as a reason to cause trouble in the local area suggesting fear, vulnerability, and loss of morals and control by locals:

"When the carnival comes down there's always riots or fights there's always something bad happening." ("Chris": 2000+ young father, 10.06.10)

There was some suggestion from the analysed data, largely from the first and second cohort that the dockyard and the yearly carnival were quite unique to Sheppey. Through such symbolic structures and practices they reflected on the significance of place and being able to relate to a local area, in which they lived, worked and socialised. However, according to Chris's claim, there is some suggestion that the engagement and relationship with symbolic structures for local inhabitants today may be breaking down.

4.2 Perception of the Island

According to local documentation, the Isle of Sheppey was distinct because its population was stable and self-contained, which is believed to have been the case for many generations. Due to the intimacy of the Island it suggests that bonding social capital, which focuses on the intimacy of groups, and which is usually exclusive to the local community in which one resides, is strong (Putnam, 2000). According to Missiakoulis et al (1986), it was claimed that many inhabitants were escaped convicts from the prison hulks that were based on the Medway in the 18th century. It has also been suggested that there was inbreeding among a small number of landless quasi-gypsy families (Missiakoulis et al, 1986). More recently, those living in the south and east of London are believed to have migrated to the Island early in the 20th century and as a consequence created a distinctive cultural style on the Island (Missiakoulis et al, 1986). It is not unknown for *"original Swampies"* to spend their whole lives on the Island, only leaving for essential services such as hospital care (Swale Borough Council, 2002). Furthermore, Wallace (1987) notes that myths have been linked to the social problems related to the Island, otherwise known as "Septic Isle".

These comments are mainly heard from those inhabitants living on the mainland, who have generally visited the Island as an employer, or as a holidaymaker. Transcripts from Pahl and Wallace's (1985) study presented a sense of limited geographical mobility and the apparent mentality on the island, according to one local employer:

"The Island is a peculiar place inasmuch as they are inter-related. Sittingbourne is 11 miles away and there are still people who haven't been off the island. In fact we took one girl here and we sent her away on a training course to London and she wouldn't go, an 18 year old...you don't sack them because it affects their family and you employ ten other people within the family. We have got one family here and we had at one stage, ten of them working for us...when they had a holiday, we practically had to shut down". (Transcript of employer at Kilippon Electricals, Pahl and Wallace, 1985)

Young fathers commented that such impressions of inhabitants living on the Island have not changed and many inhabitants including themselves feel there is a definite form of attachment between them and the Island:

"You come on this Island, it's bloody hard to get off of it, if you do get off it something always drags you back." ("Jay": 2000+ young father, 21.12.09)

"There seems to be something that is drawing me back all the time saying no you can't leave the Island it's just I don't know." ("Barry": 1970's young father, 11.05.10)

"I moved off the Island, I emigrated for a year to Sittingbourne, hated it because here if you go out on the street you go to a pub, into a shop you nearly always see someone you know and I love it." ("Edward": 1970's young father, 07.06.10)

From the above statements there still remains some suggestion of collective identity amongst various cohorts of young fathers, by forming an attachment to the Island. All three cohorts were familiar with particular perceptions of the local community, illustrating a continued form of personal as well as collective identity. Generally young fathers viewed perceptions such as the Island being inter-related and inbreeding as stereotypes. They commented that the Island tended to be pinpointed simply because it was an Island and that socially excluded communities on the mainland are just as likely to be suffering from the same social risk factors[42]:

"I mean it don't matter where you are you're going to end with high teenage pregnancy, drugs, alcohol abuse I mean all the problems are just a front but because this is an Island, it's easier to isolate and it's easier to turn around and say yeah we're look at this rather than say Margate or Canterbury or places like that." ("Sam": 1990's young father, 01.06.10)

Nevertheless, some young fathers and local documentation incorporated these perceptions by using the term *"Sheppey myths"* (Judge, 2003: Sheppey Gazette, 1997b). Young fathers commented that mainly inhabitants on the mainland who resided within close proximity to the Island described those originally from the Island as having *"webbed hands and feet,"* hence the term *"Swampie."* Swampie was also associated with characteristics of the Island, for example Sheppey is open flat marshland. Hoey (2010) noted that code names associated with a place and the individual, such as "Swampie" provide a sense of existential 'insideness' and feeling of belonging in encoded messages, which may be meaningless to the 'outsider'.

Local documentation highlighted that the myth of needing a passport to leave the Island holds a certain amount of accuracy. During the First World War, due to the strategic importance of the

[42] These comments were mostly made by young fathers who had also lived off the Island or were quite mobile in terms of going on and off the Island.

dockyard and the aerodrome, the Isle of Sheppey became a restricted military zone. Therefore, all residents were issued with a passport, which they had to produce to get on and off the Island. The army and Royal Artillery defended the coast and as a consequence Sheppey was nicknamed *"Barbed wire Island"* (Eastchurch Parish Council, date unknown; Maur, date unknown, based in Sheerness library, local history section).

Most young fathers discussed these perceptions broadly and identified areas in London, such as the East End, as also having quite unique, self-contained, closely knit communities.[43] In contrast to the typical stereotypes, Wallace (1984) drew attention to the variations of closely knit communities within different neighbourhoods on Sheppey. She noted that although social ties are more extensive in Rushenden, respondents did not necessarily regard the place as being particularly close knit. Comparatively Warden Bay was more likely to be regarded as being a close knit community than Rushenden. Wallace concludes that this apparent close knit community and insularity seemed to be interpreted by the local inhabitants as a measurement of local harmony. This was related to relationships with neighbours rather than a closely knit community.

4.3 Community life

From the analysed data one of the major themes highlighted by the first and second cohort, whilst discussing the Isle of Sheppey as a closely knit community, was the self sufficiency of the Island, which seemed as though it did not exist to the same extent as it did previously. The first and second cohort of young fathers discussed 'self sufficiency' in terms of the infrastructure, which they believed supported and maintained a closely knit community. They described the extent to which the Island was self sufficient:

"There was no need to come off the Island...On this Island we had our own gasworks, we had to import our electric yeah, but we had our own dairies, we had our own bakeries, beer was imported but we had our own transport systems, we had our own railway...you could buy anything you wanted in Sheerness and I mean anything." ("Charlie": 1970's young father, 05.07.10)

The above statement suggests some reference to place dependency, which refers to the ability of a place to enable inhabitants to achieve goals and desired activities, generally through stability and sustainability of local resources. There is a close link between place dependency and place identity through the notion of self-efficacy, wherein people use their physical environment as

[43] For reference, Family and Kinship in East London (Bethnal Green) was a 1957 sociological study by Michael Young and Peter Willmott. They studied how the urban working class lived as a community, which had some similar findings to the Isle of Sheppey.

part of 'the maintenance of self' (Livingston et al, 2008).

According to the testimonies of first and second cohorts, not only were necessities available locally, which was supported by a good transport service at the time; there were also high levels of manual employment, which was generally *"biking distance away from home."* This allowed many in the local community to remain on the Island. Most first and second cohorts during this period even highlighted that leaving the Island was a rare experience:

"If you went off the Island as a youngster that was an adventure...it was very exciting when you got to go to Chatham and do a bit of shopping but it was rare, most people didn't do that." ("Nicholas": 1960's young father, 10.06.10)

For leisure activities, most young fathers in the first and second cohorts did not regularly travel off the Island. The Island at one point supplied local inhabitants with three cinemas, various dancing venues and popular working men's clubs. Some in these cohorts spoke about visiting Leysdown on a day trip or as a summer holiday. Most did not discuss holidays elsewhere unless they were visiting family, but for some their families were unable to finance a holiday or their fathers were unable to get enough leave from work to go on holiday:

"If you went off, well for a day trip you'd go off to Leysdown, which is about ten miles away and there used to be an open top bus for about two bob which was about ten pence. You'd be able to go from Queenborough all the way to the coast to Leysdown and that would be a day out, you took your sandwiches and spend the day up there". ("Edward": 1970's young father, 07.06.10)

In relation to structuration theory, there are some suggestions from the first and second cohorts that the Island's self-sufficiency and inhabitants' lack of geographical mobility had led to feelings of agency amongst the inhabitants. Agency through self-sufficiency is created through the local inhabitants' organisation of time-space, local resources and interpersonal connections. Lack of geographical mobility allowed residents to maintain a closely-knit community, which was produced through local resources. Even residents who excelled in employment and were in a position to consider leaving the Island remained on the Island but relocated themselves in more "middle class" areas:

"If someone was doing quite well they might move from Sheerness to Minster...we felt in Sheerness that we were working class and if you lived in Minster you had done quite well for yourself, you managed to graduate, but if you lived in Sheerness you done better than the people who lived in Queenborough or Rushenden. Queenborough and Rushenden were always regarded as the bottom of the ladder and then probably Sheerness the next one but if you lived in Minster, Leysdown and Warden were just obscure places at the other end of the Island that you might be lucky enough to go to but they were places that you would go and visit for a day."
("Nicholas": 1960's young father, 10.06.10)

Examining the above statement, Nicholas suggests that social mobility was contained within the Island due to a sense of belonging to the neighbourhood and the family. Equally, Pahl and Wilson (1986) noted that there was clear divergence between local areas on the Isle of Sheppey. They identified that there were social differences between Minster and Halfway and Sheerness and Queenborough in regards to social status. They highlighted that local families with aspiration aimed to reside in Minster and possibly Halfway.

From the examination of the data, the idea of self sufficiency was discussed in two contexts. Firstly, during periods of prosperity, related particularly to the Island's thriving manufacturing industries and secondly during periods of social and financial hardship on the Island. According to testimonies and documentation, a typical example to represent self sufficiency and social and economic hardship was damage to the Kingsferry Bridge (Rymill, 2004), mainly caused by ships passing under it into and out of Sheerness dockyard. For example, on October 3rd 1954 the Island was cut off from the mainland when the Swedish ship S.S. Louisa Gorthon struck the bridge as she passed through on her way from Ridham Dock. In November 1956 the Kingsferry Bridge was put out of action again. The Norwegian ship Patricia bound for Ridham Dock, loaded with wood pulp, was approaching the bridge when a Kent fire brigade float collided with the Patricia forcing it to take evasive action. However, at that late stage the vessel struck the bridge causing considerable damage. This incident resulted in court action when Kent County Council was found guilty of negligence (Rymill, 2004).

As a result of the disasters, inhabitants on the Isle of Sheppey were unable to cross to the mainland for at least a week due to the extent of the damage to the bridge, leaving the Island to be self-sufficient. A second example was the 1953 floods, where gale force northerly winds broke through flood defences along the east coast of Kent. Halfway to Bluetown was flooded to a depth of four feet and the marshes from the Swale to Scrapsgate Road were under water. No human lives were lost but many sheep and cattle were drowned. The railway line between Sittingbourne and Sheerness was badly damaged. Offices, shops and schools were closed, some for up to two weeks and many homes in Sheerness suffered from flood damage for years (Tyler, 1994; Rymill, 2004).

After the 1953 flood, extensive work was done on the sea walls from Leysdown to Queenborough and a system of flood warnings was devised (Tyler, 1994; Rymill, 2004). Much of the Island is relatively low lying marshland and large areas of it are considered by the Environment Agency to be within the High Risk Flood Zone. However, key areas liable for flooding are defended and suitable for development (Swale Borough Council, 2012). Young men

who were fathers during the 1950s talked about how the Island was forced to become self sufficient during the flood as many residents in the affected areas became housebound:

"I mean you can't imagine it[44] really but they used to do the deliveries, milk deliveries with the paddle boats from the paddling pond up by the fair, they use to come round in one of them and paddle along and we use to lower a bit of rope down and they use to give us milk and that you know; and eggs or whatever but we didn't have any fresh water for quite a while so what we done we use to we boiled some eggs in lemonade we used the lemonade rather than water."

(Robert: 1960's young father, 19.01.10)

In relation to structuration theory, there was some suggestion of maintaining personal agency[45] through the support given by the local community and only briefly structural support such as the army. As identified above, most fathers during this period talked about how local people helped to remain self-sufficient by using paddle boats to supply each other with food and fresh water supplies.

In relation to financial hardship, young men who were fathers during the 1950s spoke about their childhoods and the difficulties many families on the Island faced during the 1930s to the mid 1950s. This was not necessarily due to the lack of employment, but largely because of low pay and family size. Kingsnorth et al (1992) drew attention to the memories of those living on the Isle of Sheppey during this period in a local memoir. For instance, Rosie Baird talked about how lucky she was to only have one sibling therefore her family did not struggle financially. Rosie also commented that some families on the Island had as many as ten children and how life was a constant struggle. This was also a common understanding amongst young men who were fathers in the 1950s.

Rosie Baird also commented that sometimes small families in the local area would even take on some of the children from the larger families and help to bring them up. This was linked to feelings of obligation to other local families and being relatively equal financially as the men were mostly dockyard workers[46]. Feelings of obligation resonate with the understanding of James Coleman who suggests that they are a key aspect of social capital (see chapter two, section 2.5). Similarly, according to men who were fathers in the 1950s, clothing was usually second hand and handed down through the siblings; houses contained no electricity and were overcrowded for many. Yet fathers during this period didn't recognise it as being particularly poor, as most families were in the same position. Equally, Pahl and Wallace (1985) suggested

[44] Reference to the 1953 flood.
[45] Personal agency refers to the subjective awareness that individuals have in initiating, executing, and controlling their own actions in society (Giddens, 1984).
[46] Rosie Baird was a resident in Bluetown where many who were living in that particular area were working in the dockyard.

that in the past the poor gained social and financial support through their closely knit local community.

The first cohort of young fathers spoke about their fathers as well as themselves working long hours at a very early age and giving the majority of their wages to their mother, to help provide for their large family. Some helped to support their families financially until they were married, which in most cases ranged between ages 20-22. Nicholas discussed when his father died at which time he had to be responsible for supporting his mother and his immediate family. There was some suggestion from the analysed data, based on the findings of the first cohort (and some from the second cohort) that social and financial hardship made them automatically supportive and responsible for their own family[47]; something they felt was not necessarily the case for some young fathers today.

Some of the first and second cohort of young fathers highlighted the importance of social contacts, which are sociologically described as developing social capital with local businesses and networks, which may increase self sufficiency for their families:

"Living down there (Bluetown) was totally different but it was a way of life down there. You had the slaughterhouse down there, you had a crisp factory down there, the co-op used to be there, Biggles the butchers and if you were hard up you use to give a sob story and get a bit of meat you knew them all by sight, by name." ("William": 1950's young father, 26.04.10)

The third cohort of young fathers did not emphasise safety and security on the Island as much or in the same context as the first and second cohort. However, from the examined data based on the third cohort, there was some evidence of place-attachment through safety and security, which was also related to familiarity with inhabitants on the Island, and being able to associate themselves with common surroundings and having a secure home base:

"It's the surroundings, it's like knowing like the back of your hand, knowing everyone that you see, knowing that if you get into trouble then you've got people that are five minutes up the road. Like if I was to get in a row like 10-15 blokes down Sheerness High Street I'd knock on a couple of doors do you know what I mean, through town or round the back of town, there's always someone that I know, there's always someone there and there's always someone in"
("Chris": 2000+ young father, 09.06.10)

The third cohort of young fathers also felt that their children growing up and living on the Isle of Sheppey was important because like fathers from previous years they could maintain familiarity,

[47] Most young fathers from the first and second cohort discussed having to do errands (grocery shopping) for their family and sometimes their neighbours. They also spoke about financially supporting their family whereas young fathers in the third cohort did not.

commonality and therefore some form of security for them and their children, which some of them suggest is generalisable to most communities:

"I wouldn't want to bring them off the Island because I love this little place... but I wouldn't want to take them off or anything like that because where else are you going to go? I mean you take them somewhere else you are going to be that person that's just moved in, so you then become a foreigner, so it's not just this Island. I mean it's the generalisation of society, you moved into anywhere and you're looked down upon, a mistrust doesn't matter where you go"

("Sam": 1990's young father, 01.06.10)

Sam gives a strong suggestion that bonding social capital is important on the Isle of Sheppey. Bonding social capital is exclusive and is formed through trust amongst those who have lived there all their lives. To leave the Island and breaking that bond would possibly be worse than possibly bridging social capital elsewhere. There is a perception from the examined data that social ties have been considered as more essential than qualifications, with some young fathers stating that *"it's not what you know it's who you know;"* this illustrates the importance of social networks and gaining employment, which has been an ongoing trend for all young fathers within this study. Social ties have also been considered essential due to casual employment and more recently the lack of employment on the Island. Equally, Wallace (1979) suggests that young people's success in such a community would depend upon their resourcefulness in exploiting social contacts and responding to informal opportunities. Those who have been building a foundation of skills and communication networks may be better at surviving in an economy, such as the Isle of Sheppey, which offers them only unstable or casual employment.

4.4 Community breakdown

Some young fathers referred to nostalgic memories by talking about not having to lock house doors or windows, even leaving street doors wide open and house keys just inside the letterbox, which was common for many in the community. However, the first and second cohorts felt that their closely-knit community was breaking down due to more geographical mobility and consequently "newcomers" on the Island. According to the literature, place has become less significant to inhabitants due to increasing individualisation and mobility. This has allowed for individuals to stretch further across space and place (Giddens, 1984; Vorkinn and Riese, 2001).

According to most young fathers and local documentation, newcomers mainly included Londoners and Eastern Europeans. Londoners were believed to be residing on the Island due to cheaper housing and Eastern Europeans were residing in the area for employment (also cited in Brown, 2008). According to Burrell (2010), Eastern Europeans have been depicted largely as

economic migrants, so employment has understandably been central to their lives in the UK. As a result, the first and second cohort gave some implicit reference to having a weakened sense of attachment to the Island, which from the analysed data may be linked to the lack of security and familiarity with their home base, which some, particularly those who were originally from the Island, found quite overwhelming:

"I mean we've lived here all our lives and we don't have no say it's just that people come here and sort of take over that's the way it feels, you look round and well who's this lot here I mean you walk up town now and we've all got an accent. I know that I mean you walk up town and you know the Londoners because they got the accent or you know the Polish people because they talk in Polish, you know, and you think there's no one here anymore it's all other people... I like the Island I've been brought up here, I love it here, I just don't want it to be overwhelmed."
("Robert": 1960's young father, 19.01.10)

Robert goes on to emphasise the extent to which he feels the local community also feels overwhelmed by the changing nature of residents on the Island:

"They wrote on the wall, I don't know whether you heard anything about that but they put on the wall erm, Sheerness the capital of Poland and it got painted out I think, the council painted it out." ("Robert": 1960's young father, 19.01.10)

Familiarity and intimate knowledge of place can provide the basis for an implicit or explicit claim of possession (Hoey, 2010). According to the literature, a key problem in some communities especially where local authorities have not received appropriate resources for a growing influx of migration, has been conflict and hostility in the local community (Robilia, 2010). There is some suggestion that low levels of employment on the Island have caused resentment and conflict between Eastern Europeans and local inhabitants living within the local community.

The extent to which the local community is important, is more evident amongst the first and second cohort of young fathers. In recent years, the Isle of Sheppey has become a socially deprived neighbourhood. This substantially lowers place-attachment, which is reflected in young fathers' differential views about the Island, especially in terms of social cohesion or networks. This was made clear as several from the first and second cohort made nostalgic reflections and gave comparisons between the past community and more recent times on the Island:

"I mean people felt safe on the Island, that was the difference, you don't feel safe on it now. Back in those days you did when you came across the Swale and when you came across there and everything was safe, everybody knew everybody" ("Jack": 1960's young father, 24.03.10)

"I think you haven't got the people who were born on the Island as much as you used to have you know... I think they're overpopulating it, you know because I mean you're losing so much of the lovely open ground that we use to have on the Island you know I mean it use to be really countryside and its getting less and less each year" ("Robert": 1960's young father, 19.01.10)

According to Pahl (1984), those who have spent the majority of their lives on the Isle of Sheppey would almost certainly perceive the present as an upsetting and depressing decline, which according to the data in this study is still the case nearly thirty years on. Some young fathers' nostalgic memories during the interview seemed sad, and suggested a certain amount of loss of confidence in the Island due to the changes witnessed within the local community[48]. These were possibly linked to structural changes including unemployment, lack of local resources and an influx of newcomers to the Island. Some of the first and second cohorts of young fathers discussed the Internet as being a valuable source for gaining goods without leaving the Island; yet they relied on their children to make the orders online for them. There also seemed some concern about the vulnerability of the Island due to the local megastore, which they felt was partly responsible for the closure of a number of local high street stores. Swale Borough Council (2012) argued that the local town centre is likely to lead to further decline due to competing local superstores, out of town superstores and other centres in the borough. Yet some of the first and second cohorts of young fathers spoke about the Co-operative society, which was also described as having a monopoly on the Island.

According to David T. Hughes (no date, based in Sheerness library, local history section), the Co-operative movement was founded in Sheerness in 1816 when a small group of dockyard employees formed themselves into a trading organisation. Bread, meat and later fresh water provided by the society for its members were sold off carts which operated around the town. It was not until the formation of a second Co-operative society in Sheerness that the town got its first retail outlet offering a much wider range of household goods. The Co-operative Society was described as a major structure on the Island by the first cohort of young fathers; and much more supportive of the locals due to the "divvy" or dividend, which its customer members received as their share of trading profits:

"I mean I remember the Co-op owned virtually everything. You wanted something the Co-op got it. I started off some where I bought a suit, shirt, tie, shoes, socks, underwear everything all from the Co-op." ("Harry": 1950's young father, 04.06.10)

[48] It is important to note that nostalgia can be selective, idealized and somewhat romanticised and therefore should be treated with some caution and scrutiny (Gabriel, 1993). See chapter three, section 3.10 and 3.12 for more information.

All three cohorts and documentation identified local structures, such as the local council, as being responsible for the breakdown in employment as well as other aspects of the community. This was due to high council rates on small businesses, loss of recreational facilities, loss of emergency services on the Island and lack of care and maintenance of the Island (Sheppey Gazette, 1994a; 1994b; Swale Borough Council, 1998).

"It was a lot better when we use to, we had a council here-Sheerness Borough Council...and we were much better off, we got our roads swept, we got virtually everything done you know what I mean the drains were emptied, the pavements were fixed and everything now we come secondary to Sittingbourne and Faversham." ("Harry:" 1950's young father, 04.06.10)

Brown (2008) stated that there is a strong feeling in Sheerness that the Island has once again been forgotten. It may be suggested that personal agency has been overridden by local structural forces. This view is due to council surveys being undertaken in the local community, residents listened to and promises made all of which he believes have come to nothing. According to Brown (2008), deprivation levels are bad and continually increasing with no immediate plans for improvement. It is understood that voluntary and community organisations have been largely responsible for some of the regeneration in the community (Brown, 2008).

Several young fathers described the Isle of Sheppey to be the *"poor relation"* compared to other local areas, especially since the Island no longer comprised the Municipal Borough of Queenborough, Sheerness Urban District and Sheerness Rural District. According to local documentation, in 1974 these three councils, which were described as having a personal care for the Island, were merged with districts on the mainland to form Swale Borough Council, therefore no longer maintaining their own separate identity (Pahl, 1984; Swale Borough Council, 2002; Judge, 2003; Sheppey Times Guardian, 2004; Brown, 2008).

4.5 Drink and drugs culture

Several young fathers discussed a drink and drugs culture on the Isle of Sheppey, which according to Brown (2008), has been a major factor associated with the socially discrediting perceptions that many people have who live off the Island. According to Pahl and Wallace (1985), there were at one point over 100 licensed premises on the Island, which is believed to have encouraged a local drinking culture. In the context of locality, the literature suggests that seaside areas such as the Isle of Sheppey with its 'carnival' atmosphere of holidaymaking, and easy availability of alcohol in local venues, are believed to encourage sexual risk taking (Bell et al, 2004). Furthermore, statistics have shown that Swale District has the second highest rate of

under 18 conceptions in Kent and has shown an increase of 8% between 1998 and 2006 (Swale Borough Council, 2008). These statistics do not suggest that the misuse of alcohol is the prime reason for high levels of teenage pregnancy on the Island; rather it is a potential factor in such localities. Also, according to testimonial accounts of young fathers in the third cohort, high consumption of alcohol and cannabis has been linked with conception.

Most of the third cohort of young fathers stated that they were involved with drink and drugs to some extent. Others from the third cohort commented that criminality and the misuse of alcohol were simply common factors of adolescence:

"It's more you know say about 14 that you start going out, you start drinking and you get into a little bit of trouble, you get arrested a couple of times... I mean you've got to get erm you've got to get arrested, I think it is the thing with young lads, it is, it is.

("Lewis": 1990's young father, 21.12.09)

Local newspaper reports, particularly during the 1990s, identified that there has been a growing drugs culture, most notably cannabis use amongst young men on the Island, which may have added to the social discredit from neighbouring areas (See Sheppey Gazette, 1993, 1994c, 1994d, 1994e, 1995, 1997c, 1997d). According to the testimonies and local documentary sources, there is very limited evidence to suggest before the 1960s that fathers were largely involved in drug taking. Yet there was evidence from testimonies and local documents to suggest that there was quite a widespread drinking culture on the Island, particularly amongst those who served in the army and navy.

Men who were young fathers during the 1950s and 1960s spoke in their interviews about excessive drinking being related to a night out in town, generally in Sheerness and Bluetown. Local documents largely commented on Bluetown being the main regular hotspot for excessive drinking and debauchery for sailors, local inhabitants and those working in the dockyard (Kent Messenger, 1980; Judge, 2003; Sheerness Times Guardian, 2004). Men who were young fathers in the 1960s briefly mentioned drugs, which they claimed they had hardly taken themselves. They linked their lack of drug taking, illegal activity and reckless behaviour to the authority and discipline asserted by parents and local structural forces, mainly education and police:

"We grew up in an era when if you fell afoul of someone in authority and they say you know, 'I'll come round and tell your mum or your dad,' that was enough... I think there was a great deal of respect for people in uniform in that sort of sense but by and large you had that sense of decency; that sense of know what was right and wrong, I think instilled in you by in most cases by your parents and in school." ("Nicholas": 1960's young father, 10.06.10)

The third cohort of young fathers commented that the drinking culture was still quite rife on the Island; and young people were now drinking at a much earlier age and were more likely to binge drink, particularly at the weekend. They also stated that their personal involvement in excessive/binge drinking made it more likely that they would progress to drug taking. It wasn't until the 1990s when fathers in the third cohort discussed in some depth the use of cannabis. From the examined data, it was suggested that cannabis was used as a socialising and recreational activity and in some instances taken due to boredom during their adolescence.

During a young father's adolescence, particularly amongst the third cohort, there was an emphasis on peer groups at secondary school in which case they would most likely find themselves involved with underage drinking and drug taking:

"I got into the wrong crowd in Minster College, a real bad crowd and then erm I started to change I started to get into bad stuff like bunking off school, couldn't be bothered, started mouthing my mum all the time and that's not me, I just changed, started to drink…all I could ever hear about was drugs, sex everything like drinking that's all it seemed like they were interested in down here, hated it, but I had I just moved to that crowd."

(Daniel: 2000+ young father, 19.11.09)

The analysed data also suggested that by using alcohol and drugs they were building social capital, status and a credible masculinity amongst their peers. Credible masculinity as discussed by Richardson (2010) (see chapter two, section 2.9) suggested credibility is subconsciously about belonging and being accepted for many working class boys. Also, young fathers from the third cohort who were newly resident on the Island used drugs and alcohol as a strategy to build social networks and social capital with the locals:

"I was in there with all the older lads like being a bit of a boy, trying to be jack the lad, getting drunk and smoking weed and causing fights. I'd start a fight in front of all these older lads just to make myself feel better, just for them to say; 'yeah that's Chris, he's a fucking nutter.' Do you know what I mean? 'You don't want to mess with him'. ("Chris": 2000+ young father, 09.06.10)

In the context of structuration theory, young fathers during the interviews reflexively monitored their lives and consequently revised how they would prefer to be identified. In relation to self-presentation, the identity and association young fathers in the third cohort wanted to maintain for themselves during the interview was "the father" and not "the delinquent." Most young fathers discussed how the birth of their child motivated them to quickly dispose of the habit. They found that in terms of cost, it was not practical to continue taking cannabis due to their financial responsibilities towards their child. Some young fathers in the third cohort highlighted that

maintaining a relationship with their partner and their child inhibited them from continuing their use of cannabis and prevented them from becoming involved with the police:

"If I didn't have Sam[49] at the age I did I don't know where I would be now, I don't know if I would have stepped to that next mark of getting in more trouble and all that, I really don't because it was getting bad for me. But Vicky my first, my first love she, she really sorted me out, she got me off the drugs, stop me drinking and that because I use to have bottles of vodka hiding under our bed and like fags all stashed in my bedroom...But yeah it was Vicky and my first kid what really sorted me out and I think it sorts a lot of people out I really do, that first child, I really do think it sorts a lot, especially for dads." ("Daniel": 2000+ young father, 23.11.09)

All young fathers and in particular the third cohort spoke positively about becoming a parent and its positive impact on their lives. Several young fathers in the third cohort implicitly suggested credibility and masculinity were a major attribute of risk taking. However, the first and second cohort spoke about being employed and then becoming a parent, which was a smooth and natural step after marriage, which the majority of them undertook before they became fathers. From the examined data, the third cohort of young fathers, who were more likely to be unemployed, spoke more about the complexity of their social situations and lifestyles, which essentially led to them becoming young fathers. There was some suggestion from the data that their transition to fatherhood increased practical and rational choices as well as their self-esteem, positively enhancing their lives. This provided a sense of security and stability in their lives as well as a new identity, which for some was a desirable identity and one which was unforeseeable before they had their child.

4.6 Gang culture

According to the literature, poor communities and marginalised individuals are more susceptible to gang culture, although it has typically been associated with large urban areas and cities rather than rural areas, such as the Isle of Sheppey. With regards to street gangs, the urban UK cities such as London, Manchester and Liverpool have been identified as having serious gang problems (Goldson, 2011).

Young men who were fathers during the 1960s to early 70's spoke about their involvement with the Mods and Rockers, who were two conflicting British youth subcultures of the early-mid 1960s (Grayson, 2008). For some of these fathers their involvement with the Mods and Rockers began at fifteen years old. They discussed how the subculture was very much part of their lifestyle and the local areas:

[49] Sam was Daniel's first son, who he had at age 17.

"All the Mods would wait at Sheerness station waiting for the gangs to come over from Sittingbourne, Sittingbourne were Rockers and Sheerness were Mods you see. We were Mods, we had a small Rocker community but essentially we were Mods."

("Nicholas": 1960's young father, 10.06.10)

Mods and Rockers have largely been associated with violence and conflict in public spaces, provoking public reaction and emotion (Cohen, 1972). Stanley Cohen originally coined the concept moral panic, which refers to collective behaviour that attempts to jeopardise social order (Cohen, 1972). Moral panic has been typically associated with youth culture such as the Mods and Rockers, punks and skinheads, due to their association with violence and public disorder. Cohen's study was primarily about the Mods and Rockers during the 1960's and their representation in the public eye. His main criticism was the media's exaggeration and distortion of the facts, particularly with reference to such incidents as brawls in Brighton and Clacton in 1964. Cohen argues that the media purposefully amplified and exaggerated such events to help raise concern amongst the public of incorrect societal morals and values, calling for sufficient punishment to prosecute those who threaten social order and the law (Cohen, 1972).

There was some implicit suggestion that young fathers who identified themselves as a Mod or Rocker did not want to be portrayed as a member of a gang. It was perceived from the interviews that gang culture was clearly viewed by most young fathers as socially unacceptable. Young fathers in the first and second cohort understood gangs to be intimidating as well as violent. Those who were involved in the Mods and Rockers did not discuss violence which resulted in fatal injury or the use of weapons, which they associated with the definition "gang culture". Instead they highlighted hooliganism and how the conflicts were generally *"just a punch up"* with some brief discussion surrounding territory:

"I mean we use to get into fights but I mean a fight was a fight you know what I mean you didn't want to kill the bloke, you know you were mates probably the next week but I don't know it's the way things change I suppose, it's definitely not changed for the better."

("Robert": 1960's young father, 19.01.10)

Young fathers suggested that there was contempt between the two subcultures and the aim was to *"establish primacy over the other"* according to Charlie who identified himself as a Rocker during this time. Contempt and attempts to achieve primacy over another group according to the literature are characteristics of gang culture (Grayson, 2008). However, the majority claimed that contempt and violence were generally between the Island and neighbouring mainland areas, such as Sittingbourne, rather than different areas on the Island. Most young fathers were drawn

towards a particular subculture through fashion, music and mode of transport and to some extent freedom that the culture was typically identified with:

"I suppose when you look back on it we all wore the same fashions... we enjoyed certain music, erm we drank certain drinks you know, we allegedly took purple hearts you know, the first ones to take the drugs but we were referred to as the clean teenagers. Rockers were dirty for some reason. If you were a Rocker your hair was greasy, your leather jacket, oh you were dirty if you wore a leather jacket, you rode motorbikes you didn't ride scooters."

("Nicholas": 1960's young father 10.06.10)

It is suggested from the examined data that involvement with the Mods and Rockers was more related to building an identity through fashion and music, whereas young fathers in the third cohort were more likely to be establishing a credible masculinity through risk taking[50]. Young fathers who associated themselves with the Mods and Rockers reflected upon the changing nature of gang culture. They suggested that gangs today are more intimidating in regards to their fashion and their behaviour towards the local community, whereas they identified themselves as more respectful towards the local community:

"You wouldn't go out to hurt anybody, I mean you might have a fight but you wouldn't go out to really hurt somebody, not like they do now you know, it's frightening now you know, you're scared to say anything to the kids now...I mean some of them, you look at them and you think ooh he looks dodgy but its only because they've got these flipping hoodies on and all that and they walk around, I mean some of them might be nice kids you don't know because you never get to know because you wouldn't approach any of them now because it's always like 'yeah oh yeah' you know what I mean it, it's totally different." ("Robert": 1960's young father, 19.01.10)

According to the literature, by the late 1960s the two subcultures had faded from public view and media attention turned to new and emerging youth subcultures (Simonelli, 2002). Young fathers spoke about being part of the punk movement during the late 1970s to 80s:

"I think my perception of the world had changed by the 80's, but the late 70's I became a punk rocker and that politicised me, well actually punk was what formed me politically."

("Tim": 1980's young father, 08.06.10)

According to Simonelli (2002), the punk subculture in Britain was the most outspoken effort to restore agency and working-class values in British rock and roll in the late-1970s. Those young fathers who were involved with the punk movement implicitly suggested that punk rock articulated the frustrations of working-class British youth in an era of unemployment and inflation, which was largely related to new political structures at the time[51]. All young fathers who identified themselves with the punk movement discussed the political connotations of punk

[50] For some young fathers risk taking included truancy at school, taking recreational drugs, theft and vandalism.
[51] Political structures at the time refers to the Conservative government during 1979-1990.

music, which illustrated their position in regards to the political establishment in the UK at the time.

The third cohort of young fathers did not identify themselves with a particular gang unlike the previous cohorts. They mainly commented on drug gangs being the main concern in Sheerness, although they did not associate themselves as part of the drug gangs but confessed to buying cannabis from such gangs. From my own observation of the third cohort during the interviews, being associated with a "gang" was immoral and they did not want to be considered a social outcast. They described themselves as just *"hanging out with a group of mates,"* rather than being represented as being part of a street gang. Nevertheless, some of the third cohort spoke about being involved with groups who vandalised and stole, which they normalised by saying it was typical of adolescent boys.

4.7 Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed the local community of Sheppey, examining structures and perceptions of young fathers and various issues within the local community. The Isle of Sheppey, noted for its industrial, naval and aviation history has been described retrospectively as a prosperous and self-sufficient Island. This past image described a structure, which provided all amenities for members of the island community. Social structures allowed for islanders to prosper and they considered themselves in a position to exert personal agency, assisted by this structure. A lack of geographical mobility particularly for the first and second cohort of young fathers ensured place-attachment through feelings of commonality and security, which to some extent built social capital. This has echoed the literature of Coleman (1990), which suggests that prolonged placement in and attachment to a particular community builds and develops social capital. Feelings of familiarity not only created attachment to the island, they also created a collective identity, which encouraged personal agency.

Structuration theory in this instance has been useful in helping to understand how social structures can help develop personal agency; and in what social contexts, spaces and times personal agency can be developed, helping to illustrate social change and its impact. This has been particularly evident in regards to the first and second cohorts discussing self-sufficiency on the Island. Social capital has been identified briefly within this chapter whilst discussing social cohesion, which has been useful in presenting how relationships in a closely knit community have value and can be beneficial in building social capital amongst local inhabitants. Young fathers in the third cohort discuss community breakdown, corroborating the work of Putman

(2000), which can be applied in this instance to describe communities as having lost their localised nature and failing to provide the necessary small collective structures which had previously allowed islanders to exert their personal agency, replaced instead with a global attitude that sees the individual in a global vacuum rather than emphasising the need for links within the local community.

Nostalgic reflections as discussed in section 3.6 by the first and second cohort of young fathers regarding place were mostly positive. They thereby incorporate place as a positive element in the formation of their identity. There was also more of an emphasis from the first and second cohort that they were more aware of to geographical and social change compared to the third cohort. However, although there is suggestion of community breakdown, all three cohorts maintain some feeling of place-attachment to the Island. These nostalgic reflections from the first and second cohort identify with prosperous times where young fathers felt that they were their own personal agents. However, comparative reflections have shown a breakdown in self-sufficiency due to the closure of Sheerness dockyard and the loss of manual work on the Island.

Although most young fathers discussed some form of place-attachment there is also some feeling of detachment as well. This has been linked to the lack of employment in the local area and in-migration, which has affected how they relate and identify with the Island. This suggests that the island in terms of place-attachment has lost its significance in more recent years. Although individualisation has promoted the idea of mobility and individual agency, it has actually gone some way to remove the support structures that young fathers relied upon. Whilst they may have come to assimilate the ideas of individualisation, these have not translated into greater assertion of their individual agency.

The misuse of drugs and alcohol as well as gang culture have been prevalent in the adolescence of some young fathers in the third cohort. These factors have played a key role in establishing a credible masculinity, lifestyle and identity for some of these young fathers. However young fathers in the first and second cohort did not associate with drink and drug taking in the same way as the third cohort, and were more likely to identify employment as a major attribute of their masculinity. For the third cohort, it has been suggested from the analysed data that the use of drugs and alcohol are often seen as masculine attributes, which are encouraged by peer groups. Consistent with other literature, the transition to fatherhood has been identified as responsible for changes in the identity and life choices of recent young fathers (Reeves, 2006; Duncan, 2007). The identity young fathers see themselves as having could be attributed to these subcultures on the island. Another key factor in how the participants form their sense of self is the structure of

and attitude towards their education. In the next section I shall go into more detail on the nature of the young fathers' educations within the greater context of their community.

Chapter Five

Secondary education on the Isle of Sheppey

Introduction

Chapter five is the second main findings chapter. The reasoning behind this chapter is that some young fathers, particularly in the third cohort, became a young father not long after their education finished and others, whilst they were still in the education system. Also, following on from chapter four, this chapter focuses on aspects of the local community and its effects on the personal values and attitudes of young fathers towards their secondary education. This chapter also addresses the changing nature of education, the school structure and the relationship that young fathers had with teachers, personal learning and the institution itself. It also considers the nostalgic reflections by the third cohort of young fathers and how they felt their personal choices during their education impacted upon their lives.

This chapter largely addresses the testimonial accounts of young fathers as there were limited documentary resources found related to education on the Isle of Sheppey. The content is focused on the major themes highlighted in the analysed data. All of the participants in this study discussed their experiences of schooling within the context of particular social norms of that time period. In a number of cases, young fathers in the first and second cohort made comparisons between the time period which they attended secondary school and the present day. Equally, young fathers in the third cohort used this topic to reflect upon their actions, engagement and behaviour in secondary school.

Firstly this chapter describes the changing structure of education on the Isle of Sheppey from a two tier to a three-tier system. It also aims to demonstrate attainment in the local education system. Secondly, the chapter examines how socio-economic change has affected young fathers' transition from education to employment on the Isle of Sheppey. It also highlights the experiences of young fathers and what they suggest are the desired requirements considered necessary to gain employment on the Isle of Sheppey as well as neighbouring areas.

Thirdly, the chapter discusses opposition in the education system in terms of the formation of an anti-authority culture and the impact of physical discipline on young fathers in secondary school. It considers their behaviour and decision making in school and how they believe these have affected their level of educational attainment. Fourthly, the chapter will evaluate young fathers

and their attitudes towards further education and the possible factors that affected their decisions in regards to possible career choices. Lastly the conclusion will illustrate how these themes and findings relate to aspects of structuration theory and socio-theoretical perspectives identified in chapter two.

5.1 School structure

The education provision on the Isle of Sheppey has varied over the past sixty years. Before 1973, the Isle of Sheppey maintained a two-tier system, which included pupil transfer from primary to secondary education after 11+ exams. After 1973, a three-tier system came into effect, which included transfer from primary to middle school at the age of eight and then a transfer to secondary school at the age of twelve (Ridings and Badman, 2004). In 2008, the system was once again changed from a three-tier system to a two-tier system. However, the remainder of Kent had been operating on a two-tier system before 2008 and therefore the Island had been out of phase with the rest of Kent (Ridings and Badman, 2004). The majority of local authorities with three-tier systems have undertaken reorganisation into two tier systems following the introduction of the National Curriculum with its Key Stages.

The School Organisation Advisory Board (2008) had suggested that adopting a two-tier education system on the Isle of Sheppey would generate for students a positive ethos, a positive attitude to learning and engagement with their studies. Conforming to the educational consensus has been a long standing issue on the Island and one which parents on the Island have opposed. The local newspaper has reported that there has been much opposition from local inhabitants to change from a three-tier to a two-tier system. Parents have largely expressed their concerns in terms of the loss of single sex middle education (Sheppey Gazette, 1988; 2004).

To date, there has been no grammar school or schools for children with special needs on the Island; the closest of these school types have been situated in Sittingbourne. There has been variation in school standards and pupil progress across all school phases. Secondary education on the Isle of Sheppey has been a major concern in terms of educational standards and progress. Minster College, now known as The Isle of Sheppey Academy, received an Ofsted inspection in December 2003, which placed the only secondary school on the Island in special measures (Sheppey Gazette, 2005). According to the Sheppey Gazette (2005), six areas of the school were identified by Ofsted as needing urgent attention. This included the quality of teaching and learning, pupil achievement, leadership and management, pupil attitude and behaviour, the budget and the school environment. The quality of education at Minster College at the time was

identified as unsatisfactory overall, although sixth form provision had been found to be adequate and somewhat improving (Sheppey Gazette, 2004; Swale Borough Council, 2008).

According to the first and second cohort of young fathers and local documentation (Brown, 2008), before the 1980s, the education system on the Island had largely been vocational. According to the testimonies of the first and second cohort, some wished to attend technical school to become an engineer. Young fathers who attended grammar school were presumed to go to university and those who attended secondary modern progressed towards gaining an apprenticeship. According to the analysed data, it was suggested by young fathers up until the 1970s that the division of secondary education into secondary moderns, technical schools and grammar schools, allocated their pupils into 'appropriate' labour markets:

"I didn't know what I wanted to do and it turned out when I got to grammar I was top every year in carpentry but they didn't do O levels in carpentry because they didn't worry about those sort of things in grammar school, it was all very academic."

("Edward": 1970's young father, 07.06.10)

It was perceived during the interviews that the first and second cohorts of young fathers were referring to the tripartite education system, which structurally imposed career paths. Before the 1970s, according to the literature, the tripartite education system was the arrangement of state funded secondary education based on the principles of The Butler Act 1944. The basic assumption of the tripartite system was that all students, regardless of background, should be entitled to an education appropriate to their needs and abilities. There were three main categories of state-run secondary schools namely secondary modern, technical school and grammar school, although many areas did not have a technical school. Each was designed to encourage a particular range of skills appropriate to the needs and future careers of their pupils (Heath and Ridge, 1983).

5.2 Secondary education to employment

Social changes in the economy have had a major impact upon the importance of education (Kenway and Kraack, 2004; Cartmel and Furlong, 2007). Indeed, the first and second cohort of young fathers highlighted social change in the economy by discussing the increasing pressure on young people today to achieve a good education, which was not so much the case for them. These young fathers suggested that in comparison, young people today need to achieve well academically for a longer period of time to enable themselves to gain suitable employment. It also gives some suggestion that there is a lack of cultural capital in regards to education:

"I literally hated school but I mean as for our childhood, most of it was quite fun really but then we didn't have the pressure that kids have got today…there was certainly not the pressure, there was the 11+ but that was a farce, an absolute farce because if you didn't come from a certain area there was no way you were going to grammar but no there wasn't the pressure we basically did thing at our own pace and it was a very slow pace on this Island."

("Jack": 1960's young father, 24.03.10)

This echoes the findings of Cartmel and Furlong (2007), previously discussed in chapter two, who suggest that the transition to adulthood is now much longer, and dependence on parents and responsibility have increased as a result of a longer period in education, which may possibly suggest a longer transition to adulthood:

"They don't think about leaving school until they're 18, well we would have been out to work perhaps 2-2 ½ years or in some cases three years before we were 18, so that way we were a bit more grown up I think." ("Jack": 1960's young father, 24.03.10)

From the analysed data, it was apparent that the third cohort was aware of what is sociologically described as macro-structural forces that stressed the importance of gaining at least a compulsory education in the current economic climate. However, they were concerned about the number of employers who wanted employees that were not at entry level and had skills through work experience as well as qualifications. Consequently, they did not want to commit to a maximum of two to six years in non-compulsory education without guaranteeing secure employment:

"The hardest thing is I found that if you've got the qualifications to do a job they still want experience. How the hell you meant to get experience if you won't let me have a go? This is what I keep saying, like no offence but erm, they go to college, they do a little bit, they can't get a job! I'm thinking why do three years? Fair enough it might be a good achievement but you can't get a job." ("Carl": 2000+ young father, 20.01.10).

Despite their implicit awareness of macro-structural forces promoting the importance of gaining a good education, the third cohort of young fathers seemed to disregard education and suggest that work experience was still preferable to education, which suggests some exertion of agency in the sense that these young fathers have personally decided not to take part in typical transitions, which are considered normal discourse. These ideas were often linked to the needs of the local community and neighbouring areas; they were also linked to the education level of their parents and other family members. Generally their parents and family members were presented as having little education and having more work experience. The third cohort of young fathers assessed the financial implications as well as financial incentives of attending non-compulsory

education, such as the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) at the time[52], to remain in non-compulsory education.

Another reason for their lack of involvement in non-compulsory education was the need to regularly update certificates, in order to gain employment; however this cost them money. This resulted in a lack of incentive to achieve for some young fathers due to their achievements being regularly "outdated[53]". In the context of structuration theory, this suppressed personal agency by young fathers feeling that they were not given the opportunity to succeed by structural institutions and were not being fully rewarded for gaining an education. Additionally, local documentation suggests that long journeys to colleges and universities were off putting for Swale teenagers and made them reluctant to continue their studies after they left school (Swale Borough Council, 2002; Sheppey Gazette, 2005).

The third cohort of young fathers also suggested that there should be much more variation in terms of career paths. For example, there should be less emphasis on academic achievement and more emphasis towards vocational/work-based qualifications. They believed that this lack became a disadvantage to those who were not in a position to commit to further education. From the analysed data, it is suggested that the third cohort considered academic achievement as an ideal, suggesting that the complexity of their lives made it difficult for them to commit fully to non-compulsory education particularly for those for those who had become young parents:

"There was one little point I wanted to bring up, you're hopefully going to have a nice career and I could of took mine further; but life experiences sometimes take you different ways and you can't. I know they say there's no such word as can't, but in mine you know not everyone wants to do that sort of thing. They say you have more opportunities but why does someone with a good brain earn more than someone who hasn't got a good brain? That is not equal opportunities to me is it? That's not equal opportunities is it? Silver spoon in some people's mouth but what I'm saying is that is one bit of paper." ("Carl": 2000+ young father, 20.01.10)

The statement above suggests that discussions of structure, such as Giddens' structuration theory, have not considered those who are socially excluded and the complexity of a young father's life can make it difficult to meet the expectations of wider social systems. It also suggests that there is a lack of personal choice, which suppresses personal agency and that academic aspiration, is predominantly based on the enforcement of structural systems such as social class rather than personal agency. The statement also suggests by stating; "*there's no such word as can't,"* how individuals may be expected to exert personal agency, despite their circumstances.

[52] The Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) was abolished at the end of 2010.
[53] Outdated qualifications were referred to in the context of gas fitting, electrical work and First Aid.

5.3 Opposing the education system

Young fathers in the first and second cohort spoke briefly about being oppositional towards the their teachers and the education system in general. They commented that any opposition was quickly dealt with by physical discipline, most notably the cane, which acted as a deterrent to bad behaviour whist in school. However, it was perceived from the interview discussions that most young fathers from the third cohort spoke about how they were very much in opposition to any authority that *"told them what to do."* This was particularly evident in the education system:

"I guess like the teachers, I didn't really get on with the teachers I could tell as soon as I see someone whether I liked them. I walked out of my math lesson on the first day like she started talking to me and I said; 'I can't do this' I said; 'your noise is going right through me, I can't stand the sound of your voice so I'm off,' I just walked out. How rude's that? Do you know what I mean I was 15 years old I said to her 'I can't stand the sound of your voice.'"

("Chris": 2000+ young father, 09.06.10)

"Ah I've done a few naughty things, it's like you didn't have your lunch pass at lunch, they never use to let you out so I use to jump over the school gate; called them a wanker and that so I'd put my name down and I'd be like 'you're a wanker mate, fucking see you later', I'd get back to school at the end of lunch and that's it after school detention."

("Jay": 2000+ young father, 21.12.09)

The above testimonies echo the findings of Mac an Gahil (1994) through their choices of vocabulary, which suggests a working class masculinity through the physical (sticking up for your mates), solidarity (sticking together) and territorial control (teachers thinking they own the place). For example, this is evident where Chris and Jay both describe walking out of lessons and school, demonstrating territorial control. This also conforms to the ideal of working class hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1995), with the participants refusing to participate in what they see as the middle class institution of education.

There is evidence in the above to suggest that "authority" threatens what Giddens (1991) would describe as young fathers' ontological security, referring to ordered patterned lifestyles and routine practices, which are encouraged by peer groups and social encounters. This highlights that young fathers may perceive authority as threatening to what they consider is acceptable in a specific space or place. Consequently, they form self-closure or exert some personal agency through their autonomous and conflicting behaviour during secondary school. Equally scholarly literature found in chapter two, section 2.10 argues that "macho lads" tended to construct a shared view of school being a system of hostile authority and irrelevant work demands (Willis, 1977; Jackson, 2003). For the third cohort of young fathers, this is illustrated by making

independent decisions over which classes they were attending, based on their enjoyment of the class and/or their relationship with the teacher:

"I pretty much did what I wanted at school. I'd turn up at registration and then go back out, come back in and play football at break, then go back out and if I had science I'd come back and do my science lesson. Erm, then probably go back out again or go sit down by the bushes and have a smoke then come back and do my PE. So I pretty much, it's like, my French class I use to sit in there and I'm like 'look I'm not French, I don't like French, I don't want to learn French.'" ("Joshua": 1990's young father, 15.12.09)

Several young fathers in the third cohort had some interest in some elements of their education, which included physical education (PE), art and history. Connell (1995) identifies PE as a key marker of masculinity in schools through demonstrating physical prowess. However, the impression gained from the data suggest that they felt suppressed by teachers who tended to be more supportive of core subjects than their areas of interest. Further, it could be argued from the analysed data that the third cohort and their teachers were in opposition mainly due to teachers promoting a knowledge structure, which coincides with the needs of the knowledge economy; whereas young fathers in the third cohort were more interested in creating an individualistic lifestyle of choice. They attempted to conform by negotiation through achieving better grades in academic studies, such as English and maths, so that in return they were able to gain GCSE's in subjects of choice. However, some within the third cohort perceived academic studies, particularly English, as boring due to the length of time spent studying the same texts, discouraging them from participating fully in the class:

"I done Romeo and Juliet from year 8 to year 11 and I'm like 'oh my God' I've had enough of Romeo and Juliet or Macbeth'. Yeah Shakespeare, it's great and all that lot but why can't they do something more modern now? I mean there has been some classic books out in the past 50-60 years, why has it always got to be Shakespeare? Why has it always got to be Dickens? Or perhaps keep Dickens but what's Shakespeare like 17th century and I mean Dickens is 19th century but why not use that, why not move up in the area but they just use the same old crap all the time and I really just had enough of it so as I say I just got very, very bored of it."
("Sam": 1990's young father, 01.06.10)

The testimony above suggests a lack of cultural capital due to his lack of value for Shakespeare and his interest of learning it. The testimony also presents an expression of masculinity, echoing the understandings of Mac an Ghail (1994), that working class boys identify aspects of their education as being meaningless and will therefore rebel against those elements. Areas of interest were in some cases based on the relationship the third cohort had with their teacher. In most cases they spoke about forming a good relationships with male teachers; there was very little discussion in regards to forming good relationships with female teachers. The second and third cohort of young fathers highlighted that good relationships with teachers were built on the

amount of praise and interest the teacher had personally shown towards them. This had a long-term effect on their engagement with a particular subject and tended to be the fondest memories young fathers had of their education:

"Yeah I liked two subjects, I liked art and history, I loved history. It was down to the teachers really do you know what I mean? My math teacher, she was a bitch I didn't like her, she didn't like me, we didn't get on and most of my classes were like that because I was quite loud and obnoxious, quite boisterous. I didn't care if I walked in late, I would F and blind, shout my mouth off, disrupt other kids but then in history, the teacher was fucking sound he was a right nice bloke, right nice bloke and I got on with him really well. I started going to after school clubs with him so I could catch up on my GCSE work and stuff like that."

("Chris": 2000+ young father, 09.06.10)

It seemed from the examined data that where young fathers from the third cohort shared a good relationship with a teacher, it tended to be based on the emotional support provided by the teacher. Equally, scholarly literature suggests that boys sustain their engagement in the classroom when they feel they are part of a positive and trusting relationship with their teacher. Ultimately, their relationship precedes their engagement with their studies and subsequent achievement (Reichart and Hawley, 2010).

Some young fathers in the third cohort lacked interest in academic studies because they were dyslexic or were part of a popular peer group at school. As a result, if they attended the class at all, they would engage in inappropriate behaviour that built their reputation amongst their peer group during particular classes that they disliked. Chris in particular felt humbled by his behaviour at secondary school, he said that his behaviour was childish and had largely damaged his chances of any achievement in education:

"That's disgusting, if some little shit spoke to me like that I would have fucking done them do you know what I mean? I think how rude but at the time I was, I didn't know the difference from my ear hole to my asshole do you know what I mean? I didn't care what I said to anyone I knew that they couldn't hit me, I knew they couldn't do anything so I did what I liked, said what I liked." ("Chris": 2000+ young father, 09.06.10)

"I mean what was I doing, what was I playing at? If I'd toned down a bit, maybe sat down and shut up for a bit and listened do you know what I mean? I might have got somewhere else, might have done a bit better with my life, well school life anyway."

("Chris": 2000+ young father, 09.06.10)

From examining the statements above, it may be suggested that working class masculinity is a major hindrance to academic achievement. Yet despite their behaviour, young fathers in the third cohort held the education system responsible for the lack of control and support of its pupils.

They also held parents responsible for their lack of advice, which they felt led to a lack of progress in secondary education:

"I mean I never had anyone explain that sort of stuff to me when I was younger and I probably would stay off the rails...no one really explained to me how important education is to you...I should of motivated myself a bit more studying and things like that when I was at school but it just didn't happen." ("Lewis": 1990's young father, 21.12.09)

Equally, young fathers in the third cohort as well as some documentary data (Sheppey Gazette, 2005), discussed Minster College, otherwise known as "*The Comp"* to those in the 1980s as being a detriment to their education. This was due to the lack of control over its students, teachers being helpless in handling unruly children as well as oversized classrooms, which made learning difficult:

"I loved school until I got to the comp... I started meeting some of the new lads that I was going to be hanging around with at the school. I mean that comprehensive school is so hard even if you wanted to learn, it was so hard because what they done you know they kept being disruptive...there was about 45 people in there and that, it's just chaos in there just no one taking any notice and the teacher giving up." ("Frankie": 1980's young father, 02.06.10)

The local media also reported that "bulging classrooms" were a huge detriment to pupils' education. According to the Sheppey Gazette (1998a; 1998b) and Kent Today, (2001), teachers commented on classes having to cope with over forty pupils per classroom and said that the Island's secondary education system was heading for a crisis if there was no long term strategy for handling the growth of the school population on the Island.

The third cohort of young fathers discussed that as a result of their "damaging" behaviour and uncaring attitude towards school, they have aimed to instil into their own children the importance of gaining a good education as it enables individuals to have more choice as well as agency. Some even commented that they hoped their child would attend grammar school simply because they felt the quality of education at the local secondary school was still not of a good standard:

"You know; 'Where's your coursework Sam?' 'I haven't done it.' I just seemed to get so bored at school but you know that's one of those things I've moved on now and I'm just trying to install into my kids that education means a hell of a lot, with your education you can actually escape from things...My little boy takes his 11+ in September so if I can get him into the grammar schools off the Island it's not going to be too bad at all then because it's when you go to the schools on this Island and the problem is that you get people like me at school who never wanted to learn." ("Sam": 1990's young father, 01.06.10)

In comparison, the first and most of the second cohort of young fathers suggested that physical discipline was a major deterrent from bad behaviour and being oppositional. They described the cane as the norm in enforcing discipline, authority and control in education. They highlighted that regardless of whether a teacher was liked or not, the relationship still demanded respect, decency and good behaviour, which were implicitly suggested as being important attributes of life. The first cohort also commented that other social institutions including the family and the police also reinforced physical discipline:

"When I was young and I done something wrong and I'd got caught you know I wouldn't do it again even if it was just a clout round the head by the copper and you bet your life if you got caught he'd take you home and tell your dad and you'd get another clout from your dad."
("Robert": 1960's young father, 19.01.10)

Despite some young fathers up until the 1970s highlighting physical discipline as sometimes being taken to the extreme by teachers, they agreed that it was largely a positive thing as it ensured good behaviour amongst children and young people. They acknowledged that the *"rudeness of youngsters today"* would not have been tolerated back then. Such behaviour would have resulted in even harsher physical discipline:

"I mean the thing was if you were to turn around and say; 'oh naff off, I'm not having none of that!' you'd get it twice...and then when you got home you got a clout from your dad so yeah I mean I remember one (teacher) that use to use a slipper, you know just to whack you on... and he use to stand the slipper up and draw a face on it with chalk and say 'don't forget he's watching you!' ("Robert": 1960's young father, 19.01.10)

Based on the examined data, young fathers up until the 1970s seemed to associate education as well as other social structures in the community with enforcing discipline, control and regulating moral standards. Since the 1980s, there was little discussion based upon structural institutions enforcing control and order in the community. The third cohort of young fathers identified school as an authoritative institution, which they mainly opposed and made autonomous decisions based on their interests and relationships with teachers. However, in reflection some emphasised that their bad behaviour and "macho lad" antics were not so much due to little discipline, but the pointlessness of gaining an education.

5.4 Experiences of secondary education

Young fathers saw education as *"boring;"* particularly those who attended secondary modern, or who were uninterested in compulsory education and had shown no interest in furthering their education. It is suggested that regardless of the social shifts in the economy, the principles of

working academically and towards further education have not been prioritised. Theoretically, young fathers since the 1980s have shown awareness of a knowledge economy, however in practice there is little evidence to suggest that young fathers are complying with the changing needs of the economy. The first and second cohort of young fathers who attended secondary modern schools considered their education as a general process before entering employment:

"I never went to technical school you know I went to secondary and then when your time was up you come out and got a job. I suppose if you wanted to go on to higher education I suppose you could but most fellas want their money don't they, like anything, quicker I get out there the quicker I get my money" ("Robert": 1960's young father, 19.01.10)

"You just done what everyone else did, which was arithmetic, reading, writing the three R's...Everybody knew come 14 you were out of the door in long trousers and go to work." ("George": 1950's young father, 27.04.10)

"When I left school properly I had an apprenticeship for three years as an upholsterer; because you didn't need qualifications you just needed your hands. Then the firm went bust and I took up plastering; I mean you learned, you learned as you went along there was no college all day." ("Bobby": 1980's young father, 07.06.10)

The first and second cohort of young fathers who attended grammar school in Sittingbourne[54] felt that there was an obvious class difference between those students from the mainland and those who were from the Isle of Sheppey. As a result young fathers who attended grammar school tended to feel socially isolated. According to Charlie, the intensity of this class difference sometimes resulted in physical violence amongst peers. These young fathers who attended grammar school also suggested that the local culture and the needs of the local economy conflicted with the academic culture of the grammar school. Consequently the local economy had a much stronger impact than academic studies on their potential career choices. As a result, these young fathers felt that if they attended the technical school rather than the grammar school they would have achieved more as the Island required more vocational qualifications.

Young fathers who attended grammar school during the 1960s and 70s spoke about how the teachers at grammar school were geared towards getting students into university[55]. From the analysed data, grammar schools were viewed by the young fathers in the first and second cohort as the pinnacle of knowledge structures, which were completely geared towards a knowledge economy. These young fathers were grammar school students who opposed the knowledge structure by making it clear that they did not want to attend university, or at least join the services as an officer; this resulted in the teachers becoming less interested and unsupportive of

[54] Altogether, three participants in the first and second cohort attended grammar school.
[55] No young fathers in this study attended university except Tim who attended at a later stage of his life. Sam had attended college and gained qualifications after the birth of his children, he was waiting to hear whether his grades were suitable to go to university; and Carl attended college but did not finish his course.

them. This was also the case amongst young fathers during the same period who attended secondary modern school. They commented on how teachers tended *"not to be interested"* in those pupils who may have been finding their education challenging or difficult. Teachers were described as only helping those who were most likely to achieve well in their exams:

"Oh it was to go to university, the whole career structure unless you wanted to join the services as an officer, the whole career structure at that time in my school was geared totally towards university... if you didn't want to go to university you did feel as though they weren't quite as interested or as supportive." ("Nicholas": 1960's young father, 10.06.10)

"I went over to Sittingbourne for the grammar school and when I left school with nothing, I didn't take my O levels, I got asked to leave because I wasn't doing particularly well after the age of fifteen." ("Edward": 1970's young father, 07.06.10)

These testimonies above echo Connell (2000) in relation to the structuring of the school system, which streamed the supposed 'able' students to the detriment of the working class boys, who would be broadly ignored. This also echoes the more recent findings of Reay (2004), who suggests that the education system is in itself middle class and that it needs to further address the specific needs of the working class if they are to benefit from it.

Some young fathers from the third cohort commented that teachers in secondary school tended to show lack of interest and care towards pupils and their studies if they were rebellious towards school rules and standards:

"If you were seen to be a little bit of trouble you were sort of pushed to one side and not helped. You had these things for you to do obviously but if you were seen like you wanted to work you got on and you was in the higher classes and things like that. I mean I remember a lot of the time we didn't have teachers sometimes in like the group, the group of us you know who misbehaved." ("Lewis": 1990's young father, 21.12.09)

In the context of structuration theory, the above statements suggest that personal agency was suppressed due to the limited support by knowledge structures. The first and second cohort gave some suggestion that potential educational and career paths were based upon the expectation and educational background of their father. Young fathers in the first and second cohort who passed their 11+ were generally keen to attend the technical school rather than grammar school, however their fathers opted for them going to the grammar school and the overall decision was made by their father regarding which school they would attend:

"I took my 11+ they said I was in the top five of the school, other kids took the mickey but everybody took the mickey out of everybody and I had the choice of technical school or grammar school my dad chose grammar and my dad was law."

("Charlie": 1970's young father, 05.07.10)

The impression gained from some of the discussions with young fathers was that their education was an extension of their parents' personal ambitions. However in most circumstances, young fathers, particularly those who attended secondary modern felt a sense of achievement by working alongside their father, and were proud to be involving themselves in the family business or becoming a manual labourer like their father:

"I wanted to be a mechanic, I wanted to work in the steelmill I wanted to be on the centre lathe and all that because my dad's like really good with his hands you know he's been an engineer his whole life, if he's not working on cars, he's got his head in a bike and I always wanted to be like him." ("Chris": 2000+ young father, 09.06.10)

However, there is some suggestion, particularly from Frankie's statement that teachers and knowledge structures promote social mobility and middle class aspiration:

"I got called in by my division tutor Mrs Dixon and she said 'right what are you doing?' I said 'well what do you mean?' She said 'Look from your school reports from your middle school you should be looking into staying on at school and then going on to university' she said...and I said 'nah, nah, nah I've got a job with my dad when I leave school' but she said 'I know but you're so much better than that'. I said 'well better than what?' Better than being a labourer you know what I mean and you know I learned a lot of stuff from it, learned how to lay bricks, I can put a roof on someone's house you know what I mean so I did learn stuff out of it you know a bit of electrics, painting and decorating I can do all that but I wouldn't of been able to otherwise would I?" ("Frankie": 1980's young father, 02.06.10)

In comparison, Nicholas felt that because he didn't attend university and fulfil the dreams of his father to become a naval officer, his father distanced himself from him:

"One of the biggest ambitions my father had in the navy was to get to become an officer; but he was in the navy when it was below decks and above decks, although he got to the rank of chief petty officer he didn't actually ever make it over to officer. So I think he saw the opportunity because I had a bit of a brain that maybe I would become an officer and achieve those sorts of ambitions and join the Navy and achieve the ambitions that he never did. Well I thought it was too young at thirteen to sign up to Dartmouth College and I didn't and I think from that sort of day on dad was a bit distant to be honest...My younger sister, she joined the Navy and she became the blue eyed girl as far as my dad was concerned."

("Nicholas": 1960's young father, 10.06.10)

From the above statements, it is apparent that most young fathers aspired to become skilled manual workers and tended to follow the common occupational trend of their fathers. The other significant factor encouraging the young father's career path tended to be the occupational needs

of the local community. It is suggested that most young fathers regardless of their academic ability were more interested and encouraged by the attitudes of their families rather than wider structures in the local community. It is also suggested from the analysed data that with some exceptions young fathers strove for their father's acceptance, approval and validation in terms of choices.

5.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed the changing structure of the education system and how attitudes of have changed towards education. Whilst it could have been expected that with weaker structures, greater agency would be expressed by later cohorts, this has actually been damaging. With working class boys seeing education as something to rebel against, this allowance of greater agency has undermined their life chances by denying them the social capital potentially gained through education.

Education was largely viewed by those up until the 1970s as a structural institution, which regulated and implemented collective moral standards and good behaviour, which helped to maintain social order in the wider community. The third cohort of young fathers spoke about being rebellious, oppositional to school rules and autonomous, which was related to building a credible masculinity. Lack of compliance with knowledge structures is believed to have resulted in most of these young fathers leaving school with little or no qualifications.

During the interviews, the third cohort reflected on their identity as a young person in secondary school and currently as a young father. As a young father, financial responsibility and security for their child is paramount, which for most was not a priority during their secondary education, seeing education as something to rebel against. This goes some way to show that the findings of Willis (1977) still have currency today. Just as his 'lads' simply wished to leave education and go straight into employment, the young fathers studied demonstrated this attitude in only focussing on what they saw as bringing them employment, thus ending their time in education. As Kenway and Kraack (2004) noted, during Willis' study employment was plentiful, even for working class boys. This was also the case on the island at the time, but as social structures have shifted, providing fewer of these employment opportunities, the community and family discourses the young fathers found themselves within promoted the long held working class masculine ideas noted by Willis, limiting the value of the education system to them.

In retrospect young fathers, particularly in the third cohort regretted their actions during their adolescence and wished that they were more engaged with their education. There is some suggestion that young fathers in the third cohort identified themselves as personal agents by holding themselves mostly accountable for their actions and consequences at secondary school. Nevertheless, in spite of holding themselves responsible for their lack of education, young fathers felt that the local education system was also responsible for their lack of achievement at secondary school and blamed the institution for its poor management, quality and standard of education.

In parallel with the research findings found in Jackson (2003), the third cohort of young fathers in particular was conscious of structural forces promoting a knowledge economy and the value of gaining a good education. Despite growing economic change in the wider society, young fathers on the Isle of Sheppey were resistant to furthering their education and largely identified work experience as a priority. Evidently, there has been little change in regards to young fathers wishing to pursue skilled manual employment, which is considered traditionally non-academic and typical of the local community. Furthermore, it is evident from the data that the views of the family are the greatest influence on career prospects made by young fathers. It is also suggested that personal choices were based on the acceptance and approval of their own fathers.

In relation to the literature, it is suggested that the lack of interest in an academic education by working class boys is related to the feminised notion of academia (Willis, 1977; Reay, 2004). This literature also suggests that working class masculinity plays a key role in identity and the career choices of adolescent boys in secondary school. Hegemonic masculinity of working class boys has also been considered a hindrance in achieving academically and is a major concern due to the social shifts towards a knowledge economy (Reay, 2004). Skilled manual labour is generally regarded as a highly masculinised choice by working class boys, which is also encouraged by the local aesthetics of an industrial area and the needs of the local economy, which still maintains some manual employment.

It is apparent from the data that class structures are difficult to transcend regardless of whether employment structures are changing; so working class young fathers still expect to be placed within manual trades, despite the fact that these trades no longer provide adequate employment opportunities on the island. This expectation is enhanced by the local community and aesthetics of the area, as well as the family history of the participants being limited to employment in skilled or unskilled manual labour; thus encouraging manual labour as an employment option. It is also apparent that socio-economic change may be held accountable for the unstable transition

from education to employment. Before the 1980s, compulsory education was viewed by many on the Island as a general process before taking manual employment, or an apprenticeship at the minimum age of fifteen, which was typical of most working class young men. It is evident that the transition to adulthood through employment for the first and second cohort happened at a much quicker pace than for the young fathers in the third cohort. Ideally according to public norms, young fathers in the third cohort should have continued their education (Furlong and Cartmel, 2007), unlike previous cohorts, to help gain reasonable employment. It may therefore be argued that changes in public discourses have impacted upon the norm for undertaking of parenthood.

Interestingly, social capital was not visible in the context of education for these young fathers, illustrating the idea that social capital through education is largely associated with the middle class (Bourdieu, 1986). As highlighted in the above, cultural capital in the form of education is lacking amongst these young fathers due to the lack of transmission from their family and the community. It is evident that cultural capital for working class men is different from middle class values. It is however evident that masculinity plays a key role in young fathers' engagement with education, which may have affected the level of social capital gained through their education. As discussed previously in chapter two, section 2.10, Reay (2002) suggests that the problem of 'failing boys' in education is often linked to masculinity. Working class masculinity sees the education system as exhibiting middle class values and being feminising; young fathers therefore often rebel against education systems and refuse to participate in the social capital they can provide. In regards to structuration theory, it has been useful examining the changing relationship between structure and agency in the education system. Structuration theory has helped in presenting how young fathers experience structural control and how they exercise personal agency as they pass through the education system. Within the first cohort, young fathers stated that the education system exhibited very strong structures, whereas in the third cohort, young fathers stated that the structures of education were weaker, without the discipline measures seen previously.

With such attitudes to employment often being the key influences on attitudes to education and the types of education the young fathers found appropriate for working class boys, the next chapter will focus on young fathers' experience of employment on the island.

Chapter Six

Employment on the Isle of Sheppey

6.0 Introduction

Chapter six is the third main findings chapter. This chapter considers the local working environment of which these young fathers have found themselves a part. This chapter uses the literature from chapter two, identifying socio-economic change as a major factor in the social exclusion of young working class men in particular. Also, following from chapter five, this chapter aims to illustrate how aspects of social change are believed to have affected young fathers' transitions from education to employment. The content of this chapter is based upon significant themes addressed by young fathers and examines how economic factors are believed to have affected their identity as a father and their role within the family.

Young fathers' testimonies and local documentation were examined to understand how young fathers perceive social change and how social shifts have impacted on their lives. Firstly this chapter will consider the local economy on the Isle of Sheppey and the changing nature of the employment sectors that are accessible on the Island. This section of the chapter highlights the extent to which male inhabitants on the Isle of Sheppey have relied largely on manual employment for many years. It will also consider how the changing nature of industrial employment on the Island has led to the significant changes in employment for these young fathers.

Secondly, this chapter will examine the ways young fathers on the Isle of Sheppey have worked and how the workplace and employment have undergone significant structural shifts since the early 1980s. Thirdly, the chapter examines social capital, previously discussed in chapter two, and how it has become increasingly relied upon amongst young fathers due to the extent of unemployment on the Isle of Sheppey. This section will also examine how social networking and the extent of unemployment have increasingly eroded gaining employment through social networks.

This chapter follows by discussing the significance of unemployment on the Island and various factors, which young fathers feel are responsible for the lack of employment. This has been related to the lack of accessibility and mobility on and off the Island and the policies implemented by the Conservative Government during 1979-1990. Following this, the chapter

examines competition, specifically local Eastern European integration, one of the major components related to unemployment on the Island according to young fathers. It will also consider how competition from Eastern Europe and those less experienced is considered financially threatening to young fathers. The chapter will then address the concern of welfare dependency on the Island. This section will identify contrasting arguments between various cohorts of young fathers regarding welfare dependency and willingness to work. Finally, the conclusion will illustrate how these themes and findings relate to aspects of structuration theory and socio-theoretical perspectives identified in chapter two.

6.1 Local economy

Sheerness has a strong industrial past with steel making and historic links with the former naval dockyard, the latter now mostly within the curtilage of the modern Port of Sheerness. The Port is still a significant part of the local economy focusing on car and fresh produce imports (Swale Borough Council, 2012). However, industry on the Island has declined and the majority of the recent known redundancies on the Island were within this sector (Swale Borough Council, 2012). According to recent news reports, 400 people were made redundant when Thamesteel in Sheerness, one of the major employers on the Island, went into administration in January 2012 (Ratcliffe, 2012). Also, many people were disappointed in June when the Danish wind turbine firm Vestas scrapped its plan to set up a manufacturing plant at Sheerness Dock, which had the potential of bringing 1,600 jobs to the Island (Nicolson, 2012). However, according to the Conservative MP, Gordon Henderson, 75% of the Thamesteel workers had managed to find other employment, and he was hopeful that another renewable energy company could be attracted to the Island in place of Vestas (Nicolson, 2012).

According to Brown (2008), education on the Isle of Sheppey has been based on apprenticeships and the entrance test to the dockyard. The first cohort of young fathers agreed that in some cases, schooling led to a naval apprenticeship and a secure job in shipyard engineering. However, Brown (2008) has commented that more recently the docks do not employ a large direct labour force from the Island; instead most of the handling services have been undertaken by subcontracted organisations. The Island also had a large number of small haulage companies, which operated out of the docks and provided jobs for local drivers. According to Brown (2008), these haulage companies have now mostly been replaced by larger multi-nationals, which he suggests operates with much lower margins per vehicle and generally employ labour from Eastern Europe. As a result, it has become apparent to local inhabitants that such fierce competition has slowly undermined the local haulage industry.

It is estimated that ten years ago, apart from the port, three major private sector employers dominated the Island. These were Co-Steel, Abbott Laboratories and Kilippon Electricals (Brown, 2008). In more recent years, characteristics of free markets were also evident in regards to these companies including; changes in ownership, financial problems and the shift to manufacturing overseas, which have all contributed to the reduction of staffing levels in all three sites (Brown, 2008). Pahl and Wilson (1981) also stated that after the Second World War and up to 1959, the largest employers on Sheppey, together with the Royal Naval Dockyard, were Canning Town Glass, Alfred Johnson, Doulton, Whelan's potteries, Pilkington Glass, Sheppey fertilisers and chemicals and W. Lodder.

Sheerness Town Centre serves mainly the resident population and tourists during the summer months; and is the main shopping and service centre on the Island with over 200 shops (Swale Borough Council, 2012). However, the High Street is identified by the Swale Retail Assessment as being at risk of decline and will come under further pressure from planning permissions recently granted for convenience superstores at Neatscourt (Queenborough) and Minster/Halfway (Swale Borough Council, 2012). Retail has been a significant employer in Sheerness, and is often regarded as offering part time jobs for women with children at school. From the local documentation, it is suggested that employment on the Island has become much more feminised (Swale Borough Council, 2002; Brown, 2008).

Employment in the public sector on the Island has increased and has mainly been dominated by healthcare, education and the prison service[56], which employs a higher number of female workers. Unskilled jobs are in very short supply on the Island and can only be accessed if local labour is able to travel off of the Island. This has proved difficult, due to Sheerness having one of the lowest levels of car ownership in South East England (Brown, 2008; Swale Borough Council, 2002). Structural support on the Isle of Sheppey such as public transport is poor and residents have found it difficult to access work off of the Island as well as local areas on the Island (Brown, 2008). Every year, a number of seasonal summer jobs become available in the local holiday industry, particularly at the eastern end of the Island such as Leysdown. Whilst seasonal jobs do provide income for young people in particular, they are generally casual and do not solve any long term job shortages (Brown, 2008).

[56] There are currently three prisons on the Isle of Sheppey namely Elmley, Standford Hill and Swaleside.

6.2 The changing nature of employment

As identified in previous chapters, manufacturing and industry have been at the forefront of the Island's main employment sector for many generations (Brown, 2008). However, the literature suggests that over the past thirty years, manufacturing employment has continued to decline and the switch to a service based economy has been typical of many advanced industrialised economies (Bowlby et al, 1998). It was generally understood, according to the analysed data of the first cohort, that the transition from education to employment was relatively unproblematic in the 1950s and 1960s. Full-time jobs and apprenticeships were plentiful for young fathers in the period up to the late 1970s.

From the examined data, the first and second cohort of young fathers identified education and employment as a linear and predictable sequence in their life course, which was clearly geared towards gendered roles of male breadwinners. The first and second cohort spoke about *"learning a trade"* through apprenticeships, which as identified previously were plentiful on the Island and therefore made educational qualifications, seem redundant. Nicholas spoke about being envious of those who were manual labourers whereas he was more academically able. It was apparent to him that those men who were in manual employment were more likely to buy their own homes and go on holidays abroad in comparison to those working in professional employment:

"I mean people were getting more money, were buying houses, were starting up their own businesses, were starting to go to Benidorm for their holidays and you did feel; where I said to Rose, I do wish I hadn't been born with so much of a brain, I wish I was born with more manual dexterity if you like and I'd just done a labourer's job."

("Nicholas": 1960's young father, 10.06.10)

According to documentation and testimonial accounts from the first and second cohort of young fathers, the Island has witnessed and experienced significant change since the late 1970s in terms of employment, which has led to a great deal of uncertainty and insecurity in the workplace. Yet despite these significant changes, some young fathers in the third cohort still aimed to pursue a career as a manual labourer and *"working with their hands"* after leaving compulsory education. This resonates with findings from the previous chapter that regardless of socio-economic change, young fathers in the third cohort still persist in gaining manual employment. From the context of structuration theory, personal choices and exerting personal agency bring feelings of self-esteem. For example, they highlighted that they did not feel passionate about the service sector where most didn't feel entirely valued, or that any of their skills were being put to good use:

"Carpentry yeah, first, second fittings, joinery, I use to make windows, doors, conservatories out of wood so that was really good fun. I loved it but the hours were a nightmare, shocking, but really good job, loved it, loved doing things with my hands, kitchens everything anything like plastering, electrics I done it all, loved it... I just love doing things, being outside or going round people's houses meeting new people, like the friendly people and that, letting you into their home, you look at a job where it's done; McDonalds what can you do? Look at a burger, here I made that, it's just stupid." ("Daniel": 2000+ young father, 23.11.09).

The analysed data suggests that unlike the first and second cohort of young fathers, the transition from education and employment has lost its smooth, linear structure, which has led to uncertain individual choices in recent years. It was implicitly suggested by most of the first and second cohort that they were born to be manual workers, which was largely based on the needs of the local community and their social class. They did not give any suggestion that they had, expected, or even wanted the opportunity to choose an alternate profession:

"I started work, well you could leave school when you was fourteen or fifteen and we were working class and the attitude was we were born to work it was just what we did, everyone went to work, you had to earn a living, didn't matter how tough it was you didn't question it, we had structure in our lives." ("Tim": 1980's young father, 09.06.10)

The first and second cohort of young fathers suggested that maintaining manual employment was linked to being raised and parented by a family of predominately manual labourers, which echoes the findings in the previous chapter. It was also linked to the local community and locally based experiences, which helped develop certain types of job aspirations. This suggests bonding social capital due to the local community impacting more than wider structural forces in forming young fathers' expectations and experiences of education, training and employment. Wallace (1980) discussed how young people on the Isle of Sheppey were aware of the potential prospects of the local economy from an early age. This was because they had played by the factories since they were children and because their friends and relatives all worked in them. From analysing these findings, it seemed that the first and second cohort of young fathers did not aim for individualistic educational goals, as they were seen to be irrelevant to the local economy; the local community reproduced manual labourers and factory workers, for which local inhabitants on the Island felt they were destined.

Similarly, Pahl (1978) carried out a study in a comprehensive school on the Isle of Sheppey. To collect his data he set an essay for all those who were in English lessons about ten days before they were due to leave school. They were asked to write an account of their life over the next 30 or 40 years[57]. The findings showed that at that particular time, the chances of 16 year old school leavers on the Isle of Sheppey doing anything more than unskilled work were very low. It had

[57] Pahl received 142 essays, 90 from the boys and 52 from the girls.

also become apparent from the responses in the study that the boys had no unrealistic or idealised notion of what to expect from life, particularly in terms of employment. From examining this study, it is suggested that they were accepting of locally available choices and there is limited sign of ambition or social mobility, which may have supported these local inhabitants out of accepting low paid unskilled labour.

From the analysed data, it is suggested that the lack of mobility from many generations and readily available local employment on the Island enforced self-sufficiency, place-attachment as well as place dependency:

"I mean the people that do want to work are having to go out; but when I was younger you could buy the local paper and they would have local jobs and the people that read that paper were local people." ("Edward": 1970's young father, 07.06.10)

"He was like, well we need people down at Ray's furniture and I moved there, I walked in there and it was like going back to school I said; 'Oh God I thought I got shot of you lot.' Half my flipping class was there." ("Jack": 1960's young father, 24.03.10)

Most young men who were fathers during the 1950s to mid 1970s felt that their employment in manual labour was stable and relatively permanent. Following the testimonial account of Nicholas, manual labour was also described as a profession that provided a "good" income in comparison to professions that required educational qualifications:

"When I was a young executive officer, working for what was then the Ministry of Social Security in the Department for Work and Pensions; although it was a reliable, solid salary structure then it didn't pay nearly as much as a lot of my friends. A lot of my friends went to work for stevedores in the dockyard; when the dockyard became privatised they were earning money twice the amount I was earning, I think they were earning in a week what I was earning in a month." ("Nicholas": 1960's young father, 10.06.10)

Although manufacturing and industry were described as relatively permanent occupations, several discussed being casual labourers due to supply and demand. Several within the first and second cohort, on more than one occasion, were made redundant due to being casual labour. However, they did not experience any long-term unemployment, or an undermining of psychological wellbeing. Instead, the first and second cohort identified redundancy as not being any real concern simply because there was considerable manual employment readily available on the Island:

"Redundancy didn't mean much to you because I moved straight from one job to another; left there on the Friday and started the other one on the Monday. Erm, whereas later in life, where it took me three months to get a job." ("Edward": 1970's young father, 07.06.10)

In comparison, young fathers from the third cohort had found it increasingly difficult to find manual employment on the Isle of Sheppey. The majority had already experienced redundancy in their late teens and early twenties. Their experiences within an economy had significantly changed from industrial production and manufacturing to a service sector (also identified in Brown, 2008). On the basis of structuration theory, it was suggested from their discussion that personal agency was clearly suppressed and young fathers in the third cohort had to resort to the structural expectations of the economy to remain to some extent financially secure. Most young fathers in the third cohort anticipated uncertainty and insecurity in gaining full time employment on the Island and had therefore *"resorted"* to the service sector on the Island:

"I'm a carpenter, and I mean not being funny but you have all these people; ah people crying out for carpenters, carpenter will never go without a job, Well look at me! I've been laid off twice on this Island, so, and the only place I'm guaranteed a job where I know I'm not going to get laid off; and my family I can support is McDonalds, that is literally because they're never going to go bankrupt." ("Daniel": 2000+ young father, 23.11.09)

The impression gained from the interviews was that the third cohort were clearly aware of the uncertainty and insecurity of the labour market, through their discussions on the growing importance and demand for gaining an education and qualifications. However, most in the third cohort were still more interested in "*going to work and making money as soon as possible,"* regardless of structural change in the economy, longer periods spent in education and the changing nature of employment on the Island:[58]

"I actually worked on a market stall when I was 15 like doing cash in hand like it was long hours. My best mate, I've got a few best mates, but my other best mate err got me that job and that it was like 13/14 hour days that was and I only got £25 a day...and that and then I sort of like only went to school for something like three days a week and sort of got a job like doing construction work erm patios and stuff like that." ("Jay": 2000+ young father, 21.12.09)

From the testimonial accounts of the first and second cohort of young fathers, it became apparent that significant change in the manufacturing and industrial sector came during and after the effects of the recession of the early 1980s. According to scholarly literature, during the early 1980s the breakdown of manufacturing and industry resulted from cutting jobs, productive capacity and investment. Economic structures sought drastic reductions in employment and when these were insufficient, company liquidations occurred particularly for small, single plant firms. Within large corporations, the most obvious response was rapid labour shedding,

[58]For Chris and Sam, their partners were pregnant whilst they were still in compulsory education. Therefore it was in their interest to gain employment as quickly as possible.

exceeding 50% of the workforce in many cases with adverse consequences to personal agency and the affected localities (Mohan, 1999).

Similarly, a local media report in 1981 commented on economic structures maintaining the principles of neo-liberalism through high levels of redundancies of local employees and greater efficiency within firms:

"Industry in general has been over-manned for some time. A number of companies have taken the opportunity to bring their labour force down to compete in the world. Firms are becoming more efficient." (Sheppey Gazette, 1981, P7)

From examining the data, during the first and second cohorts' discussions, there was an underlying association with a number of social changes in society, such as free market culture, computerisation and competition, which they believed had the most significant impact on employment on the Island:

"If we didn't have computers probably everyone would be employed; you know populations have gone up and the need for product has gone up and the amount of manpower needed to produce that product has gone down with computers." ("Edward": 1970's young father, 07.06.10)

Similarly scholarly literature addresses the social factors that have impacted on employment. It is understood that the impact of technology on manufacturing and industry sectors has had the effect of deskilling, intensifying and even eliminating jobs. Organisational and technological innovations have significantly changed supply and demand and the way in which companies organise production. The industrial relations implications of this can be seen in changes in skills, relations between companies and their employees, and the organisation of work (Lasierra, 2008).

From the interviews, it became apparent that the first and second cohort of young fathers had many nostalgic memories of their employment. Nostalgic memories connected inhabitants to the Island and allowed them to maintain a collective identity. There was also some impression gained from these cohorts that the UK in general, as well as the Island, had lost a prosperous time economically. In the context of structuration theory, it seemed that their personal agency had deteriorated as a result of changes in the economy and they now felt unappreciated and cheated by economic structures due to neo-liberalism. Furthermore, they believed that there was no loyalty, commitment to or respect for employees anymore regardless of how many years an employee may have spent in one particular company:

"I've always considered to keep your job you needed to be faithful. You do your best for the company but I haven't got that commitment anymore. After I got made redundant after 32 years you start to think I kept my part of the deal, you haven't because I was willing to stay there until I retired you know... but now since I've been working at the jobcentre and I'm still looking for work, if I found something better, I wouldn't consider that I owe them anything I've got no obligation to them whereas I did before." ("Edward": 1970's young father, 07.06.10)

In comparison, it seemed that the third cohort of young fathers had a loss of solidarity with other workers:

"The people who say oh that's it, I'm unemployed, they are the ones who have no ambition of getting a job or work they just sit on their ass and want everything handed to them. I just have very, very little time for people like that. When I did the bedroom fitting, I've worked 90 hours in five days and things like that-putting hours in to earn money and these people just hope that a spectacular job will land in their lap one day and it's not going to happen."
(Sam, 1990's young father, 01.06.10)

From the examined data related to employment relations, it may be argued that close relationships in the workplace, local resources and prosperous periods heightened personal agency. However, social shifts in the economy largely related to free market culture in the 1980s, have promoted current organised patterns of employment with its hierarchies and established political and social roles. As a result, the dramatic economic shifts that the first and second cohort had witnessed have resulted in strong nostalgic feelings and memories of economic stability and progress experienced by previous generations.

6.3 Social capital

All young fathers whilst discussing employment spoke about aspects of what is sociologically understood as social capital. Young fathers mainly discussed utilising their local social networks to gain employment, again illustrating the extent of bonding social capital on the Island. Those young fathers who were uncertain or unclear as to where their life course was leading generally *"waited for chances"* and largely relied on social contacts to gain employment. Wallace (1987) implicitly suggests the importance of social capital on the Isle of Sheppey by discussing that there were differences between young people, who were able to secure regular employment on the Island through networks and those who couldn't, which she referred to as "sinkers" and "swimmers". Reflecting on Putnam (2000), all young fathers discussed the importance of *"word of mouth"* and how social networking has been place specific. Therefore, maintaining a collective identity and a closely knit community was fundamental in regards to job access for these young fathers:

"I had a neighbour and they rung me up and they said they wanted to speak to my mum and they said 'you know we've got a bricklayer to do our wall...but he hasn't got like a labourer' and I had no work and erm I just run round the corner and said: 'Look you need your wall up because its summer time, people just run in your garden, so we'll do it' and the week I done it and the person who I helped, his partner was prison recruitment so they got my an application for prison officer." ("Carl": 2000+ young father, 20.01.10)

Young fathers spoke about parental pressure during the 1950s to mid 1970s, to enter the labour market and contribute towards the family budget. Contribution to the family budget tended to be quite a large proportion of their income which was generally considered the norm amongst those in the family who were working:

"I use to give a third of my money, over a third of it to my mum for housekeeping. It was two pound ten a week I use to give her, which is half of five pound and that was quite a lot and I had a period I was off sick for a little while and social came round and means tested us and they gave me I think it was two pound ten a week and I still had to give my mum two pound of that, but that was one of the things that everybody did I mean unlike now where you're kept erm you had to provide for yourself." ("Edward": 1970's young father, 07.06.10)

Parents of young fathers tended to be responsible for supporting their children into employment, suggesting that parents were the major source of social capital. This highlights the work of Coleman (1990) who suggests that social capital is further developed when families are linked with each other in a variety of community networks. Therefore most young fathers had informally accessed vacancies through their parents on a number of occasions:

"I mean I worked at the dairy because my dad worked there, when I went to Tudor Glass my mum was a cleaner there, my sister-in-law told me about the job at the car company; so she knew it was coming up before it was advertised so I got in early at the car company."
("Edward": 1970's young father, 07.06.10)

From examining the above statements, it may be suggested from the perspective of structuration theory, that some young fathers were conditioned to be accepting of the employment offered to them; suggesting limited personal agency and that the family was a powerful structural force. From the examination of the data, they suggested that social capital was not as applicable as it once was, which was linked to deindustrialisation. For instance, over more recent years, readily available employment has been scarce on the Isle of Sheppey. Therefore, most young fathers have largely relied on their social contacts to help gain them employment. Social contacts have been a typical resource required for social capital according to Bourdieu (2000), Putnam (2000) and Coleman (1990). However, due to the extent of local inhabitants relying on their local social contacts, therefore bonding social capital, it has proved in recent years increasingly difficult for young fathers to get a job through social networks. This suggests that the exclusivity and intimacy of the local community is not as powerful as it once was. According to young fathers,

this is due to many vacancies already being taken by another close personal contact, or that it had already been decided internally as to who was getting a job:

"Social contacts, I mean you look for jobs that are advertised and nine times out of ten they've already picked who they're taking on. I mean I've never actually gone for a job with no one that I knew and got it, it's always been someone's put in a word for me, someone's done this or someone's done that and that's the way I've got every single job. I've never actually gone to the jobcentre and said oh that one looks alright and got it, it just doesn't happen. I suppose with the bigger companies it does but even then it's sort of if you know the managers... one of the biggest problems you know trust takes years to build and seconds to lose you know it does go on, on this Island." ("Sam": 1990's young father, 01.06.10)

From the examination of the data, there is a strong relationship between social capital and personal agency. Social capital is initially generated by parents and transmitted to their children, which is evident in Edward's quote. Social capital then proceeds to build through community, norms and values, trust, cohesion and consensus (Dale and Sparkes, 2010).

Several young fathers commented that they had not taken part in any job interviews, which suggests that they are now trying to use bridging social capital as bonding social capital has become somewhat redundant. Young fathers said that when going for a job through a personal contact there was no need to take part in an interview, because many employers based their decisions on the contact that recommended the young father. In most cases it was their father who had recommended them. Employers would see their father as being responsible for his son's actions at work. According to the first and second cohort of young fathers, employers also based their decision on whether the employee was married and was supporting a family. Employing men in such circumstances would ensure reliability and positive attitudes to the job and to the firm. It may be suggested form this that conforming to traditional public discourses of fatherhood increased young fathers' chances of gaining employment. Young fathers also commented that there was less emphasis on qualifications and more of a focus on the social contact's recommendations of the young father. However, in more recent years, young fathers who had found formally advertised vacancies struggled with a formal interview process, due to their lack of experience in a formal interview situation:

"My interview for Solarglass was I sat down in front of the manager and he said to me: 'You're Tom's son?' 'Yeah!' I was sitting there in my tie, scared stiff and he said 'Right you're Tom's son, right start Monday I don't want him in here fighting your battles, see you later'. And that was my interview and that's the only interview I've ever had."

("Oliver": 1990's young father, 06.05.10)

"It's not what you know either, it's not about how many GCSE's you've got or what qualifications you've got it's who you know do you know what I mean you know if you know someone who owns an electrical company and your mum gets on with them really well then that's how I got the job working in the hospital." ("Chris": 2000+ young father, 09.06.10)

Young fathers discussed the extent social capital had changed due to much more rigid hierarchies at work and limited local resources. All young fathers, up until the 1970s, discussed how they and their parents maintained friendships with those higher up the hierarchy, such as directors and managers, which made job vacancies accessible for their family members:

"My second job, mum was a cleaner there and she spoke to the boss Mr Smith. You don't have bosses like that you know, he owned the company and my mum was a cleaner when she spoke to him...I suppose you don't get near those sort of people...and in the end all I was, was a pound note sign on a spreadsheet at the end of the day." (Edward": 1970's young father, 07.06.10)

From examining the above quotes, they support some of the arguments of Bourdieu (2000) by suggesting that hierarchies have in the past been quite fluid and individuals from lower down the work hierarchy could establish relations, therefore building social capital with those higher up hierarchical ladder. The above quotes also resonate with the findings of Putnam (2000), suggesting that the changing nature of employment, economic climate and the established work hierarchies have affected the extent in which social capital can support young fathers, particularly in the third cohort to gain employment. Social networking has been described in testimonial accounts and the literature as vital in gaining employment (Putnam, 2000; Bourdieu, 2000; Coleman, 1990).

6.4 Unemployment

The academic field has highlighted that manufacturing employment in the UK has been rapidly declining and is generally considered as a sector that is vulnerable to redundancies (Kenway and Kraack, 2004). Local documentation has stated that Sheppey's manufacturing sector has experienced huge job losses; and in comparison with neighbouring areas these losses compare unfavourably with Sittingbourne and Faversham. For example, statistics show that during 1998-2002 there was a total of 1,343 job losses in Sheppey, compared to 658 in Sittingbourne and 327 in Faversham (Swale Borough Council, 2002). However, recent statistics argue that there has been a reduction in unemployment claimants in Sittingbourne and Sheppey. The Office of National Statistics' monthly unemployment figures have detailed a fall year on year of those claiming Job Seekers Allowance in the constituency of Sittingbourne and Sheppey (ONS, 2013).

Figures released by the ONS in April 2013 show that the claimant count compared to the previous year is down by 9.1%. Figures released in 2010 show the number of claimants is 164 lower than in 2009. In 2010, ONS statistics also showed Sittingbourne and Sheppey's claimant count falling by 164 claimants. However, this took the count to 2,533, compared to 2,988 in April 2013, illustrating that the claimant count has been fluctuating around a relatively stable level, especially when compared to the claimant count of 2,457 in July 2009. Sittingbourne and Sheppey had the 150th highest count of the 650 UK constituencies in 2010, suggesting a correlation with supposed high levels of unemployment compared to the national picture (ONS, 2013).

According to previous local statistics, the Isle of Sheppey has suffered significantly from unemployment. In 1993 Sheerness West had the highest unemployment rate in Swale at 22.4%, whilst the average unemployment rate for Swale in 1993 was 10.9%[59]. Focusing on the six wards on the Isle of Sheppey[60], between 1993 and 2002, although the unemployment rate dropped, Sheerness East (5.3%) and Sheerness West (6.6%) in 2002 continued to have the highest unemployment rates compared to an average of 2.6% in Swale (Swale Borough Council, 2002).

Whilst unemployment figures for the Isle of Sheppey have improved over the past ten years (ONS, 2013); Sheerness itself has had a long standing shortage of jobs, which has significantly contributed to the ongoing deprivation in the area (Brown, 2008). It has also been suggested from testimonial accounts that social capital has recently had less of an impact in supporting young fathers gain employment on the Island than in previous years. The first and second cohort of young fathers described the incidence of unemployment as very rare during the 1950s to the late 1970s. This was due to employment in the manufacturing and industry sector being easily accessible and readily available on the Island. The first and second cohort who were skilled or semi skilled manual labourers mainly described their employment as heavy, dirty, quite long hours and in some cases dangerous, which in accordance with the literature, conformed to traditional understandings of working class masculinity (Willis, 1977).

Manual work on the production lines, particularly in factories, included long unsocial hours and was mainly described as tedious and repetitive work. It was apparent from the interviews that the first and second cohort maintained a very strong work ethic, which was a major component of being a financial provider. A strong work ethic was assumed, based upon their discussion of

[59] Statistics were gathered during a recession.
[60] Six wards for the Isle of Sheppey are: Eastern, Minster Cliffs, Queenborough and Halfway, Sheerness East, Sheerness West and Sheerness Central.

witnessing their father going to work and in some instances their mother working part-time to support the family. This impacted on the social norms and conventions in terms of what was regarded as "work" and part of "family life" for these young fathers, which encouraged them to be in full time employment:

"My mum, growing up as a kid, my mum's always had three jobs, my dad's always worked constantly I mean he worked in Abbotts for a bit, been working for 24-25 years and err he's always worked, if he's not working in Abbotts he was working underneath a car do you know what I mean, he was always earning money and my mum was the same she had to keep a roof over me and my brothers head and I guess growing up everybody's had to work and I just thought that was the norm." ("Chris": 2000+ young father 09.06.10)

"I'm a provider you know that's how I've always felt I was the provider you know and it's installed you know my dad was the provider, dad went out to work he was never sat at home you know as soon as he was made redundant they were off and he was a bricklayer and as soon as he was laid off he was off somewhere else, doing something else." ("Oliver": 1990s young father, 06.05.10)

Structural factors were identified as possible reasons behind the increasing number of those unemployed and the lack of employment on the Island. The first and second cohort of young fathers identified how they felt the Kingsferry Bridge discouraged potential investors moving to the Island despite cheaper land and industrial rentals being significantly lower than on the mainland. The bridge was associated with long delays of road traffic from allowing marine traffic to pass through.

Swale Borough Council (2002) believed that Sheppey Crossing, completed in 2006, would be a solution to disruption and long traffic delays caused by the Kingsferry Bridge. Regardless of structural change, since the completion of the Sheppey Crossing, only a small number of retail investors have become established on the Island, which has encouraged more part-time employment for predominantly female workers. Brown (2008) suggests that the opening of the Sheppey Crossing has enabled local inhabitants to travel more easily off the Island to other local retailers. This has left some local retail outlets not being able to compete with the large mainland shopping centres.

Another factor affecting young fathers gaining employment was the high cost of public transport. Kent Careers Services (2001) noted that young people in the Kent area are often reluctant to work outside their immediate area. This is often due to relatively high costs of public transport, which may be considered a structural constraint on personal agency. A number of young fathers in the third cohort commented on the price of a return bus fare from Sheerness to Minster

totalling nearly five pounds. Cost of transport limited mobility and made young fathers quite selective in terms of choosing work.

Arriva PLC provides approximately eight bus journeys a day to Sittingbourne every working day. On Saturdays, the number of journeys is reduced to four and on Sundays the service does not operate. On the Island, Arriva operates a three-route bus service around the Island (Swale Borough Council, 2002). From Leysdown there are fifteen bus journeys on school days, spread to reflect morning and afternoon peak-time travelling hours. Between the peak times the service is reduced to one bus every hour. The last bus service from Sheerness to Leysdown departs at 5:55pm and after 6:40pm all bus services from Leysdown terminate (Swale Borough Council, 2002).

Sheppey has two railway stations, situated in Sheerness and Queenborough. On weekdays and Saturdays there are two train journeys every hour to Sittingbourne and one per hour on Sundays. At Sittingbourne, passengers from Sheppey can connect with trains to London or other Kent destinations.

From examining the data, it is suggested by the second cohort of young fathers that the Conservative government during 1979-1990 embarked upon destroying the collective provisions for those who were *"working class",* such as the partially controlled economy, dockers and trade unions. Initiating a larger free market created a sense of fear related to the uncertainly and insecurity for the future:

"It's not a fear, like a quaking scardy feel, it's a fear for the future, where is the future? It's like she's come in[61] *and thrown all the pieces up in the air and they've fallen down randomly and it wasn't looking too good for the likes of me." ("Tim": 1980's young father, 10.06.10)*

"I must say it Maggie Thatcher mucked it all up, not that I'm very political but we fought a tribunal for our loss of jobs and we won…before they hit the dockyard they hit the miners and when you get a Prime Minister like she was that allowed the police to stop people at the Dartford Crossing you know what hope you got? It's like a police state because if they see four blokes in the car they'd stop the car and say 'no you can't go through', you can't do that, that's not freedom at all and I know people who were stopped because they were going up to support the miners they were stopped at the Dartford tunnel and they said 'nah sorry you're not going.' It was ridiculous and we put her into the power that was the worst thing, it was our fault." (Robert, 1960's young father, 19.01.10)

There was little contrast in terms of the above statements from most of the first and second cohort. Based on the literature, structural forces such as the government were responsible for the

[61] Reference to Margaret Thatcher, leader of the Conservative party from 1979-1990.

state economy. In the context of structuration theory, the breakdown of the state economy and encouragement of individualisation were understood by the second cohort to have suppressed their agency and had ultimately failed working class communities. Young fathers, particularly in the second cohort, referred to a right to work and a right to have this work provided by the state:

"We had a right to work, we had a right to expect a job and if you didn't give us a job don't blame us because we want to work, we expect to work, it was a given."
("Tim": 1980's young father, 10.06.10)

From the perspective of Giddens (1984), the above statement suggests a certain amount of agency in the sense that a young father is able to sell or withdraw his free labour in the marketplace. However, there is some argument that extensive change in political ideology, which threatens a young father's ontological security will result in resistance to change, due to the refusal of views and ideas that oppose the ideas an individual already holds (Giddens, 1991).

The first and second cohort of young fathers who were employed in the manufacturing and industry sector had felt empowered through the support of the trade unions[62] up until the 1980s. They said the support of the trade unions allowed them to be social agents who could withdraw their labour and maintain some agency in the workplace:

"We're refusing to go to work what's the problem? To me that was normal, we had a right to withdraw our labour we had a right to play a part in society... I've always had a problem with any sort of authority especially any authority that has any power over me obviously in pre-Thatcher years they didn't have much power so it was more of a relationship of equals."
("Tim": 1980's young father, 10.06.10)

From the interpretations of some of the interviews, the first and second cohort of young fathers suggested that whilst the Conservatives were in power, it had led to their embittered feelings and experiences of political ideologies:

"I think we were radicalised as this new government came in. I mean I was a founder member of an unemployment rights group we use to give out benefits, information on we founded that in the local Labour hall." ("Tim": 1980s young father, 10.06.10)

According to scholarly literature (Evans, 2004), possible reasons behind such strong views and reactions, particularly from the working class was that the Conservative government during 1979-1990 practiced an anti-collectivist approach, which was typical of working class communities. The organisation of production and industry has been gradually replaced by new,

[62] Trade unions are an organisation of workers responsible for achieving common goals and empowering individuals in the workplace (Musolf, 2003).

diverse and highly fragmented divisions of labour, promoting a free market ethic. Such economic diversity has caused a breakdown in local social cohesion, which was a key aspect of industrial communities and is believed to have blurred traditional working class identities.

Pahl and Wilson (1986) investigated the common problems amongst employers and local recruitment. They suggested that the needs of local employers were so diverse that it made it difficult for employers to recruit largely from the local area. It was also regularly cited by employers that unemployment benefit was the reason for people "choosing" not to work and they identified some potential employees on the Island as "unemployable:"

"There are a large number of people...who don't want to work. There are people who come here for jobs and it has been patently obvious; "If I'm only training, I can earn more on the dole." There are lots of people like that." (Local employer on the Island, cited in Pahl and Wilson, 1986)

Furthermore, Pahl and Wilson identified that the majority were labelled "unemployables" because they chose not to take up unsuitable or poor-quality jobs. It is evident from the examination of the data and the literature, that collectivist views have declined since the 1980s and young fathers in the third cohort have adapted more to neo-liberal principles, suggesting that individuals did not necessarily engage their own agency by taking responsibility for gaining employment or accepting menial jobs that may be available, such as a cleaning job:

"You could, you could argue point that there's not a great deal of jobs here but if you put yourself out, that is I think the problem is with people that they see it like a cleaning job and they don't want to do it because they think it is beneath them but then again you're earning money so you've got to do it you know." ("Lewis": 1990's young father, 21.12.09)

The above quote suggests that in comparison to previous cohorts, there is a growing acceptance of neo-liberal principles. However, there is evidence to suggest that some young fathers from other cohorts have taken on menial jobs to support their families:

"I went to the old labour exchange...I went up to the counter and I said 'I want a job' and I'll never forget he said 'Well there ain't none.' I said' Well your job is to find me a job...I ain't leaving here until you find me a bloody job mate'... and he must of thought right I'll get you, he said 'Right down the coal yard shovelling coal go and report to the manager.'"
("Harry": 1950's young father, 04.06.10)

"I worked with my dad, I did a couple of odd jobs here and there as well like painting and decorating and plastering for local firms, erm worked in a bait and tackle shop, I was a contract cleaner, I was hospital maintenance I've done loads of jobs none that you need qualifications for just dead end jobs." ("Chris": 2000+ young father, 09.06.10)

From analysing the data, it seems that young fathers in this study assessed the practicalities and short-term future of jobs being offered to them. There is some suggestion that young fathers, particularly from the third cohort, largely considered the financial implication of leaving social benefits to gain employment. Therefore it is not necessarily the case of not accepting menial jobs; it is whether menial jobs or short-term contracts can become long-term and possibly provide a better lifestyle than social benefits. To support this assumption, Swale Borough Council (2002) estimated that a lone parent with a six month old child, in social housing and claiming all benefit entitlements would need to earn a minimum of £18,000 per annum to be better off working. However, local employers indicated that there were few employees on the Island that paid wages at this or a higher level (Swale Borough Council, 2002).

6.5 Competition

Most young fathers discussed to some extent the local integration of Eastern Europeans, particularly Polish people, who they felt were mainly responsible for the lack of "adequate" employment on the Island. According to the online Office of National Statistics in 2009, 2.7% other white groups[63] were resident in the Swale area in comparison to 90.4% white British residents. There has been a slow but steady increase of other White groups in Swale, for example in 2001 the percentage stood at 1.3%. According to young fathers, Eastern European immigrants were very successful in finding employment because they accepted the minimum wage[64] and worked extremely long hours, which benefited businesses. Young fathers believed such factors made Eastern Europeans favourable amongst local employers.

According to the literature, there is quite a concentration of European immigrants in areas where wages are relatively low, such as the hospitality sector, cleaning, agriculture and construction. It is also suggested that many Eastern Europeans as well as other immigrants in European countries work at rates lower than their native-born counterparts (Dench et al, 2006; McLaren and Johnson, 2010).

Whilst discussing this topic with these young fathers, it became apparent during the interviews that their views were not based on overt racism, although some aspects of the discussion maintained feelings of frustration, which was evident as discussed in chapter three. There was also some resonance with the discussion of political ideologies and ontological security discussed in the previous section. In the context of place-attachment, dramatic changes that have

[63] Other white groups include those originally from Eastern Europe.
[64] Minimum wage is £6.08 for workers aged 21 and over. £4.98 for workers aged 18-20 (DirectGov.co.uk).

taken place in the local community have encouraged some young fathers to implement forms of self closure[65] in a particular space to sustain distance from others who are effectively viewed as inferiors or outsiders. This helps form part of the protective shell, which helps maintain ontological security as well as identity of place (Giddens, 1991).

The impression gained whilst discussing this topic suggested concerns related to financial threat, and feelings of being forced into a position where they were unable to financially support their family. This *"affected the person they are"*, which may be conceived as being related to their identity as the main breadwinner and maintaining personal agency in the local economy. In the majority of cases, young fathers described Eastern Europeans as exceptionally hard workers and very good at their jobs. According to the young fathers, this made it understandable that employers favoured Eastern European workers. Nevertheless, they felt it important that economic structures prioritised British workers as a matter of loyalty to British citizens. Young fathers argued that a lack of loyalty from local employers, fierce Eastern European competition, and the impracticalities of a family man working such long hours for low pay, were the main causes for the current benefit culture on the Island:

"I mean for me the Polish, they work hard and they work for little money... yeah ok if they want to come down that's fine but don't take stuff off of us first, what's ours first, our jobs should be for us then them...These Polish that get greedy take 50-60 hours a week and all down the docks it's just too greedy and then you got all us but no jobs, tell me how that's right, this is our country." ("Daniel": 2000+ young father, 19.11.09)

"They are part of the trouble, they will walk in there for £6.50 an hour because they're all living in one house and there's like 200 of them in one house and they're you know, that's the problem we're getting is that they can offer £6.50 an hour because a Pole will come in and he'll earn that amount of money, keep 50 quid for themselves and send the rest back home. But he's quite happy living in his one bedroom but I have a family, I've got to run everything and it just wouldn't be financially viable for me." ("Oliver": 1990's young fathers, 06.05.10)

Since 2004 a large number of foreign workers, mainly from Eastern Europe, have settled in the UK with a significant proportion of these heading to rural areas. Such migration has played a positive part in filling labour gaps and overcoming skills shortages. However, migrants often live in overcrowded conditions, which can add pressure on local housing markets (Gallent et al (2008). Local documentation from Pahl and Wallace (1980) had identified that competition had always been a concern in the local workplace. They found that employers in manufacturing industries on the Island increasingly preferred to employ female factory workers. This was due

[65] Self closure refers to inhabitants who decide not to engage with others who are not local to the community, typically identified as outsiders (Dixon and Durrheim, 2004).

to women being on lower rates of pay, being generally categorised as semi-skilled workers and more likely to be employed on a part time basis.

The first and second cohort reflected on the changing nature of loyalty and commitment in the workplace, which threatened job security. From the examination of the data, young fathers in the first and second cohort experienced little in terms of an enforced hierarchical structure in the workplace as illustrated in section 6.3, as most managers and directors who were generally local to the Island, formed friendships amongst their employees. Employees felt secure and cared for in this type of workplace and remained loyal and committed by working at one particular company for a long period of time. The impression gained from the interviews were that the first and second cohort felt saddened by the dissolution of commitment, loyalty and friendships in the workplace, due to the growing and rigid hierarchy at work, which they had come to experience in later life:

"There was always the manager, the top management but obviously the relationship we had at Solarglass he knew me, he knew my wife, he knew my kids you know what I mean we all grew up there and it was funny it wasn't a family run business but it was a family because we all knew, I knew he had a heart attack and you knew a lot of stuff about people."

("Oliver": 1990's young father, 06.05.10)

"My foreman said your little daughter's been taken ill he said 'Your daughter's been taken ill, she's been taken to hospital, a cars waiting for you at the gate.' You know not 'Do you want to go or would like today off? Well I suppose you better go.' Sort of thing it was 'Drop everything, you don't do nothing we'll tidy up for you, you get yourself over there' and that was the attitude in those days to families and things like that, you worked yes but if anything went wrong the firm would bend over backwards to help you." ("Jack": 1960's young father, 24.03.10)

This is contrasted with the loss of solidarity in recent years:

"I worked for that company then for 32 years since we started, I started at the bottom...I just taught a young lad how to do the job...and then within three months of him starting, as I say, I taught him how to do my job, or the bulk of it, and they got rid of me on my £25 000 with the company car, and the company phone, and company petrol and kept him on his £12 000! Thanks very much, so I was stuffed, I was 57." ("Edward": 1970's young father, 07.06.10)

There may be some suggestion from the examination of the data that the growth of mobility and migration have modified the social structure on the Isle of Sheppey. In relation to structuration theory, high levels of unemployment and variations in job opportunities linked to competition have potentially constrained personal agency and the social relationships with Eastern European immigrants in particular. Economic change, which promotes a free market ethic rather than a controlled market, has had a major impact upon how the young fathers in the study viewed employment and their attitudes towards employers and the company itself.

6.6 Welfare dependency

Although interviewees attributed the lack of employment on Sheppey to the changes introduced by the Conservative government in the 1980s, the lack of employment predicted them. The Isle of Sheppey in the late 1970s, according to a newspaper article had a reputation of being an *"Island on the dole"*, with consistently *"appalling jobless figures,"* particularly for young people leaving school at the time (Sheppey Gazette, 1978). More recent media coverage on welfare dependency on the Isle of Sheppey has been published nationally. The Sun (2010) reported on Anita Hull (38), whose family lived in a newly built four-bedroom home in Minster on the Isle of Sheppey. Anita and her husband (46) were both unemployed and had thirteen children. Anita and Steve have not worked since 1989, after the birth of their first child, Troy, now 20 and their benefits-funded income totalled £38,324 a year. Both Steve and Anita reported that they would find it very difficult after this long period of unemployment to go back to work; and that George Osborne's proposal to limit hand outs to £26,000 a year was *"completely out of order"*. Seven young fathers since the early 1980s discussed being welfare dependent at some point. However they argued that the extent of welfare dependency on the Isle of Sheppey is magnified due to the fact that it is an Island, and it is not necessarily a social concern related specifically to the community:

"But you'll find that anywhere whether you be in London, Medway towns, Scotland, here you'll find it, but it seems more magnified here, everything seems so magnified here because we're such a close community." ("Charlie": 1970's young father, 05.07.10)

The first and most of the second cohort of young fathers emphasised social support as being more the problem rather than the solution for supporting those who are welfare dependent. Young men who were fathers during the 1950s to early 1970s spoke about being financially responsible as a father and the harsh reality for their families if they were unemployed. They explained that such an accommodating social support system has made it "acceptable" for local families to be welfare dependent and as a result a culture of welfare dependency has formed on the Island:

"I think it's a good thing now that they've brought out this where you've got to prove erm whether you're fit for work. I mean I don't know...I mean before benefits you didn't eat but there isn't that option anymore." ("Edward": 1970's young father, 05.06.10)

It was suggested that upbringing and parenting, which promoted independence had a fundamental impact upon their outlook towards social support. Examining the above statement

suggests a pre World War II world view; suggesting that some young fathers, particularly in the first cohort, would not consider benefits as an option to support their families. However, the first and to some extent second cohort did not feel constrained, due to readily available employment. Since the 1980s, social change in the economy has impacted upon the agency of working class young men and has resulted in some relying on social support. Yet despite the first and second cohort of young fathers being aware of socio-economic change leading to possibly unemployment, they largely disregarded it as being a causal factor of welfare dependency in recent years. Mostly, they viewed young parenthood today as a *"social money making tool"* rather than progression from marriage, which most found themselves:

"It's definitely changed in the last two generations, my opinion is it's too easy you know there's no responsibility on anyone anymore, erm it's not your fault if you get pregnant and it's not the boy's fault for getting you pregnant, you know, nobody's liable for it apart from the government." ("Edward": 1970's young father, 05.06.10)

"It's the attitude it's a mental attitude of whether, if you want to work you'll work and if you don't you won't, because they've got that option now but I mean for what you used to get I don't think you had that option, you could do it but you'd be poorer for it, now they seem to do well out of it, they seem to be able to get everything everyone else has got without working; so I mean I have always tried to work because that's the way I was brought up."
("Robert": 1960's young father, 19.01.10)

Similarly, as part of Wallace's (1987) study she asked a sample of young people on the Isle of Sheppey about their attitudes towards marriage, children and unemployment. 47% said that they would not marry if they were unemployed, compared to 35% who said they would. However, 72% said that they would have children whilst they were unemployed, suggesting that those with irregular employment were just as likely to have had children by the time they were twenty one as those with regular jobs.

The first and second cohort of young fathers suggested that the apparent lack of work ethic amongst local young fathers today has had an effect on the commonalities and responsibilities they shared with local families on the Island. Jack, a father during the 1960s, emphasised how strong the work ethic was amongst *"traditional Swampies."* This made it difficult for Jack to believe that benefit dependency was associated with those who were originally from the Island.

In contrast Oliver, a father from the 1990s who was originally from the Island and who had only recently been made redundant after twenty five years in the same company, argued that it was not necessarily a case of lacking work ethic or being a particularly "lazy" community. He believed it was based upon the Isle of Sheppey lacking mobility and being a relatively self-

contained labour market, with a high proportion of manufacturing industry that has rapidly declined. It is also based on the current economic climate and a high number of redundancies being made generally, which has left many *"original swampies"* as well as others feeling guilty and ashamed about being out of work:

"You'll probably find that a lot of people are in my position where they've worked all their life and now because of this recession they're going and you're getting a lot more older people, a lot more of my type of people that have worked all their life and they all of a sudden been kicked in the nuts and now having to go down and do that[66]." ("Oliver": 1990's young father, 06.05.10)

From examining the data, young fathers in the third cohort referred to popular public discourse related to young parents on social benefits. They felt that in particular, older inhabitants on the Island believed largely in such discourses about young parents. The third cohort of young fathers argued against such claims made by the first and second cohort by discussing how their work ethic was not lost and they too wanted to work and support their young families. From the interview discussions, they presented themselves as having a sense of duty and responsibility, and part of their identity was to support their families. It was implicit that they believed that being employed and being the main breadwinner was a major part of their role as a father, regardless of whether their relationship with the mother had broken down. They argued that not only could social benefits not support their families financially, but young fathers became limited in engaging with their child in terms of recreational activities, which they understood to be a major part of being a good and engaging father:

"I want to get up, I want to earn the money, I want to support my kids, yeah I'm not with the mothers, but that's life but you've still got to support them, still want to take them out places and that you can't do that on the dole." ("Daniel": 2000+ young father, 23.11.09)

This above statement reflects on the understandings of Giddens (1991) in his argument based on choice within an integrated set of practices or discourses. For example, Daniel has made either an independent or collaborative choice not to be with the mothers of his children. This is understood as the young father succumbing to a 'pure relationship,' which is based on love and personal desires, which is possibly viewed as typical in modern society through his comment about "that's life". It may also suggest that individuals are possibly not in control of personal situations. However being a father is considered to be quite a different type of relationship, which requires a certain degree of obligation, encouraged by public discourses illustrating parenthood as contractual and permanent.

[66] In regards to *"doing that"*, Oliver is referring to the shame that he feels having to go down to the job centre to sign on after being made redundant.

The third cohort commented on the social stigma that is associated with being supported by social benefits. Some young fathers who were made redundant from their jobs emphasised that they *"held off being on benefits for as long as they could."* It is important to consider that there is some possibility that these statements are likely to be adhering to public norms and values, which are discussed in chapter three, section 3.9. Young fathers are unlikely to present themselves at interview as being supported by social benefits, as this is associated with "social scroungers", which is not considered socially and morally acceptable or a particularly strong masculine identity.

The third cohort who were unemployed said they were constantly looking for work. However, during this period they felt unsupported and stigmatised by local institutions and authorities who they felt were responsible in helping them find employment. They deemed certain institutions to be unhelpful and thoughtless about their current situation and felt they were not supported back into employment:

"They look at you as if like you haven't got a job why not? But they won't help you find a job and they try and send you on courses in Dover, but I live on the Island, how are you meant to get from Leysdown that takes an hour to Sheerness to get to Dover and lucky enough they help me find this job but that's the only thing they've done for me in four years since I've been on and off but the youngsters here do get quite judged." ("Carl": 2000+ young father, 20.01.10)

Some within the third cohort said social benefits were a short term solution, however due to high levels of unemployment on the Island they had found themselves in long term unemployment:

"Employment on the Island's rubbish, it really is I've been trying for three years to get a job and that's even before the recession." ("Ryan": 2000+ young father, 10.12.09)

Consequently those young fathers who were on social benefits and were long term unemployed began to develop low self esteem and felt that they lacked confidence in gaining any form of employment:

"It knocks my confidence, you get your hopes up first couple of times I'm like ah this is promising then it all goes down and it is a huge blow to your confidence but now I've learnt not to put your hopes into it." ("Ryan": 2000+ young father, 10.12.09)

Similarly, local documentation has suggested that as way of protection and perhaps the only way of demonstrating some control over their lives is to actively stop looking for work[67] (Wilson, 1986):

"The more you go around looking, the more refusals you get, the deeper the depression becomes...In the end I just packed it up. It wasn't doing me any good mentally, this constant reaction. Then you take this attitude; I just refuse to work, as if you've got a choice!" (Participant: Wilson, 1986)

Wallace (1987) also discussed the effects of unemployment on young people on the Isle of Sheppey. She found that the effects of unemployment were stronger amongst young people interviewed at 21 than when they were being interviewed at 16. This is partly because of the amount of time being unemployed. Long term unemployment was far worse than short term unemployment and many had been out of work for two or three years. The most serious case reported by Wallace in this study was a young man who had been admitted to a psychiatric hospital after attempting suicide and drifting into drug taking and minor delinquency. According to his grandfather, the man had been a hard working pupil at school. His grandfather attributed the suicide attempt to the fact that he had been more than a year without work and had lost all sense of purpose and direction.

Some young fathers, particularly in the first cohort, as well as local documentation have suggested that benefit dependency was an inter-generational concern (Swale Borough Council, 2002). For example, young fathers pointed out that it was likely for individuals to be receiving benefits if they experienced their own parents also receiving benefits. However, Jay stated that due to his parents being supported by welfare benefits for most of his life, he was adamant that he would not rely long-term on social benefits:

"I don't know what it is, I think it's something to do with his back but err like I've been surrounded by benefits all my life and I don't really like it I sort of like want to go out there and earn my own income and earn my own money"[68] ("Jay": 2000+ young father, 21.12.09)

Most young fathers argued that it is the parents who are responsible for the future actions of their children. From the examined data, parents should be proactive in supporting their children gain and maintain education and employment. However, it is important to acknowledge that previous

[67] Recent policy states that claimants of unemployment benefit should be able to work, available to work and actively seeking work. If one of these three components is not met on a weekly basis, claimants risk no payment for that week (Citizens Advice Bureau, 2013).

[68] Whilst this young father was being interviewed for this study he also stated that later that afternoon he was attending a job interview, which had been confirmed to me by a reliable source (young dads worker), suggesting that the quote is valid.

cohorts relied heavily on employment in manufacturing and industry, which has been a declining sector. Therefore, aspirations and potential occupations relied upon by previous cohorts would need to be reconsidered for future generations.

6.7 Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed the changing nature of employment, predominately the breakdown of manual labour on the Island and how this has affected these young fathers. This chapter has also examined the importance of social capital and its importance as a local resource. It has also considered political structures, which have impacted upon the types of employment available and how these have impacted upon the Island. The Isle of Sheppey has been largely known for its manufacturing and industry. The first and second cohorts of young fathers expected a smooth transition into manual labour, generally through apprenticeships or social networking after leaving compulsory education. Before the 1980s, manual labour was described as being plentiful on the Island. From this chapter, it has been apparent in some cases that structures, specifically the lack of manual jobs and the shifting societal emphasis on to a knowledge economy, have been the predominant force, which has restricted personal agency and determined the choices of some of these young fathers, particularly in the second and third cohorts. Since the 1980s, it has become increasingly apparent that structural change has impacted on the transition from education to employment.

Free market culture and the principles of neo-liberalism have been highlighted as one of the major and most detrimental shifts in the economy (Kingdom, 1992; Musolf, 2003; Howell, 2005). Young fathers have been assumed to be able to find work under their own agency, with the limitations placed upon them by masculinity and poor involvement in education being ignored. Since the 1980s, young fathers have experienced insecurity and uncertainty in their employment, which has consequently further constrained their personal agency. It is not the case that structures have been put in place to inhibit the agency of young fathers, rather it seems to be the case that young fathers had relied upon the structures around them in order to exert their own agency and when these structures has been withdrawn, they have failed to adapt.

Several young fathers in the first and second cohort spoke about the extent to which social change and its implications had affected the local economy. According to Dutta (2011), governments previous to the Thatcher government were mainly responsible for regulating the economy, particularly for those who were working in manufacturing and industry; the Thatcher government radically changed positions in the 1980s and adopted ideas that promoted

individualisation and therefore individualism. However, there is some evidence from the local media (Sheppey Gazette, 1978) that the breakdown in manual labour was already becoming a concern. Young fathers during this time period were more familiar with the concept of the collective worker, which strongly opposes the principles of a free market and individualisation. This conforms to the ideas young fathers had subscribed to in their education, assuming that they would satisfy the roles that their fathers had before them, that they would be able to conform to the hegemonic masculine ideal.

Neo-liberal ideas have led to embittered feelings, whereby workers feel that they have in some way been betrayed by employers, which have created hostility amongst those who view Eastern Europeans as competition and financially threatening (Burrell, 2010; McLaren and Johnson, 2010). A number of young fathers have identified that since the economic shifts in the 1980s, there has been a rising number of people unemployed on the Island. As a result, many on the Island are believed to rely long-term on the social benefit system. Whereas these fathers once relied upon nationalised manual industry to provide them with economic support, they now rely on the state to provide them with social benefits, as other forms of support seem to have eluded them.

Social capital has been particularly evident within this chapter and the concept has been useful in demonstrating how it can be maintained in closely knit communities, with economic benefits and job prospects. Relying on social networks has been a major factor for all young fathers in finding employment; young fathers also typically seek support in finding employment from their own fathers (Coleman, 1990). However, social networking through bonding social capital has increasingly become ineffective in supporting young fathers to gain employment due to the limited availability of employment on the Island. This echoes the findings of Putnam (2000) who suggests that bonding social capital can be to a group's disadvantage due to its level of intimacy with one particular group of people who are likely to be in the same situation. Rather bridging social capital is important for these young fathers to prosper. Social capital has been a major non-monetary resource on the Isle of Sheppey, which has assisted young fathers' personal agency through gaining employment. However, social capital has become much more limited on the Island. Young fathers have argued that building social capital through hierarchies at work has changed considerably, due to employer-employee relationships not being as intimate as they once were. This echoes Putnam's (2000) concern that communities are not as involved as they once were. Whilst the young fathers in this study do know their local community, the fragmented nature of the workplace has meant that they glean little benefit from their local networking. As a result, young fathers have become much more reliant on formally accessing employment, which

is a new experience for most of them; this informed their retrospective disappointment in their own attitude to education.

Having assessed the influencing factors on the lives of young fathers, the thesis now presents a picture of the context of fathering on the Island, particularly in terms of fathers as the breadwinner. The thesis has examined the local community, education and employment which go to form the foundation of how young working class men see themselves on the Island, and how this may go on to impact upon the life course of those who become young fathers. In the next chapter I shall go on to examine the process of young fatherhood itself for the participants.

Chapter Seven

Young fatherhood on the Isle of Sheppey

7.0 Introduction

Chapter seven is the final main findings chapter. The aim of this chapter is to achieve a clear understanding of the main focus of my thesis, which is the changing nature of young fathers' experiences, relationships, feelings and understandings of fatherhood on the Isle of Sheppey over the past sixty years. Those interviewed highlighted specific influences that shaped their experiences of fatherhood. There was a correlation between participants as to what these main influences were, which are being focussed on in this chapter. The content of this chapter largely addresses interview data due to limited documentary evidence available locally on the topic.

Firstly, this chapter illustrates the changing discourses of teenage pregnancy and young fatherhood on the Isle of Sheppey. For further context, please refer to table 3.4 for more information on young fathers' profiles. Secondly, the relationship young fathers shared with their biological father and in some instances their stepfather is discussed. This section also discusses the effects that these relationships had on the type of parental approaches taken by young fathers and the type of relationship they shared with their mother. Thirdly, the chapter focuses on the reactions from paternal grandparents towards the young father and the pregnancy. It also considers the identity of the young father and the sudden shift in priorities for the young father. This chapter then discusses the outcome of having a child and the positive relationship formed between the paternal grandmother and the young father. It also considers familial boundaries between being a "grandmother" to the child and being a "mother" to the child.

This chapter then follows by focusing on the roles of the young father within the family unit. It also considers the priorities of young fathers within the family unit and the importance of adapting to familial needs. Employment and the family is then discussed and how the breakdown in industrial employment has affected the identity and male role within the family for most young fathers on the Isle of Sheppey. The chapter will also consider the changes in how current young fathers discuss their role as a father, which has included more domestic and childcare roles, which have generally been associated with the mother. Following this, the chapter then examines the relationship between a young father and his partner where the initial relationship had broken down. This section demonstrates how the changing dynamics of a relationship can impede the relationship young fathers had with their child.

This chapter then follows by discussing structural support available for young fathers over the past sixty years. This section also goes on to discuss how they came to be involved in the Children's Centre and the factors inhibiting young fathers from attending Children's Centres. It then examines the experiences of young fatherhood with regards to their emotional engagement. Finally, the conclusion will illustrate how these themes and findings relate to aspects of structuration theory and socio-theoretical perspectives identified in chapter two.

7.1 Discourses of teenage pregnancy

The Isle of Sheppey has been well documented as having a number of social problems (Kent County Council, 2008), and high levels of teenage pregnancy have been a particular concern on the Island since the 1990s (Kent County Council, 2008). Sheerness East had over 100 conceptions per 1000 girls aged 18 and under, while Leysdown and Warden both had between 75-99 conceptions per 1000 girls (Kent County Council, 2008). There was a dramatic change in discourse, regarding how the first and second cohorts of young fathers identified and discussed "teenage pregnancy." They identified teenage pregnancy as a major concern amongst adolescents who conceived their child outside marriage. From the examination of the data, teenage pregnancy was generally regarded within the local community as immoral and socially unacceptable.

The first cohort of young fathers suggested that young girls in the 1950's and 60's who were pregnant out of wedlock were often stigmatised as *"slags."* Repercussions of pregnancy out of wedlock included taunts and rumours in the local community and not associating with the young girl. During the 1960s, Nicholas had conceived his first child at seventeen out of wedlock. He commented that he and his partner [69] found it extremely difficult, emotionally and psychologically, to overcome the reactions by the local community, which they still feel affected by today. He described how those closest to him and his partner, such as their parents and closest friends, reacted negatively towards them and saw their actions as shameful:

"There was a lot of shouting...my father never did really accept it even though the closest we got was after Zack was born... he never really was 100%. Even on the day we got married he told his bosses that he was working for that 'If anything comes up at the weekend, you know let me know', and I was thinking 'Blimey your son's getting married whether you approve or not that's what's happening.' He was fairly helpful afterwards in trying to give us sort of advice when he saw that we were trying to make the best of it." ("Nicholas:" 1960's young father, 10.06.10)

[69] This interview took place at Nicholas's home where his wife was also present. She also contributed to this particular discussion and supported the claims made by Nicholas.

The analysis suggests that conformity to moral regulations and standards was important in a closely knit community. Nicholas discussed how he and his partner were made to feel ashamed of the pregnancy and as a couple they were prepared to take drastic action, such as running away to ensure that they remained together. Young fathers were familiar with such public perceptions during this period of time. For example, the first cohort spoke about pregnant young girls, some being their own family members, who were often *"sent away"* to distant relatives to have the baby and to remain *"out of view"* from the local community.

These young fathers also said that as soon as the pregnancy was known about by the young couple and their parents, decisions were rapidly made with little input by the young couple. Also echoing Kiselica's (2008) findings in chapter two, section 2.13, rapid decisions were generally made by the parents of the couple, which typically included marriage within a few months of the news to avoid social stigma. Nicholas stated that he and his partner had no involvement in their parents' discussion; and their fate was based solely on the choices made by their parents, which it seemed they had no other choice but to accept:

"We told both sets of parents one evening and within a matter of days both sets of parents got together and sat around the table and discussed what might be best and they emerged like a puff of white smoke at the Vatican and said: 'Well you're getting married' and within 6 weeks we got married. For us we hadn't talked about getting married at that stage, I mean we hadn't even contemplated it when we were talking about what might happen, what the consequences were going to be and what we might do as a reaction to that."

("Nicholas": 1960's young father, 10.06.10)

According to the literature, major structural institutions such as family, marriage and to some extent religion were still largely empowered and maintained morality and traditional social norms during the 1960s. Nevertheless, the 1960s were also considered by scholarly literature as well as the personal testimonies of young fathers as the beginning of challenging social conformity (McRobbie, 2007):

"I think when I grew up in the 50's that was sort of a post-war child in that sense and you felt the sort of degree of freedom I think creeping in...but we were very much when we were teenagers and going into the 60's, The Beatles, Rolling Stones era there seem to be a lot more casual, relaxed sort of atmosphere." ("Nicholas": 1960's young father, 10.06.10)

Up until the 1980s, there still remained some social stigma towards early, unmarried pregnancy as echoed in Formby et al (2010). For example Frankie, a father in the 1980s spoke about getting *"funny looks"* from members of the local community, including those who worked in the local hospital:

"Oh we use to get some funny looks and when Alice was born. I wasn't asked if I wanted to sit on the birth and that and I was in the waiting room and I was getting dirty looks off the cleaner and the nurses and all that." ("Frankie": 1980's young father, 02.06.10)

From examining the data, the first and second cohort of young fathers suggested how moral conduct amongst young people and attitudes towards marriage and stable family life have altered considerably, changing the perception of teenage pregnancy and having illegitimate children. The first and second cohorts suggested that due to a more accepting and liberalised society, young fathers today lack coping skills and fail to accept their paternal responsibility, which was generally enforced through the institution of marriage. To some extent, the impression from the interviews seemed as though the first and second cohort were basing their beliefs on popular media discourses; identifying young fathers today as being runaway dads and young girls having children in order to gain state benefits and social housing:

"They aint got to worry have they? I mean they're paying these young kids to have babies. Wrong isn't it? I don't care what anybody says it's wrong. I go for my meagre pension on Monday morning and there'll be a young girl, sixteen, seventeen, eighteen in front of me, one in a push chair and one in her belly, there be another one behind, another one by the side of her push chair and you can't help but overhear in this little post office and they've never done a day's work in their life and they're getting six or seven times more money than me and that does make me wild because we didn't get nothing unless we worked for it."

("Harry": 1950's young father, 04.06.10)

The first and most of the second cohort of young fathers agreed that once you became a father you accepted the responsibility, which was largely based on financially providing for the family. From the perspective of the literature, this may be seen as an acceptance of the perspective of neo-liberalism, which encourages individuals to work and provide independently of the welfare state. However, there is some contradiction in discourses within modern society. For example, individuals are expected to provide for themselves and the family but individualisation (Beck and Beck Gurnsheim, 2002) and individualism (Giddens 1991) can lead to less commitment to marriage, which may leave dependents vulnerable. Nicholas suggested that in the 1950's the brutality of warfare[70] and *"life affirming experiences"* had built coping skills and made them more respectful and responsible. They also stressed that there is a lack of marriage amongst young parents today, as well as persistent breakdowns in two parent families, leading to a lack of commitment particularly from young fathers.

[70] Reference to the Second World War (1939-1945).

During the interviews, the first and second cohort did not make much comment on the age of young parents today unless they were particularly young[71]. On average, the first and second cohort became fathers between the ages of 20-22. From the examination of the data, the main concern related to young parenthood according to these two cohorts was a lack of *"natural progression,"* suggesting that some of the fundamental transitions from adulthood to parenthood had been blurred for young parents today:

"I think twenty two was about the average age, it was a natural honest decent thing to do for most people. You still had your rebels but I think people respected each other more and you respected other people and everyone was married and that's probably why more marriages were sticking together than what they are now. I mean they now go to social services and get a flat and everything paid for and go and have a baby and they'll buy them a pram and everything else." ("Harry": 1950's young father, 04.06.10)

"In those days we did, we knew that if you were going to be a father you had responsibilities, I think you accepted it more back in those days than today, today they just do a runner, 'Oh the state will keep her' you know but in those days we didn't think that way or at least most of them didn't." ("Jack": 1960's young father 24.03.10)

Despite the first and second cohort of young fathers highlighting that irresponsible, absent fathers were a rarity when they became fathers, Jack did claim that there were some fathers during that time who were not responsible for their offspring. Nevertheless, they were made to be accountable for their child primarily by their fathers who were authoritative figures who insisted that financial support was given:

"You got 10 bob a child and that was the father's allowance and I know that because I had a couple of mates who put the cart before the horse but that's what it was, it was 10 bob a week, no arguments like 'I haven't got this, I haven't got that' like a lot of them do these days, it was 10 bob and that's what you paid and of course that's another thing you'll find fathers of the father made sure he paid it an' all you know not 'I can't pay it this week', 'Oh yes you can' I think looking back we had a bigger sense of responsibility mainly because we were told we had to, I mean I didn't have my father but I had my uncle." ("Jack": 1960's young father 24.03.10)

From examining the data based on the first and second cohort, it may be argued that young fathers today have a greater degree of choice. The changing nature of marriage and family life may have affected the commitment, security and responsibility of young fathers and their families today. However, the radical notion of shotgun marriages[72] and keeping the pregnant mother out of view of the local community is not necessarily a favourable or ideal approach to handling "young parenthood" or pregnancy outside marriage.

[71] References to 13-15 year olds having children were generally abstract statements, suggesting that they had little evidence to support the point they were making.
[72] Shotgun marriage is a forced marriage and in some instances is related to an unplanned pregnancy (Anitha and Gill, 2009).

7.2 Parental relationships

The first and second cohort of young fathers mostly described their family of origin as a two-parent family. In contrast, the majority of the third cohort identified that their family unit had broken down and they were either in a single parent family or a step parent family. In relation to the literature, it is typically understood that a two-parent family is more stable and supportive to a child's development, whereas single-parent families can present a lot more adversity both to child and parent (Jaffee et al, 2001; Murray, 1990). All young fathers felt that they were emotionally closer to their mother than their father. The first and second cohort believed that this was because their fathers worked long shifts or were serving in the forces. Consequently, their father would be working unsocial hours or not be at home for relatively long periods of time. The literature suggests that young working class men subscribe to ideas of hegemonic masculinity, seeing the man of the family as providing the function of breadwinner (Connell, 2000; Kane, 2006). Generally young fathers who were part of a two-parent family identified their fathers as respected figures of authority within the family. This was then reflected in how young fathers were willing to accept masculine roles in relation to their own children. However, their emotional attachment to their mother, some felt that they had struggled to build an emotional attachment to their children due to feeling emotionally detached from their father:

"Being a dad, what I would change is I wish I could hug them more easily and like mine it doesn't feel right and that's from my dad. My dad was so, I mean I never saw him without his shirt on you know it was like we were the kids and I don't know it felt like we were totally separated, never a hug I can't ever remember that, even when he was dying, so that is something I would really like to be able to do even now. I've done it but it feels awkward."

("Edward": 1970's young father, 07.06.10)

"He even said to me; 'You call me dad at work or embarrass me at work I'll take you outside and I'll knock you out.' Because he wasn't into that it was always a "man" thing and it was always 'Alright mate' but it was never the case where I could give him a cuddle because he was a man you know what I mean and you don't do that. I mean even now you know there's no emotion." ("Oliver": 1990's young father, 09.05.10)

The third cohort of young fathers who were brought up in a one parent or step family[73] tended to have a turbulent relationship with their biological father and their stepfather. Several young fathers in step families spoke about being physically disciplined by their stepfather, which in some cases weakened the relationship they had with their mother as they felt that she did not intervene or was in favour of their stepfather's actions. Chris, a current young father, had experienced a particularly abusive relationship with his stepfather. Nevertheless, Chris spoke

[73] Four young fathers in the third cohort grew up in either a one parent or step parent family.

about making a conscious effort not to resort to any type of physical discipline and felt that there were less harmful but effective approaches in disciplining his child:

"I was just a very angry young man and having kids I'd never think like of hurting my daughters like my mum's ex partner hurt me do you know what I mean? I think I would never fucking do that, I would never raise my hand to them never. I was smacked as a kid not being beat or anything like that if I was naughty. I would get a smack on the bum or a smack on the hand but even that I think it's wrong it's all about the naughty corner or the naughty step, take three minutes out, time out and stuff like that I'd never raise my hand to my kids and I never will ever there's no need for violence at all no need." ("Chris": 2000+ young father, 09.06.10)

Some young fathers who were from a one parent family felt that the relationship that they had with their biological father was uncaring and in some cases non-existent. As a result, some young fathers maintained a positive relationship with another male member of the family, often an uncle or grandfather. It is suggested that young fathers strove to have an emotional attachment to at least one male member of his family. They described their relationship with the male member of the family as being caring and intimate; this included having a paternal figure to talk to and engage with, which they felt were the main aspects of a father and son relationship:

"Granddad was there, he listened to me, he understood me, he gave me the attention I needed I mean I was alone, I was a loner especially in my own home...but he accepted me, he got on with me." ("Ryan": 2000+ young father, 10.12.09)

Despite the relationship between them and their father being fragile, some young fathers made a conscious effort to sustain a close and engaging relationship with him:

"He didn't even know, like if I wanted to spend time with him I would not talk about what was happening at my mum's house do you know what I mean? When I see him I took it as a rare treat do you know what I mean, he would only have me every other weekend or every four or five weeks I'd see him maybe on my birthday and his birthday and Christmas and that would be it through the year and I didn't want to say to him; 'Oh I get beat at home, I'm getting hit about.'"
("Chris": 2000+ young father, 09.06.10)

However, some young fathers who grew up in a one-parent family and had an absent biological father, were quite angry and bitter about their absence. They were adamant that they did not want to build a relationship or even have contact with their biological father:

"Erm, he's still alive, he's back in Newcastle, he friend requested me on Facebook but I'm not interested... he sent me a message on Facebook saying sorry about being a runaway father, weeks like days turned into weeks, weeks turned into months erm I'm just not interested."
("Joshua": 1990's young father, 15.12.09)

Young fathers who identified their father as absent were determined that they would remain engaged and within close proximity to their child, particularly young fathers who were non-resident. Young fathers who had bad experiences of being parented themselves, had absent fathers or had turbulent relationships with their fathers emphasised how much they wanted *"to do the right thing by their child."* This included being in contact with their child, having consistent access to their child and ensuring that they did not make the same mistakes as they felt their father had made with them. They were not, therefore, irresponsible as portrayed in the dominant discourse. This evidence suggests that the popular discourse, particularly in the media, regarding young fathers as 'uninterested', 'absent' or 'deadbeat' is problematic. Political discourses have also represented young parents as failing in their role as parents due to their lack of interest, understanding and engagement (SEU, 1999). However, this evidence suggests that it is not necessarily the individual behaviour of these young fathers that is the problem as political discourses have suggested; in fact the evidence shows that young fathers aim to be there for their child, particularly if they have received bad parenting themselves.

In most cases, negative experiences with biological fathers tended to build a stronger relationship between the young father, their mother and siblings. Nevertheless, they also spoke about their bad behaviour and attitude towards their mother, regardless of whether a paternal figure was present. From examination of the data, it may be suggested that their own father were a major factor in regulating behaviour. One cited explanation in the scholarly literature for lower levels of children's behaviour and well-being in step parent families is that step parents are likely to invest less in their step children than do biological parents (Bzostek, 2008). Low levels of behaviour and wellbeing are most prevalent amongst adolescents living in stepfamilies formed through divorce and remarriage (Bzostek, 2008).

Most young fathers tended to build a bond with their father by sharing the same common interests and in particular through sport and music. Young fathers also suggested that having common interests with their children, unrelated to the gender of their child, allowed them to form an intimate bond. For example, Oliver spoke about some of his fondest memories of engaging with his daughters who took a keen interest in his job as a lorry driver. He regularly engaged with them by taking them on journeys up and down the UK:

"Evie and Lily wanted to come with me, now I find that quite strange because they loved it, they thought it was brilliant you know the seat moves up and down Dad, look at your steering wheel you know and I spent a couple of nights out with them...They still talk about it now you know, you remember that time when we went down such and such and it was snowing and that brings back memories." ("Oliver": 1990's young father, 06.05.10)

"As he got older he was interested in groups, you know rock and roll you know I took him to his first gig when he was twelve and we were quite close and probably still are because of the music thing." ("Edward": 1970's young father, 07.06.10)

Young fathers who were unable to form a common interest with their father felt that they struggled to build a positive relationship with him. In some cases they felt that there was favouritism amongst siblings who did share the same interests as their father:

"He has always got on better with Simon, the thing is with Simon, Simon was the sporting type. I'm not athletic at all I'm really not but Simon was the sporting type, I was the intellectual type and my dad's not an intellectual...so you try and talk politics with him or anything like that you know everything's got to be black and white it's baffling it really is."
("Sam": 1990's young father, 01.06.10)

The impression during the interviews was that young fathers who discussed having limited common interests with their father were saddened by the fact that they felt that they could not relate to or bond closely with him. Generally those young fathers who could not build a bond with their father were quite distant with him and instead maintained a civil relationship, acknowledging each other as father and son.

7.3 Attitudes towards the pregnancy

There were mixed reactions towards the news that these young men were going to become fathers. For some in the third cohort the initial reaction was shock:

"I was still a bit taken back by it to be honest I was still a kid myself."
("Chris": 2000+ young father, 09.06.10)

Overall the young fathers were pleased and excited by the news; however those young fathers, particularly in the third cohort were worried about the financial implication of having a child and being able to personally support their new family. After the initial reaction of shock their main concern was to find a job, which most of the young fathers in the third cohort didn't have at the time. Financial implications were not a primary concern of young fathers in the first and second cohort; instead the only major concern for the first and second cohort was whether they were married to their partner. This suggests that there have been moral and economic changes that have taken place. There is some suggestion that up until the 1980s, structures which encourage moral standards, such as the community, family and religion, were still powerful in the life choices in individuals' lives. Since the 1990s, there has been an emphasis on economic structures rather than moral structures.

Those young fathers in the first and second cohort who were not married were not only shocked about the pregnancy but were also fearful of breaking the news to their own family. The reactions from soon to be grandparents were based mainly on the marital status of the father. Those who were married gained a positive reaction from both maternal and paternal families. Young fathers who were married when their wife fell pregnant were not overly surprised as some were trying for a baby and some simply understood that having a child was a natural progression of marriage and was expected at some point. However, in a minority of cases where pregnancy took place outside marriage, the first cohort of young fathers found this quite detrimental to their potential careers, particularly those wishing to pursue a career in the forces:

Researcher: Was Robert planned?
George: "No she fell pregnant so had to get married really and I was twenty when he was born and she didn't want me to stop in the army so I came out because she didn't want to be an army wife so that was my career up the shoot." (George 1950's young father, 27.04.10)

Young fathers within the third cohort were not married when they received the news that they were going to become fathers. They were generally shocked by the news of the pregnancy even though they had admitted to not taking personal responsibility for using contraception. From the examination of data, young fathers in the third cohort showed weaker sense of agency through lack of responsibility for contraception and giving some suggestion that it was their partner's duty to prevent pregnancy. The focus of young fathers seemed to be that prevention was very much the responsibility of the mother; they did not see this as being an area for them to assert their agency. However, stronger personal agency was seen when asked about the prospect of abortion. Despite the fact that young fathers were very reluctant to assert their personal agency up until the point of pregnancy, they saw the issue of abortion as a clear moral arena for them to assert their agency:

Researcher: Was Adam[74] planned?
Daniel: Erm no we were silly kids, again we thought you just had a baby you can't full pregnant and oh dear pregnant again so it is really scary…there's a year between Sam and Adam…I just didn't know what to do but I don't believe in abortions, I don't believe in killing a life"
(Daniel 2000+ young father, 19.11.09)

Some of the young fathers in the third cohort acknowledged that they were both responsible for not using any form of contraception. In other cases, they said that their partner was using the contraceptive pill; however due to antibiotics the pill had not been effective.

[74] Adam was Daniel's second child.

The self-presentation of the third cohort of young fathers whilst discussing the lack of contraception was to describe it as an immature act of a young man. Some of these young fathers attempted to provide a rationale for their own lack of contraception; whereas others suggested that the lack of contraception led to a greater good. For example, those in the third cohort who were involved with drugs and alcohol felt that their partner and their baby were key factors in constructing a positive and more mature identity for themselves:

"That's when I was on the drink and the drugs and as soon as I found out the drugs stopped, the smoking the weed...yeah that just stopped, the drinking banged that out, totally over night, changed me, changed me and with Vicky's help as well I can't let her out of it because she really did help me, she was there for me and erm like there be a time when I was so angry and she would sit there and calm me down and so she really helped."

("Daniel": 2000+ young father, 19.11.09)

"I mean becoming a dad made me grow up I had to I dare say that if we didn't have the babies then I would still be doing it now do you know what I mean I'd still be going out every weekend getting smashed do you know what I mean but having kids you've got to grow up haven't you, you've got to pull your finger out as much as sometimes I struggle and I feel like I can't cope sometimes you've just got to be strong haven't you." ("Chris": 2000+ young father, 09.06.10)

Paternal grandparents for most young fathers in the third cohort were shocked by the news of the pregnancy and felt that their son was *"wasting their life,"* especially if he was in his late teens. From examining the data, it is suggested from this statement, *"wasting their lives,"* may be based on social shifts in the economy, which allow for greater opportunities than having a child at a young age, which may be considered restricting. It may also be perceived that a young father's lack of conformity towards social change can cause social disadvantage. Therefore, parents' reactions to young parenthood are a sign of concern and potentially worry that their son may find themselves in social and/or financial difficulty in the future. Nevertheless, young fathers, particularly in the third cohort were defensive towards their parents' opinions. They wanted to show them that they were capable and responsible enough to not only be a good father, but also to support and maintain their relationship with their partner and build a family:

"He wasn't impressed when I got my missus pregnant the first time because I was 17 and she was 15 she was 16 by a month when she had my daughter. I just remember him being not best pleased you know 'you're fucking wasting your life and all that' and 'you're too young' and all that but proved him wrong there because we lasted till only a few years back, had three kids, have three grandchildren so something went alright."

("Frankie": 1980's young father, 02.06.10)

"People in the family didn't give us more than twenty minutes but twenty years later, three kids you know obviously there is some sort of strong bond there you know. So we've been through our ups and downs and different thing so you know it was like us basically putting two fingers up to

everyone and saying 'Well you got it wrong didn't you!'" ("Oliver": 1990's young father, 06.05.10)

These statements suggest that young fathers aimed to conform to traditional discourses of fatherhood. The third cohort of young fathers highlighted responsibility as a major theme within their testimonies. Most of them highlighted the overwhelming feeling of responsibility to their child and supporting their partner once they had been told about the pregnancy. This mainly included financial responsibility, which meant having a job by the time the child was born. The examination of the data suggested that financial responsibility was fundamental to being a supportive and responsible father. All young fathers within the third cohort emphasised that fatherhood was likely to be a challenge. Nevertheless it was important to be supportive and adaptive to the situation and enjoy the new experience of fatherhood:

"You've got a little baby yeah you've got to look after, you've got to grow up because if you don't grow up what's the baby going to have, what you're going to have the baby taken away from you, you're going to get in all sorts of trouble and it's not fair that baby didn't ask to get brung into this world." ("Daniel": 2000+ young father, 23.11.09)

Some major changes in regards to identity for most young fathers in the third cohort were maturity, *"growing up"* and taking responsibility for someone else. It was essential for these young fathers that they gave their child a good upbringing and start in life in comparison to some of their own upbringing and relationships. It was also believed that as young parents, it was important to maintain a healthy and happy upbringing for their child.

7.4 Building parental relationships

Young fathers who had a fragile relationship with their parent(s) and/or stepfather suggested implicitly that their first born child acted as a catalyst in rebuilding positive relationships with family members. Some young fathers felt that their first child brought reconciliation between the immediate families. According to some young fathers, grandparents viewed their grandchild as *"a second go"* at parenting and being given a *"chance to put things right"* where they may have felt they had failed as a parent with the young father. Despite young fathers feeling positive about the changing attitudes within the family, they felt slightly disheartened by the relationship their parents were having with their children. To some extent, young fathers reverted back to negative memories of their childhood and could not understand why their parents could not have had the same positive relationship with them that they were now sharing with their grandchildren:

"Everyone was actually quite supportive and my Nan me Granddad I must say even my stepdad. You see he never once treated James or...Neil the slightest way like he treated me. He was really, he used to take him out, do things for them, he would buy them stuff you couldn't fault him for it." ("Lewis": 1990's young father, 21.12.09)

While young fathers felt that their children had brought about a positive relationship between them and their parents; there was in a minority of cases, particularly amongst the third cohort, some concern about grandparents interfering. Sam, a father during the 1990s, spoke in depth about his mother *"interfering."* He thought that his mother felt herself to be mainly responsible for taking care of his child, because she thought that he and his partner were not mature enough to take care of a baby. He felt that his mother was not aware of how much she was actually interfering and to some extent controlling the young family. This caused tension and arguments between him, his mother and his partner, leading to Sam and his partner restricting his mother from seeing her grandchildren:

"My mum was very much, she admits this to me she saw Will as her baby. You know we were too young to have babies so that was her baby so she use to try and interfere, and it got to the point where she'd interfere, so Kate would take Will away from her. She was taking control of it and Kate didn't like it. I mean she started off what was best for us then it finished up with I know best and she admitted it. I mean my mum was the extreme grandparent, which was bad because Kate stopped taking him down there. I mean it used to annoy both of us."

("Sam": 1990's young father, 01.06.10)

Queniart (2004) suggests that young fathers who are searching for independence as a parent sometimes can increase the tension in their relationship with the grandparents. Regardless of the type of support grandparents may offer, interference with the decision-making of the parents is generally not tolerated. Young fathers who previously had a fragile relationship with their mother, found that their mother's interference with the young family made them revert back to negative memories of their upbringing. This caused arguments between the young father and their mother:

"My mum's got no right to tell me or Ann how to raise our kids after the job that she done with me do you know what I mean, she's got absolutely no right and she knows that. I've told her before like, we went up there for dinner one time on a Sunday and I put Emily on the naughty step and my mum went up to her and I said: 'Mum what you doing? Can you leave her alone!' and she said; 'Well no she's crying.' And I said; 'Well just fucking leave her alone, I'm her dad, you're my mum back off!' Do you know what I mean; 'You aint her mum, you aint her dad" I said; 'Just go away and I'll deal with it how I want to deal with it.'

("Chris": 2000+ young father, 09.06.10)

Most of the third cohort were positive about the relationship that had formed with their parents after the baby was born. However, from examining the data, there is some suggestion that

grandparents may suppress young fathers' agency due to finding it difficult to formulate boundaries between being a caring and supportive grandparent and taking over the parental role. It is suggested in the above statement that grandparents may not be respectful of their child's approach to parenting and instead of guiding their child's parenting they ultimately take control.

7.5 Roles within the young family

The young fathers in this study had become progressively more involved in childcare and domestic chores since the 1950s. Pleck (1987) discussed in chapter two, section 2.11 identifies various typologies of fatherhood and suggests that fathers were more engaged with their children by the late 1960s. Also reflecting the findings of Pahl (1984), men who were young fathers in the 1960s described childcare as being a supportive partnership rather than the sole responsibility of the mother. It was suggested by the young fathers in this study that their long, unsocial working hours were the major factor impeding their involvement in childcare:

"We'd put them to bed about 7pm and we use to walk them up by the seafront about 9 o' clock, because it was so hot we'd walk them along the seafront and then when we come back we never heard no more from them until the morning." ("Jack": 1960's young father, 24.03.10)

"There would be no question of if they woke up in the night they wanted a feed I would go down and get the bottle and Mary would comfort them, invariably during the night Mary would feed them and I would go back to sleep because I was going to work."("Nicholas": 1960's young father, 10.06.10)

"Obviously on my days off I'd have shopping to do and various other things, ok I didn't do a lot of washing up for a long while but looking after the baby, when she went out I was looking after the baby." ("Charlie": 1970's young father, 05.07.10)

There were also some cases where young fathers were single fathers or carers for their wife and were therefore responsible for the childcare and domestic duties as well as financially providing for the family:

"My wife was a bit dodgy with her heart and she went into hospital and of course Robert was about three years old then and I had no one to look after him and I had to work. I was lucky I was working round here on the buildings so I put him in one of those like jump suits and I took him to work with me. I did that for about three months and I put him on the sand and he use to play in the sand and everyone use to look after him for me." ("George": 1950's young father, 27.04.10)

"I had to take Robert to work with me because he had no one to take care of him and I didn't want them to look after[75] him because they were getting on and they didn't want any trouble. I

[75] George is referring to his in-laws who were living on Sheppey at the time. His parents were living in Manchester.

said to the foreman 'will it be alright if I bring the boy?' He said 'yeah he can play on the sand' and that's what I done and I was up and down the ladder and I kept an eye on him and I use to look after him." ("George": 1950's young father, 27.04.10)

Despite young fathers supporting the mother and becoming more involved with childcare and domestic duties in the home; the first and second cohort still identified their priority as well as main role in the family as being the main breadwinner. All young fathers emphasised that they would play with their child and on their days off from work they would engage in domestic chores and caring for the child:

"I did lots of playing with them but the actual responsibility was over to Marie really. I mean I was doing quite a lot of hours because when I started work at the car place, it had just started and I remember going six months without a day off and starting at four in the morning till ten at night, yeah it was to get money coming in, it was my job."

("Edward": 1970's young father, 07.06.10)

Young fathers who were either single parents or who were carers for their wife spoke about being solely responsible for the childcare and domestic duties. They felt that it was a case of adapting to the needs of the family and being a responsible parent. They admitted the difficulty in adopting all roles within the family, particularly if the young father was working and was unable to rely on grandparents and/or family members for support. However, they believed that being a responsible parent was related to adapting to situations:

"She'd be in and out of the hospital and she's got a lot of thyroid problems and blood pressure and I took over the children myself when she had to have the operation and I had to look after the kids, bring them up, three or four on my own. I had to do it and take them to school and pressure and everything else on top of me and now I do help a lot because if she had to go back in hospital I'd have to be there for them, it was a struggle but I had to do it because I thought no one else is going to do it for me and that's just the way life is."

("Barry": 1980's young father, 11.05.10)

From the analysis, the third cohort, like young fathers from previous cohorts, attempted to comply with traditional discourses of fatherhood by suggesting that being a "good" father included the responsibility of financially providing for the family. However, a number of young fathers in the third cohort had difficulties gaining employment and therefore were not able to conform to traditional discourses of fatherhood. Consequently, they spoke more about the importance of being an engaged father. This included being involved in the childcare, play activities and having day trips, particularly during long periods of unemployment.

Despite most young fathers suggesting that the roles within the family were generally shared, Harry, a father during the 1950s argued that there were very gender specific roles within his family:

"I mean I never use to change them or nothing like that because people during my era you didn't do that sort of thing my wife did it, that was mum's job and I was probably a bit of a slob because I'd come home from work, go and have a bath, leave my clothes on the bathroom floor because I've been to work that's her job, not thinking, but subconsciously when I think of it afterwards you know because once I retired I didn't leave anything anywhere."

("Harry": 1950's young father, 04.06.10)

Harry also commented that it was rare for fathers to attend the birth of their child, and that the birth should remain private for the mother. He also suggested that the family should maintain specific gender roles, and that the changing nature of family life and blurring of traditional familial roles have potentially led to some social problems:

"You didn't go to the birth of your kids and I still don't think you should anyway, that's a woman's private thing and that's probably another thing that's gone wrong you've got the man doing all the women's jobs and the women doing the men's job and is that right? Is that what's turned the world topsy turvey?" ("Harry": 1950's young father, 04.06.10)

Comparatively, most of the first and second cohort of young fathers felt that it was a positive step that their sons were more engaged in caring for their children than they had been. From the examination of the data, social shifts and discourse in familial roles were positive. Some of the first cohort of young fathers argued that their wife was more responsible for the childcare simply because she was better and more natural at caring for their child than they were. They also commented that the children understood and related specific roles to certain parents. For example, children would show concern if particular familial roles were carried out by the father rather than the mother:

"In our day you know it was the thing that mother brought up the children, mother was always home when they came home from school. I mean it's like it now, I mean all the kids are grown up and if I pick the phone up it's; 'what's wrong with mum?' You know first reaction; 'What's wrong with mum?' Because they are so use to mum being here, after school mum will be there."

("Jack": 1960's young father, 24.03.10)

Young fathers in the third cohort did not discuss gender divisions in the family. As previously identified in chapter three, this might be based on the fact that previous cohorts are able to reflect on and analyse further their past experiences and relationships with their children; whereas young fathers in the third cohort were currently learning and experiencing new things at the time of interview. All three cohorts discussed to some extent engagement in childcare and

domesticity. It is also evident that young fathers prioritise traditional gendered family roles, such as being the main breadwinner.

7.6 Employment and the family

According to scholarly literature, family life in the western world has undergone much change due to the changing nature of employment and lifestyle (Landwerlin, 2006). From examination of the data, it was perceived that manual labour was quite predictable for many on the Island; it built their working class adult identity and masculinity as well as building structure and meaning into their life. It also established their role as the main financial provider and being a good role model to their children:

"It's a way of life to work, it's a way of life to get up in the morning, get yourself ready, pack your lunch and off you go to work." ("George": 1950's young father, 27.04.10)

"I don't have a lot of money, I don't want to be in the rat race but that is my structure that is what makes me respectable." ("Tim:" 1980's young father, 10.06.10)

"Work. That's what men do work and look after them[76]."
("Daniel": 2000+ young father, 23.11.09)

However, it became apparent that most of the third cohort have found it increasingly difficult to establish and maintain an identity as a breadwinner. This was due to redundancies, long-term unemployment and difficulties gaining a suitable income, signifying a crucial change in identity for them. This exposed them to significant economic pressure, which in some cases placed the family unit under psychological strain and made it increasingly difficult for young fathers to establish their identity as a provider for their family:

"It does play on your mind when you have to turn a job down and you're thinking why did you turn that down? Why didn't you take it? You have this argument with yourself and you literally are fighting yourself because it would financially cripple me but Lily[77] wants you to have a job, but I can't take that job just to please the little one you know because she wants to see dad back at work brilliant but it wouldn't be the right thing to do so we don't tell them anything to that degree." ("Oliver": 1990's young father, 06.05.10)

"I was always the provider and that's how I looked at it. Laura's never worked, she's always looked after the kids and I was always the provider; and I suppose that was the biggest shock that I wasn't going to be the provider anymore." ("Oliver": 1990's young father, 06.05.10)

[76] Reference to his young family.
[77] Lily is Oliver's youngest biological daughter who is seven years old.

The third cohort of young fathers also commented that it was important that they remain a good role model for their child, therefore it was important that their child observed them *"going to work"* on a daily basis, regardless of how menial the work may be. In spite of this, the third cohort discussed how social benefits can in some circumstances be more beneficial than employment. This was due to weighing up the practicalities of many jobs being on short term contracts with no guarantee of employment thereafter. Furthermore, the tedious and long process of applying and being approved for social benefits afterwards, as well as waiting for payment after being made unemployed, made the prospect of gaining employment on a short term basis discouraging:

"I personally want to work, but I do understand though I really do, because like there's no point going to work every day for 12 hours if you're going to end up after you've paid your rent with something like £20 and there's no point going out slogging your guts out because you're not going to be no better off do you know what I mean." ("Jay": 2000+ young father, 21.12.09)

From examining the data, the first and second cohort of young fathers were more likely to conform to the traditional discourse of fatherhood and considered themselves a "good" father for as long as they were in employment and were maintaining their role as the breadwinner. Young men who were fathers during the 1950s also discussed their employment in the navy, in which establishing a credible masculinity amongst other servicemen was important. This included many drunken evenings ashore *"with the lads,"* and many months spent travelling with their peers. Similarly, Pahl (1984) highlighted that there was a well established informal male culture in the community which focussed on pubs. This provided an alternative for those men who were not yet ready to play a more supportive role within the household.

According to young fathers in the first and second cohort, once they were married and started a family, their interest in drunken evenings, travelling and according to the analysis, maintaining a suitable masculinity in the workplace had faded. Instead they identified themselves as mainly responsible for their family and began employment as a manual labourer on the Island. Wallace (1987) also commented that the means of social reproduction on the Island was not solely linked to smooth transitions from education to employment, rather the responsibility of a family largely disciplined young men into employment. Long hours were invested into manual employment, which in some cases were due to being solely responsible for the family financially. Smith (2009) discussed in chapter two, agrees that such long hours at work required a certain amount of distance from their family, which limited the amount of time spent with their children:

"My wife said to me that he wants a long pair of trousers so I said 'what does he want a long pair of trousers for?' I said 'he's still at school' and she said 'oh no he leaves next week.' I said

'how old are you then?' and he said '14' and I said 'you're not!' And he said 'yeah!' So I've been working like this, shift work you see and I'd hardly see them I mean everywhere was shift work yeah I mean the potteries were shift work and everybody was shift work and I said 'what!' And she said 'yeah he's 14 next week' and I said 'oh my God' and I said 'well this isn't happening, this isn't going to happen to me' and I said 'I don't want any more shift work'"

("George": 1950's young father, 27.04.10)

"I always went off the Island to work and quite often when I came home, especially when they were young they'd be either in bed and I only worked in Sittingbourne or getting ready to go to bed, I mean our ties are bonds and they have become much, much closer, they were close but they're much closer as they become adults." (Nicholas": 1960's young father, 10.06.10)

"Well I didn't see them a lot really because I was always working that was the problem you see I mean you know you went to work I mean I was home when Jane was born purely because it was holiday time." ("Jack": 1960's young father, 24.03.10)

Some young fathers in the third cohort who were doing shift work and had split up with the mother of their child found it difficult to maintain regular visits. It had left some young fathers feeling even more distanced from their child than those who were still living with the mother:

"Sam and Adam I don't see much of at all because they're at school and then I'm on nights so then I can't see them; and then at weekends Vicky has her time with them, the weekends that she'll let me I'm working so it's so hard to ever get to see them."

("Daniel" 2000+ young father, 23.11.09)

Distance from the family due to long hours and/or shift work had been typical for most young fathers on the Isle of Sheppey. According to Kent Careers Service (2001), how far away from home and exactly where local inhabitants are prepared to travel to work has depended on a number of factors including; wages/salary, the level or nature of the job, transport availability, cost and practicality, age, exactly where they live and the social patterns of their family, friends and neighbourhood.

As part of young fathers' testimonies, most identified the above factors as issues in relation to taking employment. Furthermore, the breakdown of relationships, which occurred more often in the third cohort[78], influenced where most young fathers wanted to work as they wished to remain within close proximity to where their child lived. However, the overall concern and deciding factor for them in regards to taking employment, regardless of the amount of hours, was the feasibility and practicality of financially supporting the family/child.

Young fathers within all three cohorts were mostly accepting of their partner having a job, in some cases it is what had kept *"body and soul together"*. Yet despite more egalitarian roles

[78] Three young fathers from the third cohort had broken up with their partner.

within the family, there were still various gendered boundaries. For example, young fathers still identified themselves as the main breadwinner. It was suggested by some young fathers that their wife having a job was entirely optional; in some cases their wages were not considered part of the family budget, and the needs of the home and family were the mother's main priority. Therefore mothers tended to work around the needs of the family, particularly if the family required two incomes:

"That's what we use to do, I mean I use to come home and Bella would have a small part time job in the evening which kept body and soul together." ("Jack": 1960's young father, 24.03.10)

"I mean it always use to be that the man was the money earner, although my wife has always worked, but when I got married I said to her 'if you don't want to work, don't. If you do, you do'. I mean, I hopefully, I could keep her that was, you know."
("Robert": 1960's young father, 19.01.10)

"She brings up the kids and I'll bring in the wages to feed the kids. I mean if she wanted a job I wouldn't stop her, she's had jobs working as shop assistants part time, I don't mind but that's her money, but she doesn't put that money into the house that's my job, that's undermining me. She worked up till the kids came along and as soon as the kids come along that was it her job was looking after the kids." ("Bobby": 1980's young father, 07.06.10)

"I think it will just be me until the baby gets old enough and that like to like go to nursery or something like that then Kirsty's interested in doing hairdressing and that she's already done her level one and that but err yeah I'll probably be the breadwinner until like the baby's old enough she'll probably be at home looking after it and that so."
("Jay": 2000+ young father, 21.12.09)

From examining the above statements, it may be conceived that traditional discourses of fatherhood and working class masculinity have seen little change over the past sixty years. All the young fathers wished to conform to a breadwinner identity as well as be a supportive and engaged father. It may also be suggested that there is very little difference in the morality of fatherhood for these young fathers, regardless of negative discourses society may have of "young fathers" currently. Nevertheless, there is a difference between "young fathers," over the years, which is that young fathers in the third cohort are more likely to be available to their children due longer periods of unemployment.

7.7 Relationship breakdown

Within the first two years of the child's life, some young fathers, particularly in the third cohort, had begun to feel strain in their relationship and as a father. Strains were generally due to the needs of the child, sleepless nights, working hours, finances and commitment issues:

"You can imagine having the kids everyday kids, kids, kids, wake up kids, kids, kids, no work, no work, no work, no money you know that's what takes the strain out on everyone."
("Carl": 2000+ young father, 20.01.10)

It was suggested by the third cohort that due to a number of arguments, the young couple began to distance themselves from each other, which in some cases led to the breakdown of the relationship. This echoes the sociological concept of the 'pure relationship,' discussed by Giddens (1991). The pure relationship suggests that relationships today are more likely to be based upon personal desires due to the weakening of particular social institutions and changes in the home and workplace. As a result, relationships have become individualistic and therefore don't require the same commitment as they once did. Fagan (2008) suggests that many adolescent mothers and young fathers have great difficulty establishing and maintaining positive co-parenting partnerships. Romantic and co-residential relationships between these parents frequently end within the first few years following the child's birth, and when this happens, young fathers' and mothers' co-parenting relationships often decline:

"I was working and that and Vicky started getting paranoid that I was like always wanting these women and that I was working with and she started to really get worried and then that would cause rows and then like she started to change so much and like I changed and I'd come home from work and I'd go out I'd just go out and that was never like us because we was always together and I'd go out and want to be with my mates so I didn't want to be around her and it got really bad." ("Daniel": 2000+ young father, 19.11.09)

"We use to row a lot more because I was doing a day job and a night job. I was plastering during the day and at night I was taking lorries from Sheerness up to Nine Elms and Spitalfields market and Covent Garden and it was causing rows because I wasn't at home and I was tired you know, when I did get a day off I'd sleep." ("Bobby": 1980's young father, 07.06.10)

From the examination of the data, it was perceived amongst the third cohort that moral and gendered responsibilities have become difficult to maintain in comparison to previous cohorts; due to frustrations in relationships and the hard work that accompanies young parenthood. For most young fathers in the third cohort it was fundamental that there was a good working and harmonious relationship with the mother of their child. In circumstances where the relationship had broken down, young fathers in the third cohort found it difficult to maintain a positive relationship with their partner, which affected the relationship they had with their child.

Joshua, a young father during the 1990s, spoke in depth about how his partner who was also a young mother, had limited his visitation and access to his son due to the breakdown of their relationship. Visits were supervised by his ex-partner or a member of her family and Joshua was not allowed to leave the house with the child. According to Joshua, if he got a new partner,

visiting his child would become even more difficult and at times non-existent. It was suggested that the young mother was aware that she maintained agency through power of the relationship between Joshua and his child:

When we split up obviously I wasn't allowed to see him, well I was allowed to see him but only in the company of her whole family really erm I was allowed to play in the garden with him she wouldn't let me take him out nowhere but her brothers were allowed to take him out erm I wasn't allowed to have girlfriends around him you know what I mean it was very err and I didn't properly see him until she moved away, run away with him for about 6 months to her aunty's in Barnet obviously I couldn't find him...he was about 4 years old because she actually said to me that day 'erm I can't say no, no more because he understands,' he's like 'I want to see my dad' and she's like 'well I can't say no, no more so I've got to let him.'

("Joshua": 1990's young father, 15.12.09)

Such testimonies were not evident in the first cohort as young fathers during this time have mostly remained with their partner. Since the 1980s, there has been increasing evidence of relationship breakdowns,[79] according to evidence in the data. Some young fathers have struggled to maintain consistent contact with their child. For young fathers in the third cohort, the analysis suggests that their partners used the child as a weapon due to their feelings of hurt about the breakdown of the relationship.

7.8 Support networks

The third cohort of young fathers addressed the importance of having a supportive family network around them, particularly in regards to childcare[80]. The first and most of the second cohort of young fathers were not as reliant on their parents for support as much as the third cohort were. The first and second cohort related this to being within a secure marriage and being in full time employment, which from the analysis provided security as well as independence for their family. In comparison to the third cohort, the majority of the first and second cohorts were employed during the pregnancy as well as the birth, suggesting change in social circumstances for young fathers in the third cohort who were mostly not in employment during the time of the pregnancy or the birth. Generally the first and second cohorts of young fathers were supported by their parents in terms of childcare and expensive gifts, such as prams and cots for the arrival of the baby. Queniart (2004) suggests that the birth family represents the main source of support for the new parents-to-be. This can include loans or gifts of money and provision of baby-sitting assistance.

[79] Since the 1980s, the relationship between six young fathers and their partners had broken down.
[80] Interestingly young fathers in the third cohort did not make reference to their parents financially supporting them, although many were unemployed. This may be related to the idea that young fathers did not want to be viewed as being financially dependent on someone else.

Several in the third cohort commented how difficult being a young parent would be without the continuous care and support of their parents and in particular their mother. This illustrates that bonding social capital can be important within different spheres for these young fathers Similarly Queniart (2004) suggests that the paternal grandparents generally give young fathers the necessary support required to fulfil their parental role, while guaranteeing support and help for the new family. This infuses the father with the confidence he needs to take on his new role and the responsibilities that come with it. Those young fathers who were no longer in a relationship with their partner were even more reliant on the support of their parents and in some cases their wider family. Paternal grandmothers in particular were generally supportive during stages of unemployment, caring for the baby, difficult periods with their partner and whilst the young father or couple socialised with friends:

"When Emily was first born she'd come round, she'd help us out a lot because me and Ann was quite young at the time. If we wanted to go out to the cinema or wanted to do things my mum's more than happy to have the girls...I think without my mum, me and Ann's relationship wouldn't be much of a relationship because the time that we have had together is down to my mum having the girls. I mean if she wouldn't have the girls we wouldn't be spending time together, we wouldn't of kept what we got, which I am grateful to her for[81]*."*

("Chris": 2000+ young father, 09.06.10)

The third cohort of young fathers also spoke about their involvement and experiences with professionals within childcare settings, which shows the beginnings of bridging social capital. The first and most of the second cohort said there was little support from professionals or institutions at the time; for most of them, their family was their major support. The first cohort of young fathers noted that "*it was expected and never questioned"* to raise your own family without support. It was understood that parents were responsible for the upbringing of their children for the first five years until they attended school.

Nevertheless Tim, a single father in the 1980s, spoke about how he found professionals in children's settings very helpful[82]. Due to family circumstances he was involved with Social Services, who provided him with children's services that could help support him in taking care of his child. He identified that he was the only man who attended children's groups. Nevertheless he felt that the professionals as well as mothers who attended were very welcoming, supportive and sympathetic to the fact that he was a single father. Regardless of women dominating the groups, he was happy to accept all help offered to him and was quite

[81] This suggests a possible change in norms in regards to how explicitly young fathers in the third cohort spoke about time spent with their partner. Time with their partner was not explicit amongst the first and second cohort, although it may have been implicitly referred to through marriage.

[82] Tim referred to "various children's settings" but did not specify exactly what or where these settings were.

open-minded about being supported in a predominately female environment. He viewed mothers as no more knowledgeable about taking care of a baby than fathers. He felt that parenting and upbringing of a child was purely based on learning through experiences:

"No it was very welcoming. They just sort of weighed the babies and asked you about them and what are they eating. You know these are my kids, she's gone and I'm going to have to look after them. I mean Jodie she was only six months and generally the social services were very supportive. I mean they sided with me in the court case erm and I had a support network with my foster family, my mum was round the corner, my sister was living up the road. My interactions with the authorities was very good while I was a single parent, but I was a single father and I think that was rare in those days. I got a lot of sympathy from mothers as well, I mean I was grateful for any help and you know just like mothers aren't born with the knowledge of how to look after babies, I certainly wasn't...so I suppose the social services were a third neutral party which I was comfortable for going for help." ("Tim": 1980's young father, 08.06.10)

Harry and Sam believed that current organisations, such as Children Centres were *"mollycoddling"* parents as in their view this did not allow them to think or learn for themselves as parents. One of the functions of Children's Centres is implementing and structuring parents' engagement with children. It was also suggested by Harry and Sam that involvement with such establishments was simply laziness by parents which should be the main concern:

"Daddy Cool things where you come and bring your kids and we'll have a fun day. You can do that anyway, it doesn't need to be structured. This goes back to the laziness and the ignorance of people where it's got to be come down and do this with your kid, not get off your own ass and do it off your own back, just come down and do it. These people have to be told to do it and that's the problem." ("Sam": 1990's young father, 01.06.10)

From examining the statements by Harry and Sam, they saw themselves as ultimately needing to take individual responsibility as parents, rather than relying on the support systems provided to them by the state. This belief in their own responsibility and being independent from the state, led them to view parents who engage with state support and the state support itself with suspicion. There was a growing sense of the 'nanny state' becoming too involved in areas of individual responsibility.

There was also some suggestion from the data that the third cohort of young fathers were sceptical about involving themselves with those who they saw as being in authoritative positions. This was related to previous negative experiences with other authorities including those professionals working in social welfare, living and employment. There was also some evidence that young fathers were cautious of authority in childcare settings. They believed that such institutions are an extension of Children's Social Services. Therefore they felt that they were at risk of having social workers involved in their lives because of some of their previous

backgrounds; and being a young parent, which they believed would be associated with being a vulnerable and incapable parent:

"In some respects it's very good (Children's Centres), in some respects it's very bad. The problem that you have got is the stigma caused by the government; in that a lot of people still class it as social services which people steer clear of."
("Charlie": 1970's young father, 05.06.10)

From examining the data, it may be argued that established discourses related to young parents being irresponsible and incapable had affected their involvement with supportive services. Generally the third cohort was introduced to Children's Centres and related professionals by their partners, male friends who were attending groups at the Children's Centre or by other trusted professionals. Young fathers tended to build trust with professionals if they were showing personal interest and concern in the young father's life, which is this example is the young dads worker:

"I turned up on Thursday and he's[83] like 'Yeah you interested in doing this?' And I was like 'Yeah I'll do that' and yeah he sorted out my interview and that and then he dropped my job description round and that. He knows Claire and he asks about Claire and he asked about the flat and that and told him it's freezing, told him occasionally we get mice and he got us some mice catchers but err he's a really good geezer, top geezer like out of everyone that's ever helped me like since I've been on my own he's by far been the best person that's actually had an input into my life and he's sort of like steering me the way I want to go and he said to me when I first met him that that is exactly what he would do which I'm happy like he's sort of like keeps you going and that...he comes to the jobcentre with me because they'll always trying to feed you crap and he'll be like' I'll come with you then.'" ("Jay": 2000+ young father, 21.12.09)

Professionals who were understanding and supportive of helping the young fathers out of current problems, such as unemployment and difficult living arrangements, made them more likely to motivate themselves personally and involve themselves in professional services. The third cohort of young fathers who regularly attended the Children's Centre with their partner described it as being possibly intimidating for men. It was felt that young fathers didn't belong in what they described as a female dominated environment:

"I think dads have got a stigma about doing things like that but it definitely is a mum's sort of thing whereas with the dads it more let's go down the field and kick a ball about you know and I think that is a thing that dads do." ("Oliver": 1990's young father, 06.05.10)

They spoke about their first impressions of the reception area, generally filled with mothers and female staff, which encouraged mothers into the Centre rather than fathers. Despite the feeling of a female environment, the third cohort in particular felt that the Children's Centre promoted

[83] Jay is referring to the young dads worker at the Children's Centre.

groups and activities directly to fathers and their children, which they thought was a positive and encouraging factor. Young fathers admitted that although they may seem discouraged to attend Children Centres, like mothers they also needed advice and support:

"I think every dad needs help and support, they're embarrassed to come or a bit like: 'Oh I'm not doing that, I'm manly and all that.' I think they do, I mean that was one of my problems was I thought 'God I aint gonna go there cos there's going to be no one there' that's what I was always thinking. But then I heard Steven went so I went with Steven and I think it is just word of mouth, the blokes hearing I think that's what it needs a bit of word of mouth."

("Daniel": 2000+ young father, 23.11.09)

Young fathers who attended the groups that were exclusive to men found them quite therapeutic as they allowed young fathers to engage with their child as well as "*let off steam to other fathers."* They were also more likely to attend because the group was exclusive to men and it would guarantee other fathers. Young fathers felt that groups that were open to both mothers and fathers would not attract a large number of young fathers. The impression gained from the discussion was that in exclusive groups, they felt they could discuss any problems but also keep their masculinity intact, as well as feel relatively comfortable without feeling incompetent compared to women. They felt that it was a good learning environment to share ideas and tips with other fathers. Young fathers commented that Children's Centres should be encouraged to do more father directed groups given the changing nature of families:

"It helps dads out, gives a bit of daddy time with the kids and other dads around so you can have a chat and you don't feel so on your own you've got the other men there instead of walking in a room and all women and just you, it's a brilliant idea, I like it erm there should be more out there. I suppose they could do for the men...I mean most of these groups and that it's all about the mothers but men are welcome but at the end of the day the men will not come because it's all women and you're going to walk in there and without a doubt there won't be no men there because they know it's all for the women...like it's always been about the woman never about the dads...but they've got to make known it's more dads not mums cos that's what the dads don't like. 'Oh I ain't going there all them women'... you do feel intimidated, not by the women just by what are they going to think of you, are you doing things right and that so you never turn up that's what I done but then the daddy thing that was a good idea, it was and I hope they do do more, I do." ("Daniel": 2000+ young father, 23.11.09)

The above statement illustrates to some extent the concern some young fathers have about people's perception of them and others possibly questioning their ability as a father whilst taking part in these groups. Nevertheless, young fathers felt that there were a variety of activities including day trips. Young fathers were particularly responsive to the day trips due to some not having a car or reliable transportation and felt it was an excellent way to spend time with their child and sometimes spending time off of the Island:

"I'm more than happy to walk in here, I'm more than happy to put my name down on all the trips you know what I mean I love it because I don't drive, it's limited for me to do anything with the kids. I can take them down to the park or take them down the sand pit and stuff like that but it's getting away from the Island, like going to the farms and stuff like that, I'd take full advantage of it do you know what I mean." ("Chris": 2000+ young father, 09.06.10)

Despite some young fathers identifying Children's Centres as mother-focused and suggesting that they were a component of social services, young fathers mainly in the third cohort who had overcome feelings of intimidation and managed to involve themselves with the Centre had found it useful, not only in gaining support with their child but also other issues including welfare, housing and employment. This illustrates that bridging social capital through children's centres rather than relying fully on bonding social capital has advantages, for example in this instance Chris has enabled his children to experience things outside of the local community, which may build upon his children's cultural capital. Young fathers in the third cohort who had become involved with the Centre have not considered themselves "lazy" or needing structured play, far from it; rather they saw Children's Centres as building personal agency through structural support providing them with opportunities that they themselves could not necessarily offer to their child without support.

7.9 Experiences of young fatherhood

Most young fathers spoke very affectionately about their children, and young fathers highlighted how it was vital for them to spend as much time with their child as possible. Most young fathers emphasised that it did not have to be expensive or materialistic to spend time with their child. Spending the day playing at the seafront in Sheerness did not have to acquire huge expense but was something the whole family could enjoy and engage in together:

"I mean it's good family time and that's what you need, it aint money you don't need to give them nice things, well it's nice to give them nice things but it's better to actually give the girls an hour of your time instead of give her twenty quid, I mean anyone can pull out £20 but it's nice to spend that family time together like all of us together." ("Chris": 2000+ young father, 09.06.10)

Young fathers were optimistic and excited to be the first to show their child *"the world,"* which entailed taking them to see various places:

"As being a happy playful dad yeah I was. I loved playing with her and just being with her you know? Throw up in the air, just take her round and show her things. I suppose she didn't know what the hell I was going on about at that age, you know just show her the world but that was part of the excitement and yeah just be with her. I really enjoyed that."
("Tim": 1980's young father, 08.06.10)

Young fathers felt that it was as important to spend time with their child as it was to spend time as a family. The third cohort of young fathers in particular commented that spending time one to one sometimes would be based on whether they felt the mother needed some time alone; whereas in previous cohorts they spent time together as a family. Chris suggested that he was aware of the effort and time taken by his partner to look after their children and felt that it was important that she was given a break from childcare.

Young fathers who felt that they didn't have a "decent" male role model in their lives and had limited experience with children were concerned that they would not be able to parent their child well enough. In spite of this, in a matter of weeks from having the baby they felt that their parenting was positive. Young fathers, particularly in the third cohort were also happy to engage in activities that were specifically gender orientated. For example, Oliver discussed how he was happy to *"get dressed up"* and *"be made up[84]"* by his daughters. Echoing the findings of Kane (2006) in chapter two, he understood that having a girl would lead to gender specific play, which included make up and dolls whereas play with boys would include model trains and football:

"I have been made up, I have been made up a few times you know but girls are different do you know what I mean I've sat there and played dollies but I think it is with a girl I think it's more of a protection thing if it had been a boy we would have had train sets, scalectrix and that kind of thing." ("Oliver": 1990's young father, 09.05.10)

Young fathers showed clear emotion in how protective they were of their children, particularly if their child had health conditions or if they had a daughter. This resonates with the findings of Galasinski (2004) referred to in chapter two, who argues that fathers can be as emotional as mothers in their care and concern for their child. Sam showed much care and concern for his daughter who had type one diabetes, and described his daughter being *"favoured"* over his other children:

"If I'm bluntly honest I favour my little daughter Mia more than anybody else because she's ill she does have diabetes no matter what she's doing I will constantly be looking over her shoulder." ("Sam": 1990's young father, 01.06.10)

From the analysis, young fathers differentiated through femininity and masculinity. Those young fathers who had a son felt that *"chasing girls"* was about *"being a boy,"* whereas young fathers were quite protective of their daughters, particularly as they were growing up and getting romantically involved with boys:

[84] Reference to young fathers having make-up put on their faces by their daughters.

"It's a man thing, it's a man thing because you all know what you were like you know because Roger owns a shotgun and I always said 'If he ever gets you pregnant I'm going to blow his balls off'... but it is like most things, a boy brings home a pretty girl and you're like umm very nice." ("Oliver": 1990's young father, 06.05.10)

They also constantly reminded their child of the risks of becoming a teenage parent. The third cohort of young fathers in particular admitted that although they had no regrets about having their child young, it had been difficult, which they did not want their own child to experience. Some young fathers believed that having children early was a positive thing. They felt that young fathers were more likely to be engaged and active with their children compared to being an older father. Nevertheless, there was some controversy as young fathers agreed that they would not want their children to become young parents due to the strain, restriction and the financial difficulties of having a child young:

"I'm glad I had them early actually because I was young if you know what I mean because I could spend time with them and enjoy it erm because I think if you get too old, you don't, you're not wanting to do those things with them. So like I know sometimes I like to sit and watch a movie or something you know, have a bit of chill time with work and that erm and then Ben starts leaping all over me 'C'mon dad' but um he is, I do think as you get older I think some ways you are better off having children when you're younger but then you need to have some, a good support network." ("Lewis": 1990's young father, 21.12.09)

In the context of self-presentation, it is unlikely that young fathers would present themselves at interview as possibly regretting having their child at an early age. As discussed in chapter three, section 3.9, regret about a child would not be considered "morally acceptable" and does not adhere to the public norms and values of being a parent. Therefore it is more likely that they would discuss the practicalities of them having a child at an early age but also identify the many difficulties of being a young parent, suggesting why they did not want their own child to become a young parent. Given their own personal circumstances they argued that they would have an independent lifestyle during their forties instead of their twenties.

According to the data, socialising became difficult for most young fathers after the baby was born. Only some of the third cohort had friends who were also young fathers in their social group. Therefore, some young fathers felt slightly isolated from their social group. For the first and for some of the second cohort, marriage and children generally took place in their early twenties, which they suggested was the case for many of their peers. As a result they did not feel particularly isolated as fatherhood, marriage and family life was a common process during that period. For most young fathers, socialising with their peers generally took place playing club football at the weekends and that it was the mothers who were more likely to feel socially isolated from their friends:

"I mean I still had the lads at football so I was still playing football, so I still had that I think the only time you got to socialise was if there was any sort of football do's you know or presentation nights." ("Nicholas": 1960's young father, 10.06.10)

Playing football and other sports were also described by young fathers as therapeutic and a release from their young families and pregnant partners:

"When I start playing football I don't think of nothing else apart from winning my match so for me that's like, that's my only like minutes of the whole week like I feel free. Other than that you get your girlfriend in your ear moaning at you and that because she's all pregnant and that all hormonal it's mad." ("Jay": 2000+ young father, 21.12.09)

Before the birth of their child, the majority of young fathers, particularly the third cohort had a lifestyle, which included socialising, alcohol use, use of soft drugs and sports. The importance of their social circle had changed after the news of the pregnancy and their child and partner became the focal point of their lives. However, the self-presentation of young fathers, particularly in the third cohort, showed their ability to switch back and forth between their life as a young man and their life as a young parent.

7.10 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the changing discourses of teenage pregnancy, how young fathers themselves have been parented and how this has impacted upon how they feel they should parent. Also, the chapter has examined factors which have affected the identity and priorities of a young father. The discourse on teenage pregnancy has significantly altered since the 1950s. As found by Kiselica (2008), before the 1970s, pregnancy outside of marriage was not condoned or considered as socially acceptable on the Isle of Sheppey. Social order was enforced through structural forces and institutions, which regulated moral development and social norms amongst inhabitants. According to the discussions with young fathers in the first cohort, marriage was a significant institution where procreation was considered morally and socially acceptable. Those who fell pregnant out of wedlock were considered locally as social anomalies, and this led to decisions made by the young couple's parents in terms of what should happen to the couple and their unborn baby. In comparison, young fathers in the third cohort illustrated strong personal agency over the decision as to whether they wanted to continue or not with the pregnancy.

According to scholarly literature discourse on the family has changed significantly. Since the 1960s social change in family planning has encouraged sexual freedom and choice amongst

young people in relation to when and with whom to start a family (McRobbie, 2007; Kiselica, 2008). Sexual freedom and choice have also been linked to social shifts in employment and education where women in particular are participating longer and consequently delaying the age which they enter marriage and childbirth (ONS, 2002; Duncan, 2007; ONS 2010). This is evident in respect of the parental responses towards the third cohort of young fathers who believed that their son was "wasting their life" by having a child early. Nevertheless, young fathers said they did not regret having their child at a younger age and felt that they could be more proactive with their child and achieve their personal ambitions in later life.

Young fathers in the third cohort expressed the same moral beliefs as previous young fathers in terms of supporting and being a responsible father. However, it is important to contextualise such statements as potentially adhering to public norms and values. Traditional family roles, according to young fathers in the third cohort, included first and foremost gaining employment, being the main breadwinner and being engaged with the child. These traditional family roles are considered by them to be part of a traditional working class male identity. The extent of young fathers' emotional engagement was in some cases based on the relationship shared with their own father. Relationships were also based on what scholarly literature identifies as gender stereotyping and accomplishing an ideal working class masculinity, which was defined by limited emotionality (Kane, 2006).

A number of young fathers in all three cohorts spoke about the difficulties and general demands of having a child. There were a number of additional pressures according to some of the third cohort, which were not as prominent in the first and second cohort. For example, relationship breakdowns were more likely in the third cohort and were linked to money problems, unemployment and commitment issues. The application of Giddens' (1991) concept of the 'pure relationship' was useful in this instance as it helped to provoke thought about the changing nature of marriage and relationships and how social change has possibly weakened certain social structures and even strengthened personal agency.

Familial as well as social support was mostly significant for the third cohort of young fathers, whereas most of the first and second cohort had very limited structural support. Although social capital has not been discussed directly in this chapter, it has been useful in provoking thought about how young fathers, particularly in the third cohort, attempt to build bridging social capital through attending groups and events at the local Children's Centre, which echoes the understanding of Putnam (2000) that we should be more involved in local social groups to build social capital. Chris in particular implicitly discussed how attending groups and events at the

Children's Centre had allowed him to do more activities with his children and possibly build helpful contacts at the same time, developing social capital.

The Children's Centre were not only accountable for supporting young fathers and their children, but also gaining welfare, housing and employment and legal advice. Overly involved grandparents in some cases attempted to involve themselves in parental decision making, suggesting that young fathers were seen as vulnerable, lacking maturity and to some extent considered incapable. This suggested that young fathers not only found negative discourses portrayed in the media, but that this was reinforced within their own families (Bunting and McAuley, 2004). Despite some young fathers knowing that support was available to young parents, they did not wish to access the Children Centre as it was generally seen as a female dominated environment. This suggests that young fathers are hindered from accessing opportunities due to wishing to conform to hegemonic working class masculinity (Connell 1995), feelings of intimidation and being consistently judged.

Chapter Eight

Conclusions

8.0 Introduction

In the introduction to this thesis, it was noted that the literature on young fatherhood is limited with respect to rural young fathers, particularly from a socio-historical perspective. In a response to this research gap, it was decided that the aim of this study would be to examine, within a rural location, the changing social and personal experiences of young fathers during the past sixty years. The main focus of this thesis is young fathers, and the analysis of social change has been used to contextulise and understand their experiences and responses to events which occurred in their lives, on the Isle of Sheppey. The findings from this study are significant in that they form an original contribution to the current academic field of young fatherhood, in examining rural working class young fathers over a sixty year period, rather than looking at a contemporary urban context. They also challenge the stereotype of the feckless young father.

The definition of young fatherhood was based upon contemporary understandings, which define a young father as being aged 25 or under (DCSF, 2009). This definition was applied to all participants in this study, and this application, in itself, has illustrated how social change has affected the age in which it is considered appropriate to become a father. This thesis focused on key social settings, all of which played a formative role in their experiences and transitions as young men; these included education, the local community and employment.

Firstly, this final chapter reviews and summarises the main themes of the study and contextualises them in relation to the theoretical perspectives and academic research discussed in chapter two and chapter three. Secondly, the chapter discusses possible implications of the research. Thirdly, the limitations of the study will be considered through a reflective account of the research process. Finally recommendations for future research based on the major themes of my study will be outlined, bringing this thesis to an end.

8.1 Transition from education to employment

The literature has shown that before the reduction of state intervention in the economy during the 1980s, stable and homogeneous transitions from school to work were considered the norm for most young people (Cartmel and Furlong, 2007). This research study also found that most of the

first and second cohort young fathers maintained a smooth transition from education to employment, suggesting that these young fathers generally followed the norm. As shown by Wallace (1980) and discussed in chapters five and six in this thesis, their transitions during this period on the Isle of Sheppey were influenced by the local economy, the economic background of their family, and the type of school education experienced (Wallace, 1980). All these influences directed them into an acceptance of manual employment. As illustrated in Pahl's (1979) study, young people's lives were characterised by realistic expectations based on the economic context of the Island, illustrating little evidence of aspiration, which may have taken them off the Island. From the perspective of structuration theory, the analysis of the data indicates that social structures, including friends and family, are reproducing systems that create generative rules and resources through social interaction, which in effect influenced the choices and destinies of the first and second cohort interviewed for this research (Giddens, 1991).

Social changes in the economy have significantly altered the choices, destinies and transition to financial independence since the 1980s. Deindustrialisation has led to a higher number of redundancies and longer periods of unemployment for those young men who once made a quick transition from compulsory education to manual labour (Cartmel and Furlong, 2007). In this study, as shown in chapter six, the experiences of most young fathers in the second cohort highlighted the significance of deindustrialisation and its negative impact on the level of unemployment in an old industrial region such as Sheppey.[85] However Wallace (1985) commented that significant economic changes were taking place before the 1980s due to the closure of the dockyard in 1959, which was the beginning of economic instability on the Island. The outcome of these changes are most explicit in the lives of the third cohort, where the findings have illustrated points made by a number of scholars who have shown how young people must either navigate a new pathway into higher education and training; or potentially face economic dependency on family or state benefits, commonly associated with contemporary young parents who are less likely to progress to higher education and training (Bowlby et al, 1998; Hubbard, 2000; Cartmel and Furlong, 2007). It can be seen that these young fathers are still attempting to follow the life path into employment seen in the first and second cohorts, but that social structures have changed around them, and made this difficult.

On a number of occasions this thesis has drawn upon the concepts of individualism and individualisation and shown how neo-liberal principles since the 1980s have encouraged an individualistic lifestyle. However, the findings from this study have suggested that the choices of

[85] More recently, the Isle of Sheppey has experienced more redundancies in January 2012 with 400 people being made redundant when Thamesteel in Sheerness, one of the major employers on the Island, went into administration (Ratcliffe, 2012).

the individual take place in accordance with different phases of life. Choices are not as atomistic as neo-liberalism may assume and must be adjusted according to the norms of the labour market, the welfare state and the educational system at any one point in time. Whilst individualisation may have removed individuals from their traditional social discourses, people now have to constantly assert themselves in a pre-existing institutional system throughout their lives, as suggested by Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002).

According to Cartmel and Furlong (2007), remaining in education for an extended period of time has become a favoured option for many young people since the 1980s: in general, young people are dependent longer on their parents and their transitions to adulthood and financial independence tends to occur at a later stage. It is evident from the material presented in chapter five that the transition to adulthood through employment happened at a much quicker pace for the first and second cohort, than those young fathers in the third cohort. Chapter five has also shown how young fathers in the third cohort acknowledged that they were aware whilst at school of the importance of achieving a good education although they did not act on it.

The third cohort in this study acknowledged their attitude and behaviour whilst at secondary school were associated with their poor education. They also felt that the secondary education system on the Island lacked control and authority over its pupils. Their assessment was supported by local documentary data. Failure by such institutions led to minimal support by teachers, which the young fathers felt had led to their lack of educational progression; an assessment shared by the local media (Sheppey Gazette, 1998a; 1998b; Kent Today, 2001). Furthermore, non-compulsory education prevented the third cohort from achieving due to the expense of gaining qualifications, the lack of which, they believed in some cases, inhibited them from gaining employment. Not only was expense an issue but work based qualifications were generally outdated in a year and would require more money to update, this reducing feelings of personal control and incentives to achieve for some young fathers. This suggests that social structures can limit personal agency, suggesting that Giddens' concept of duality (1984) is problematic in this instance. Here again, there is a shift in social structures undermining the efforts of young fathers to move from education to employment; a focus on formal qualifications seen by the third cohort in particular as undermining the traditional pathway to manual employment.

Like young fathers in the previous cohorts, the third cohort were constrained by the needs of the local economy; and their families' educational and employment background as to the personal choices they made economically. This suggests that regardless of social changes taking place in

wider society, it is evident that the immediate institutions surrounding a young father will most likely have the biggest impact upon him.

8.2 Transition to fatherhood

According to the research findings in this study, social change has had a fundamental impact upon the perception of fatherhood over the years. From the literature on social identities, it is suggested that historically a "father" is created by structural order (Giddens, 1984). For example, it is argued that social order before the late 1960s was shaped by structural institutions such as the nuclear family, religion, marriage and the local community. This then regulated moral development (Giddens, 1991; Kiselica, 2008). From the findings in this study, and in accordance with the literature (Kiselica, 2008), young fatherhood generally took place within the institution of marriage for most of the first and second cohort, and pregnancy outside of wedlock was not condoned or considered socially or morally acceptable. This suggests that choices, values and norms were predominantly based upon a general consensus of the local community and social structures, rather than the choices of the individual.

Indeed, from the findings discussed in chapter seven, it can be seen that according to the first and second cohort, pregnancy out of wedlock often happened whilst courting, leading to marriage at an accelerated pace, which was often decided by their parents. In comparison, most young fathers in the third cohort asserted their agency in these decisions by making their own personal choices on marriage and in some cases abortion. The analysis of the data on these issues has drawn upon Giddens' concept of the pure relationship, suggesting that individuals, particularly since the postmodern period, have been enabled to enter as well as freely leave social institutions, such as the family and marriage, based predominately on personal desires and romantic love (Giddens, 1991). Furthermore, in line with Murray (1990) it may be suggested that the support of a welfare state in an increasingly individualised society has allowed mothers to be more independent and not to have to rely on the economic support of fathers, although this development is debated and policies to cap welfare payments have been recently proposed.

8.3 Masculinity

Leaving compulsory education and going straight into full-time work had the advantage of a young father becoming financially independent quickly and attaining the breadwinner role commonly associated with working class masculinity (Willis, 1977). Masculinity, according to the literature, can be identified as a social construct, creating mutual knowledge amongst men

through social interaction and narrative (Connell, 2000; Frosh et al, 2002). However, economic change that has taken place, particularly since the 1980s, has made attaining the breadwinner identity more difficult, and this has also been illustrated in this study. This difficulty, described in the literature as a "crisis" in working class masculinity, may cause unacknowledged tension in identity, leading to a lack of self-worth and self-esteem (Nayak and Kehily, 2008).

In relation to this study, maintaining a credible masculinity has been of particular importance to the third cohort, particularly whilst in education (see chapter five). They felt that their 'laddish' behaviour and lack of interest was aimed at building a credible masculinity amongst their peers, and was a major factor in inhibiting them from achieving a good education. It was suggested by the first and most of the second cohort that 'laddish' behaviour in school was suppressed by the use of physical punishment. The analysis of the data discussed in chapter five, suggests that physical punishment in education was a means of social control, maintaining moral standards and a deterrent of bad behaviour and opposition in the classroom.

Evidence of the importance of masculinity for the participants of this study has not only been noted in their attitude towards education, but has also demonstrated itself through the relationships between father and son. Gender stereotyping was evident amongst young fathers and their own fathers. For example, young fathers who were in the same workplace as their father discussed how there was to be little reference to the fact they were father and son as this was regarded as 'emotional,' which could not be seen in a highly masculinised area such as industrial work. Other young fathers commented on the fact that there was a lack of tenderness between them and their father, which in some cases affected the level of tenderness shared with their own child, particularly if they had sons. Young fathers who had daughters found it much easier to engage emotionally, as emotionality tended to be associated with femininity. Such personal reflections helped to construct a clear personal identity through an ordering of life events, building a sense of who they were as a person and how they had arrived at this point. It is also evident that moving through different phases of a young father's life, for example a young man to a young father, changed their view and attitude towards previous actions and behaviours.

For the first and most of the second cohort, social support and care of the child was considered a private affair within the family. Although some young fathers in the third cohort were more accepting of public services supporting the family, they were not willing to access public services such as Children's Centres due to feeling intimidated by a female dominated area (see chapter seven). The evidence from this study suggests that aspects of working class masculinity inhibited young fathers from accessing supportive services due to a feminised environment.

Also, some young fathers, particularly in the third cohort, were sceptical of being involved in public services as they were considered an extension of children's social services. Furthermore, the relationships they have had previously with various social institutions and professionals in the community had affected their enthusiasm to get involved with necessary support. It is apparent from the data that consistently bad relationships with social institutions, lack of trust and negative public discourse related to young fatherhood have made young fathers, particularly in the third cohort, concerned about how they might be perceived by others. This lack of engagement with public bodies may be seen by those agencies as a lack of engagement with parenthood, rather than disinclination towards the agencies. This could contribute to the discourse of young fathers as uninterested, 'absent' or 'deadbeat'. Although this discussion is based mostly on young fathers making a personal decision not to interact personally with Children's Centres, and possibly other supportive services, it is important to note that the availability of support for young fathers, particularly in relation to Children's Centres, has recently reduced. For example, recent policy changes made by the Coalition Government have announced its commitment to Sure Start Children's Centres, but marked a clear policy shift towards more 'targeted' services and which has closed a number of Centres (Lord et al, 2011).

8.4 Social relationships and networks

Building social relationships and utilising social networks in the local community was a major strategy in gaining employment for all three cohorts within this study. It was typical of young fathers from all three cohorts to emphasise bonding social capital, suggesting that social relationships on the Island were more important and relevant than qualifications and were a strong incentive for remaining on the Isle of Sheppey. Qualifications were generally described as non-essential in accessing employment, particularly in the first and second cohort; instead most young fathers spoke about their fathers having contacts in their place of employment, which got them a job. This is a finding similar to that of Pahl and Wallace (1985), though in Wallace's (1987) study, she suggests that there were differences between young people who were able to secure regular employment on the Island and those who couldn't, otherwise known as "sinkers" and "swimmers". Building social capital through family members supports the understanding of Coleman (1990) who suggests that the family are important in the development of social capital through involved and supportive parenting. Further, he discusses how social capital is also not necessarily owned or inherited but arises as a resource, which is established by remaining in a particular area over a period of time (Coleman, 1990). The evidence from the third cohort in this study indicates that bonding social capital discussed by Putnam (2000) was breaking down on

the Island; however young fathers still, to a certain extent, identified the importance of solidarity and social cohesion.

Since the 1980s, organisational and structural changes in the workplace have affected the level of trust in the local community and the extent to which young fathers can utilise social capital to gain themselves sufficient employment. Putnam (2000) implies that the problem is linked to individualism and that people are now less likely to become collectively involved in organisations and are therefore less likely to confer with others in small groups, which hinders the development of social capital. The Isle of Sheppey itself, to a certain extent, contributes towards social capital through social networking between local inhabitants; this is due to the lack of mobility on and off the Island. However, social isolation, limited mobility and social deprivation have weakened economic performance on the Island, and the usefulness of bonding social capital on the Island.

From the analysis of the data, prior to a more free market and knowledge-based economy, social capital had been a major community-based resource, considered effective due to the cohesiveness and relational ties that existed on the Island (Pahl, 1984). This had a major impact upon young fathers' feelings of self-worth and significance in the workplace; particularly young fathers in the first and second cohort who had experienced economic prosperity and little in the way of unemployment. Also, this was a period in which there were strong and intimate employer-employee relationships, which encouraged trust, a general consensus and a collective and equal identity in the workplace. In comparison, the third cohort had a much more individualistic view of employment and had shown little interest to building commitment to a particular employer. It is suggested that the third cohort was not trying to find employment in any different sense to the earlier cohorts. They had to operate as separate individuals, without securing a different route to finding work, which has undermined their efforts.

8.5 Perception of social change

An important note to be made in this thesis is that participants have been asked to tell a story, where inevitably they offer their own perceptions and interpretations of events and circumstances, and a corresponding subjectively constrained overall focus. However, the interviews were based upon predetermined themes identified in the literature, which may have limited the extent in which young fathers could or felt able to define for themselves the meaning of their experiences as a young father. Nevertheless, the discussion points during the interviews were broad and simply served to provide a framework to enable them to tell their story. As discussed in chapter three, there were variations in the detail and richness of individual

testimonies, which is reflected in the extent to which the narratives of particular participants are drawn upon in the discussions of the findings of the study. Narratives from different cohorts also presented collective memories, including recalling major events that evoked strong emotional reactions, thereby representing markers of social change, which had significance for the cohort concerned. For instance, some young men who were fathers during the 1950s to 1970s (first and second cohort) focused their interviews on their memories of general consensus through the local community, employment and maintaining trust and a collective identity. The narrative approach has thus not only helped to identify the major experiences and factors impacting upon each young father's life; but has also given prominence to understanding the relationship between personal agency and structural change within a local setting.

Young men who were fathers during the 1980s focused more on conflict due to change in the balance of structure and agency in the workplace through changes to trade unions and employer-employee relations. Men who were young fathers during the 1990s to the present described the complex transitions and outcomes of these social changes that had been highlighted by fathers previously. This suggests that place is more than a geographical setting with definitive physical characteristics; but rather that place is fluid, changeable, and a dynamic context for social interaction and memory (Dixon and Durrheim, 2004). Thus narratives provided insight into the construction of young fathers' experiences of place and morality, which are understood as contributing factors to self-identity (Green et al, 2006).

The narratives have also provided nostalgic memories, particularly from the first and second cohorts. From the analysis of the data, these were often related to discussing contemporary social and political conditions, and a search for stability and ontological security in the present. Nostalgic memories have often been dismissed by researchers and have been described in the literature as being disjointed feelings of mourning, imagination and desire for an exaggerated past, which is believed to corrupt the true realities of historical research (Pickering and Keightley, 2006). From the study, the first and second cohorts had memories of a glorified past, which Pahl (1984) recognized in his study as "pleasing nostalgia", particularly amongst older people living on the Island. However, by invoking nostalgic memories, they illustrated the extent to which social change impacted upon their lives and how that had impacted upon their identity, personal agency and absence of community, which were major investigative aspects of this thesis.

Both Pahl and Wallace noted in their studies (1984; 1985; 1987), the profound social and economic decline within this occupational community. Neo-liberalism in the 1980s is understood to have increased greater individual choice and continued to change family discourse by

promoting economic opportunities for both women and men, which have also affected even the prospect of having a family (Miller, 2011). With reference to social change, most young fathers in all three cohorts highlighted economic change as a major hindrance to their role as a father and particularly their ability to financially provide for their family. This illustrates the continuing decline noted by both Pahl and Wallace in the 1980s.

Discussing the community with young fathers from different cohorts, it became clear that they saw their idea of place as an extension of home into public space. This feeling of belonging was built up around the Island and found its focus in the familiar objects and shared experiences of day-to-day living. A key component of a sense of place and articulating a sense of living in a community identified in this research was the presence and preservation of locally distinct features, such as the dockyard, local factories and the yearly carnival (see chapter four). Further, the ability to exercise personal agency was associated with the collective, maintained by closely-knit communities, local economy and trade unions, particularly for the first and second cohorts. Young fathers, mostly in the first and second cohorts, reflected on the significance of place and being able to relate to a local area, where many lived, worked and socialised. It was argued, drawing upon nostalgic memories, that before the ascendancy of neo-liberalism in the 1980s, the Island sustained stability, security and possibly a happier and more contented community, in comparison to recent years where insecurity and uncertainty are at the forefront of young fathers' lives.

8.6 Main findings from the study

This thesis has addressed a gap in the literature by analysing the perspectives of different cohorts of young fathers, in a rural coastal setting, over the past sixty years. The importance of these findings is that they provide a clear understanding of the major social factors which have impacted upon the changing discourses of young fatherhood. Further, this study has provided some understanding of the changing nature of how structural forces impact upon the agency and lives of young fathers. Studying testimonial accounts and local data over a period of sixty years on a socially isolated and excluded Island has helped to establish a clearer understanding of how social change may have impacted on the lives and experiences of young fathers. The study has found that individualism and the process of individualisation are to some extent responsible for the breakdown of institutions considered important for developing general consensus on moral and social values such as marriage, remaining as a family unit, sense of common and/or collective identity, trust, strong ethos of the local community and authoritative social institutions.

In light of young peoples' transitions, it has been shown in chapter five how a slower transition to financial independence, and adulthood, has affected the definition of "young father". Young fathers in recent years are generally defined as young men who have had a child at the age of 25 and under (DCSF, 2009). However, as recalled by a father in the first cohort, and discussed in chapter five, the typical age of leaving education was fifteen during this time. Therefore these men had left education for at least four or five years, and were financially independent before they were usually married and became fathers, which typically occurred at the ages of 20-22; this was rarely the case for young fathers in the third cohort. However, as also reported by Wallace (1987), the idea of young men making a smooth transition to employment as a means of social reproduction is more complex. Like young fathers in this study, having responsibility to financially provide for a family disciplined a young man into employment. Young fathers seen in this sense of age are not then a recent development in society; rather, the situation they find themselves in economically, regardless of fatherhood, has dramatically changed over the last sixty years. The third cohort of young fathers are not embarking on a different journey in relation to fatherhood from the previous cohorts; structural change around them has simply inhibited how they are equipped to cope with that journey, and consequently how they are perceived and presented in the media, and policy documents.

This study suggests that social changes, such as changing labour markets that have negatively impacted upon early parenthood, as well as the identification of risk factors associated with becoming young parents, have contributed towards political interest in young parenthood as a social problem. The identification of social risk with teenage pregnancy, however, was implicitly challenged by participants in this study, with most young fathers suggesting that there were no particular differences between how "appropriately aged" fathers and "young fathers" view the role and responsibilities of being a father. Indeed, these "young fathers" could have been seen as "appropriately aged" were it not for the social changes which have occurred around them. Moral panics have been created about a group who at heart are no different due to their age; the difference can be seen more in the socio-economic structures around them.

This study also considered the public discourse and self-presentation of participants. In chapters three and seven, I discussed how public discourse was a major influence on the moral development of young fathers. The literature discusses how current public discourse about young fathers has been associated with the media's portrayal of "deadbeat dads" and "runaway fathers;" they have also been identified as vulnerable due to the number of social risk factors that generally accompany them (Murray, 1990; Jaffee et al, 2001; Robb, 2004). As a result, young fathers, particularly in the third cohort, may have felt pressurised to live up to the ideal role of a

financially supportive and engaged father during interviews.

The young fathers in this study were already suffering a number of social exclusion risk factors, particularly low educational achievement and unemployment. This was particularly evident within the third cohort of young fathers. Although it is understood that obtaining a good level of education in contemporary society promotes social mobility and prosperity (Cartmel and Furlong, 2007), this study indicates that it is more likely that young fathers in all three cohorts will follow the rules of their immediate environments. In the context of the Island factors that promote conformity within the local community are the remains of an industrial and manufacturing community, in which many have been employed; and family members, primarily their children, who are local on the Island.

The research evidence from this study suggests that young fathers can construct their own lives and exercise personal agency but can become limited by structural change. For example, young fathers in the first and second cohorts spoke favourably of structure and routine being part of their lives; illustrating the importance of collectivism rather than individualisation. This was created by smooth transitions from education to employment and the upbringing of a family within the institution of marriage. In comparison, young fathers in the third cohort discussed how there was little structure in their lives and how they experienced what seem to be individualised pathways and transitions. Economic change has altered such transitions considerably, with an observable impact on education, generally thought to be at the forefront of maintaining social mobility and prosperity. Young fathers in the third cohort who did not participate fully in compulsory education or access non-compulsory education are more likely to experience unstructured lives and uncertain outcomes. It may be argued that young fathers have found life more difficult due to the social changes that have occurred around them; but it could also be argued that they have failed or refused to adapt to these change, thus passively participating in the construction of young fatherhood as a social problem.

The breadwinner role was considered the most important factor of paternal identity for most young fathers in all three cohorts. Maintaining the breadwinner role heightened and legitimised their masculinity, which was crucial in protecting their self-esteem and self-worth. Furthermore, the third cohort of young fathers associated fatherhood with a new and more positive adult identity, which changed some of their previous lifestyles. For the third cohort, fatherhood brought structure, stability, security and most importantly responsibility, which were personal attributes and aspects of life that they had not experienced so far in their lives.

8.7 Application of theory

Giddens' structuration theory (1984) was the major theoretical perspective applied to this thesis. It was chosen because it provides a framework in understanding social systems and how agency interacts with social systems which then produces social change. Structuration theory has proved to be very useful in exploring the relations between social structures and individual actions of young fathers. It has provided this thesis with a reflective guide, allowing me to think critically as well as form an understanding of the data, from the perspective of personal agency and social structure. Structuration theory has also allowed me to understand how social structures and agency have manifested themselves within different social contexts, spaces and times as well as to theorise the different experiences of the young fathers in the study. The meanings that young fathers attach to their actions have been explored by addressing the relationship held with social structures in their daily lives (Giddens, 1984).

There are however some limitations in relation to the application of structuration theory to this study. For example, structuration theory is quite abstract in its empirical grounding and fails to provide methodological directions of how to conduct the research, or give actual examples of how the theory can be applied to the study (Thompson, 1989), which is why the theory has been used in this study to provoke thought and reflection rather than being an applied methodological framework.

Further, Giddens' reference to understanding structure and agency as a "duality" has been analytically difficult in the study. There is some suggestion within this study that structural changes have had a major and predominant impact upon the agency of young fathers. This indicates the value of understanding structure and agency independently (rather than as a duality) in order to analyse their interrelations, as Archer (1996) proposes.

The second theoretical perspective applied to this study was that of social capital. It was chosen based upon the premise that it would provide knowledge on the pattern and intensity of networks among young fathers and the shared values which arise from those networks (Bourdieu, 1984; Coleman, 1990; Putnam, 2000). It encompasses institutions, relationships, and customs that shape the quality and quantity of a society's social interactions, which was a focal point of my study. It has also been argued in Putnam's (2000) research that social change has had a fundamental impact upon the extent to which social capital can support individuals, particularly in employment.

Social capital has proven to be useful in much the same way as structuration theory; it has

provided a reflective tool to critically understand and evaluate the data. It has also been useful in illustrating the combination of macro-sociological historical structures with micro-level causal mechanisms over a period of time, which has helped construct social change.

There are however some limitations in relation to social capital. For example, social capital as a concept is very elusive due to its various definitions and understandings in different disciplines, which has made it difficult to analyse and generate findings. Secondly, there were problems associated with applying social capital to the data. It seemed that the concept is generally treated as a coherent whole, rather than as separated themes. This made it difficult to ensure that specific mechanisms of trust, community, reciprocity, interpersonal relationships and networks, which are elements of the concept, were being fully investigated and discussed.

Sociological concepts at the micro level were useful tools for analyzing the data and applying the macro level theory of structuration. Social exclusion, masculinity, place attachment, individualism and individualisation provided useful concepts for understanding the changing nature of structure and agency and how these concepts have had different implications for young fathers during the past sixty years.

8.8 Limitations of the study

Here I take this opportunity to be reflective and identify the possible limitations of this thesis. Initially, this study intended to collect five young fathers per decade from the 1950s to the present, resulting in at least thirty participants. By gathering at least five participants per decade, it may have possibly given more detail and expanded further on some of the data and the range of views collected. Unfortunately, the time allocated to collecting participants and poor response rates limited me from gaining my intended number of participants. As a result, to reach data saturation, I had to merge decades together to create a fuller understanding of different cohorts. I also supplemented my findings with documentary data.

Like most qualitative research studies, the findings from this study cannot be generalised. Some may wish to view this study as a case study on young fathers in a particular geographical location, which develops the body of literature as well as being unique in the fact that the location is an island. More critical views may suggest that because this study focused on one geographical location, which is an island, it may provide unique findings that are not representative of mainland areas. However, some of the findings from this study, particularly from the third cohort, are typical of findings discussed in the contemporary field of young fatherhood. For example my study highlights major themes such as social exclusion, unemployment, disengagement in education and fragile family life. Furthermore, levels of social

deprivation on the Island are similar to those found in socially deprived urban locations. Whilst this study is located in a rural island setting, the problems faced by young fathers are also those seen in the academic literature focussing on urban locations (Meek, 2008).

There were issues presented through undertaking life story interviews with the participants. Although these interviews provided the richest form of data available and made clear a series of life experiences there were two main problems that could potentially be argued to emerge from the nature of these interviews.

Firstly, to allow for some structure in the interview, to aid discussion and to ensure that no pertinent areas were left uncovered. I wished to cover all typical social risk factors associated with young fathers according to the literature review and assess whether these were prevalent in the lives of participants. However, this could be seen as a key limitation in my interviews. By having a set structure in place, limitations were placed upon the topics that young fathers would suppose are appropriate for the particular interview. Had I simply entered the interview situation and asked the participants to discuss their lives and what they saw as the key influences and factors that had shaped them, they may have directed the study into other areas.

Secondly, it could be argued that the life stories presented by the participants may have conformed to popular discourses rather than their actual perceptions of their lives. It could even be suggested that their nostalgic recollections were in some way influenced by popular discourses. The issue of young fatherhood could be considered a sensitive social topic, therefore it could be interpreted that I was questioning their ability of being a father at a young age, enhancing the chance of their conformity to popular discourse, with traditional discourses being seen as socially and morally acceptable. The participants were well aware of the moral panic created in the media around their circumstances. As the young fathers were aware of the moral judgement of their position and the normative role of the father, they could have been attempting to escape judgement by conforming to the supposed discourse of the normative father figure. They could have presented themselves in what they considered a more positive light than perhaps the way they truly reflected upon themselves. This is not to suggest that it would necessarily have been a conscious decision to portray themselves in this fashion; as previously mentioned, the public discourse could simply have been internalised and affected the recollections of the participants.

The decision to create cohorts rather than examine each participant as an individual could be viewed as a limitation. Taking each life story as an individual account and examining each in turn would have yielded incredibly rich data and would have allowed for very specific inferences to be drawn. However, this would have led to two main problems. Methodologically, to make

the research about specific individuals rather than a group or community, would have made the findings even less applicable to other environments. With the study already not able to be generalised, this would have limited its use in drawing wider conclusions even further. Secondly, there were ethical implications. The young fathers involved were known on the island and expressed concern that if individual circumstances and personal profiles were made explicit in the study, regardless of pseudonyms, it would be apparent to the community who was being discussed. This could have caused personal issues for the young fathers and would have made them less trusting of the researcher, thus revealing less rich data in their interviews. The decision was therefore taken to create cohorts, examining general trends in time periods rather than specific instances in the lives of individuals.

Lastly, the researcher being an outsider on the island may have limited the study. As discussed, Sheppey is an island with very low mobility, where people remain embedded in a place and are known by most of their peers. This is an area where those from outside are generally mistrusted, or thought of as 'other'. To come in to this environment from the outside and ask personal questions about the lives of young fathers, focussing on a sensitive issue, could have caused participants to be reluctant to fully disclose their true impressions of life on the island and their own personal choices.

8.9 Recommendations for future study

This thesis has focused on the social experiences of young fathers, which have been shaped by their experiences and transitions as young men, in a geographically specific area, over the past sixty years. It utilised narrative methodology with twenty one white working class men, supplemented by documentary research. The research findings of this study pose further questions, which can be taken forward for further research. In relation to the academic field, there is still the need for further research in rural areas in relation to young fathers. Currently, the field has identified that the focus has generally been on urban areas, particularly deprived council estates or urban areas with high levels of social exclusion (Meek, 2008). This limited focus is likely to be related to the idyllic view of rural areas and socially excluded individuals being sporadic in such areas (Cloke and Little, 1997; Hughes, 2004). Therefore, further research in rural areas is needed to identify socially excluded individuals like young fathers and to examine further their experiences and identify specific needs. The implications of this would be that professionals, and policy makers would gain a clearer idea of the needs of rural young fathers, which would support young fathers in caring for their child. It would also identify where young fathers are likely to be residing within rural areas, which would possibly allow for services to be pinpointed to appropriate rural areas.

The study's findings have suggested that ideologies of working class masculinity have been a major hindrance for some young fathers in the third cohort. The academic field already contains quite an extensive amount of research over many years relating to working class masculinity and its impact upon educational achievement (Mac and Ghail, 1994; Jackson, 2003; Reay, 2001; Reay, 2004). The general consensus of the literature suggests that working class masculinity is resistant and quite oppositional to the education system, which is considered feminine and middle class (Mac an Ghail, 1994; Reay, 2004). Similarly, this study's findings suggest that the local culture of the community in which young fathers and their families have lived, worked and socialised, has more of an impact upon the choices made in terms of employment prospects than education. Therefore, the area of interest, which may be taken further, is the impact of socially isolated rural communities, and the importance of place and families on the future prospects of young people. The implications of understanding the priorities of young people and what influences their life choices is that we will have a greater understanding within the literature and for policy makers on what can impact upon how young people conduct themselves and make choices.

Moral development and self-presentation were addressed in this study via life story interviews, which may have reflected dominant public discourses rather than fully addressing the realities of their lives. Therefore, a different methodological approach such as an ethnographic approach may be an appropriate solution to clearly understanding the daily struggles of contemporary young fathers in their daily and natural environments. The implication is that to fully understand the reality or at least the true perception held by participants, research in an isolated social environment would have to go some way to reduce the perceived difference between researcher and participant. This would allow for greater depth of research in the literature and would enhance the trustworthiness of that research.

8.10 Conclusion

The findings from the research presented in this thesis have extended existing knowledge on young fatherhood, and the experiences they have had within a particular geographical location, which contributes towards the possible differences experienced between urban and rural areas. The study has provided clearer understandings about the changing nature of young fatherhood, perceptions of young fatherhood, fundamental factors that have impacted upon the lives of young fathers and the consequences of those factors over a period of sixty years. As discussed in this chapter, young fathers can be seen as a social problem primarily due to economic changes.

This change has slowed the transition to adulthood and consequently made it difficult for working class young fathers to achieve financial independence. Combined with a changing labour market, and young working class men attempting to conform to masculine ideals and public discourses, a poorly disciplined education system fails to provide them with alternative lifestyles. This is of key importance at a time when governments are attempting to save money by reducing support structures and encouraging people to get into work (DfE, 2011; Lord et al, 2011; Barnardos, 2012). As noted above, the agency of young fathers is severely limited by social structures, something many western democracies are failing to acknowledge in an acceptance of liberal values of individualism.

There have been various discussions presented in this study in regards to young fathers. However, I would like to close this thesis with one of the major lessons that I have learnt through completing this study. Young fatherhood has been described, particularly in contemporary literature, as being quite problematic. This is due to the social risk factors likely to be experienced by a young father, particularly educational failure and unemployment. Young fathers have also been described as lacking in moral fibre, demonstrating a lack of responsibility towards their child as well as society. However, it has become clear throughout this study that young fathers wishing to live up to their roles and responsibilities have not dramatically changed over the last sixty years. Young fathers are not a recent emergent group and neither have they suddenly stopped showing responsibility towards their role as a father. Rather, it seems to be the case that the social structures around many young fathers have changed and no longer offer them the support, which they once relied upon. Whilst society seems to blame young fathers for creating their own problems, it can be argued that young fathers are continuing as they always have, but their lack of conformity to a changing set of structures around them has caused society to manifest problems for them, which they are currently left to deal with.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Body of literature for literature review

Developments in social and economic policy

Author	Date	Type of source	Origin
Pierre Bourdieu	1986	Book	France
Norman Tebbit	1989	Book	UK
John E. Kingdom	1992	Book	UK
David Bryne	1995	Book	UK
Stephen Driver and Luke Martel	**1998**	**Book**	**UK**
John Mohan	1999	Book	UK
Social Exclusions Unit	2001	Online report document	UK
Gil Richard Musolf	2003	Book	US
Nick Ellison and Chris Pierson	**2003**	**Book**	**UK**
Alan Deacon	2003	Book	UK
Susanne McGregor	**2003**	**Book**	**UK**
Dan Finn	**2003**	**Book**	**UK**
Chris Howell	2005	Book	UK
Graeme Lockwood	2005	Journal article	UK
Jamie Gough, Aram Eisenschitz, Andrew McCulloch	2006	Book	UK
Conservative party	2006	Online document	UK
Ruth Lister	2010	Book	UK
Stuart McAnulla	2010	Journal article	UK
Mohan J. Dutta	2011	Book	US

Structuration theory

Emile Durkheim	1895	Book	France
Anthony Giddens	**1971**	**Book**	**UK**
Anthony Giddens	**1984**	**Book**	**UK**
John Thompson	1989	Book	UK
Anthony Giddens	**1991**	**Book**	**UK**
Margaret Archer	1996	Journal article	UK
Mary Ann Hardcastle, Kim Usher, Colin Holmes,	2005	Journal article	UK
Anthony Giddens	**2009**	**Book**	**UK**

Social capital

Author	Date	Type of source	Origin
Pierre Bourdieu	1984	Book	France
Pierre Bourdieu	**1986**	**Book**	**France**
John Coleman	**1990**	**Book**	**US**
Robert D. Putnam	1993	Book	Italy
Alejandro Portes and Patricia Landlolt	1996	Journal article	US
Charles Tilly	1997	Journal article	US
Alejandro Portes	**1998**	**Journal article**	**US**

Robert D. Putnam	**2000**	**Book**	**US**
John Field	2003	Book	UK
Rosalind Edwards, Jane Franklin and Janet Holland	2003	Journal article	UK
David Gauntlett	2011	Book	UK

Individualisation, individualism and place attachment

Author	Date	Type of source	Origin
Anthony Giddens	**1971**	**Book**	**UK**
Ray Pahl	1984	Book	UK
Anthony Giddens	**1991**	**Book**	**UK**
Anthony Giddens	**1998**	**Book**	**UK**
Urich Beck and Elisabeth Beck-Gurnsheim	**2002**	**Book**	**US**
ONS	2003	Online report	UK
Anthony Glendinning, Mark Nuttall, Leo Hendry, Marion Kleop and Sheila Wood	2003	Journal article	UK
Annie Hughes	2004	Book	UK
John Dixon and Kevin Durrheim	2004	Journal article	US
Vanessa Burholt and Dawn Naylor	2005	Journal article	UK
Mark Livingston, Nick Bailey and Ade Kearns	2009	Journal article- Joseph Rowntree foundation	UK
Lorenza Dallago Douglas D. Perkins, Massimo Santinell, Will Boyce, Michal Molcho, Antony Morgan	2009	Journal article	International
Daniel Sunblad and Stephen Sapp	2011	Journal article	US

Rural and coastal towns

Author	Date	Type of source	Origin
David R. Phillips and Allan M. Williams	1984	Book	UK
Paul J. Cloke and Jo Little	1997	Book	UK
Sarah Monk, Jessica Dunn, Maureen Fitzgerald and Ian Hodge	1999	JRF online report	UK
Swale Borough Council	2002	Council report document	UK
Anthony Glendinning, Mark Nuttall, Leo Hendry,	2003	Journal article	UK

Marion Kleop and Sheila Wood			
Christina Beatty and Stephen Fothergill	**2003**	**Online report document**	**UK**
Jamie Gough, Aram Eisenschitz and Andrew McCulloch	2006	Book	UK
Viven Lowndes and Lawrence Prachett	2008	Book	UK
Communities and local government committee	**2007**	**Online document**	**UK**

Challenges to the male breadwinner model

Author	Date	Type of source	Origin
David N.Ashton	1986	Book	UK
Charles Murray	**1990**	**Book**	**US**
Anthony Giddens	**1991**	**Book**	**UK**
Raewyn W. Connell	1995	Book	Australia
Sophie Bowlby, Sally Lloyd-Evans and Robina Mohammad	1998	Book	UK
Nigel Edley and Margaret Wetherall	1999	Journal article	UK
Gill Hubbard	2000	Online journal article	UK
Social Exclusions Unit	2001	Online government report document	UK
Stephen Frosh, Ann Phoenix and Robert Pattman	2002	Book	UK
Gil Richard Mussolf	2003	Book	US
Sara Willott and Christine Griffin	2004	Journal article	UK
Jane Kenway and Anna Kraack	2004	Book	UK
Raewyn W. Connell	2005	Book	Australia
David Halpern	2005	Book	UK
Keith Hayward and Majid Yar	2006	Journal article	UK
Emily Kane	2006	Journal article	US
Fred Cartmel and Andy Furlong	**2007**	**Online report document**	**UK**
Annop Nayak and Mary Jane Kehily	2008	Book	UK
Rosie Meek	2008	Journal article	UK
Michael Janger	2009	Online source	US
Sandra McNally and Shqiponja Telhaj	2010	Princes Trust Online document	UK
Department for Education	2011	Online government report	UK
HM Government	2011	Online government	UK

		report	
ONS	2011a	Online report	UK
The Poverty Site	2012	Online source	UK
Barnardos	2012	Online source	UK

Young masculinities

Author	Date	Type of source	Origin
Raewyn W. Connell	**1995**	**Book**	**Australia**
Janet Holland, Caroline Ramazanoglu, Sue Sharpe, Rachel Thomson	1998	Book	UK
Anthony W. Clare	2001	Book	UK
Stephen Frosh, Ann Phoenix and Robert Pattman	2002	Book	UK
Emily Kane	2006	Journal article	US
David Nylund	2006	Book	US
Jean Spence	2007	Book	UK
Diane Richardson	2010	Journal article	UK

Young masculinities in education

Author	Date	Type of source	Origin
Paul Willis	**1977**	**Book**	**UK**
Máirtín Mac an Ghail	**1994**	**Book**	**US**
Raewyn W. Connell	**2000**	**Book**	**Australia**
Sara R. Jaffee, Avshalom Caspi, and Terrie E. Moffitt	2001	Journal article	US
Diane Reay	**2000**	**Journal article**	**UK**
Diane Reay	**2001**	**Journal article**	**UK**
Diane Reay	**2002**	**Journal article**	**UK**
Carolyn Jackson	2003	Journal article	UK
Diane Reay	**2004**	**Journal article**	**UK**
Jane Kenway and Anna Kracck	2004	Book	UK
Robert Macdonald and Jane Marsh	2004	Journal article	UK
DfES[86]	2005	Online government document	UK
Anoop Nayak	2006	Journal article	UK
Michael Wadsworth, Diane Kuh, Marcus Richards, Rebecca Hardy	2006	Journal article	UK
Department of Education	2011	Online source	UK
Barnardos	2012	Online source	UK
The Guardian	2013	Newspaper article	UK

[86] Department for Education and Skills

The changing role of fathers

Author	Date	Type of source	Origin
Reuben Lorenzo Hill, Elise Boulding, Lowell Dunigan, Rachel Ann Elder	1949	Book	US
Joseph H. Pleck	1987	Book	US
Robert L. Griswold	1993	Book	US
Deborah Lupton and Lesley Barclay	**1997**	**Book**	**UK**
Dariusz Galasinski	2004	Book	Poland
Julia Brannen and Ann Nilsen	**2006**	**Journal article**	**UK**
Jeremy A. Smith	2009	Book	US
Hanan Hauani and Katie Hollingworth	2009	JRF online report	UK

Fatherless families

Author	Date	Type of source	Origin
Charles Murray	1990	Book	US
Francois Badarida	1991	Book	UK
Deborah Lupton and Lesley Barclay	1997	Book	UK
Suzanne Speak, Stuart Cameron and Rose Gilroy	**1997**	**JRF[87] report document**	**UK**
Sarah Allen and Alan Hawkins	1999	Journal article	UK
Sara R. Jaffee, Avshalom Caspi, and Terrie E. Moffitt	**2001**	**Journal article**	**New Zealand**
Anthony W. Clare	2001	Book	UK
Vern L. Bengtson, Timothy J. Biblarz and Rbert E.L. Roberts	2002	Book	US
Loretta E Gavin, Maureen M Black, Sherman Minor, Yolanda Abel, Mia A Papas and Margaret E Bentley	2002	Journal article	US
Lisa Bunting and Colette McAuley	**2004**	**Journal article**	**UK**
Brent A. McBride Geoffrey L. Brown Kelly K. Bost Nana Shin Brian Vaughn Byran Korth	2005	Journal article	US
Suzanne Cater and Lester Coleman	**2006**	**Book**	**UK**
Melissa J. Herzog	2007	Journal article	US

[87] Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Adriana J. Uman˜a-Taylor Debra A. Madden-Derdich Stacie A. Leonard			
David Popenoe	2009	Book	US
Kevin Roy and Colleen Vesley	2009	Book	US
ONS	2012	Online report	UK

Changing discourse on teenage pregnancy

Author	Date	Type of source	Origin
Deborah Lupton and Lesley Barclay	**1997**	**Book**	**UK**
ONS[88]	2002	Online report	UK
Liza Catan	2004	Online document	UK
Lisa Bunting and Collette McAuley	2004	Journal article	UK
Martin Robb	2004	Book	UK
Katherine Pears, Susan Pierce, Hyoun Kim, Deborah Capaldi, Lee Owen	2005	Journal article	US
Jane Reeves	2006	Journal article	UK
Suzanne Cater and Lester Coleman	2006	Book	UK
Elaine Chase and Abigail Knight	2006	Book	UK
Simon Duncan	2007	Journal article	UK
Sheila Henderson, Janet Holland, Sheena McGrellis, Sue Sharpe, Rachel Thomson	2007	Book	UK
Angela McRobbie	2007	Journal article	UK
Mark S. Kiselica	**2008**	**Book**	**US**
Julia Hirst and Eleanor Formby and Jenny Owen	2010	Book	UK
ONS	2010	Online report	UK
Barnardos	2012	Online source	UK

Policy supporting young fathers

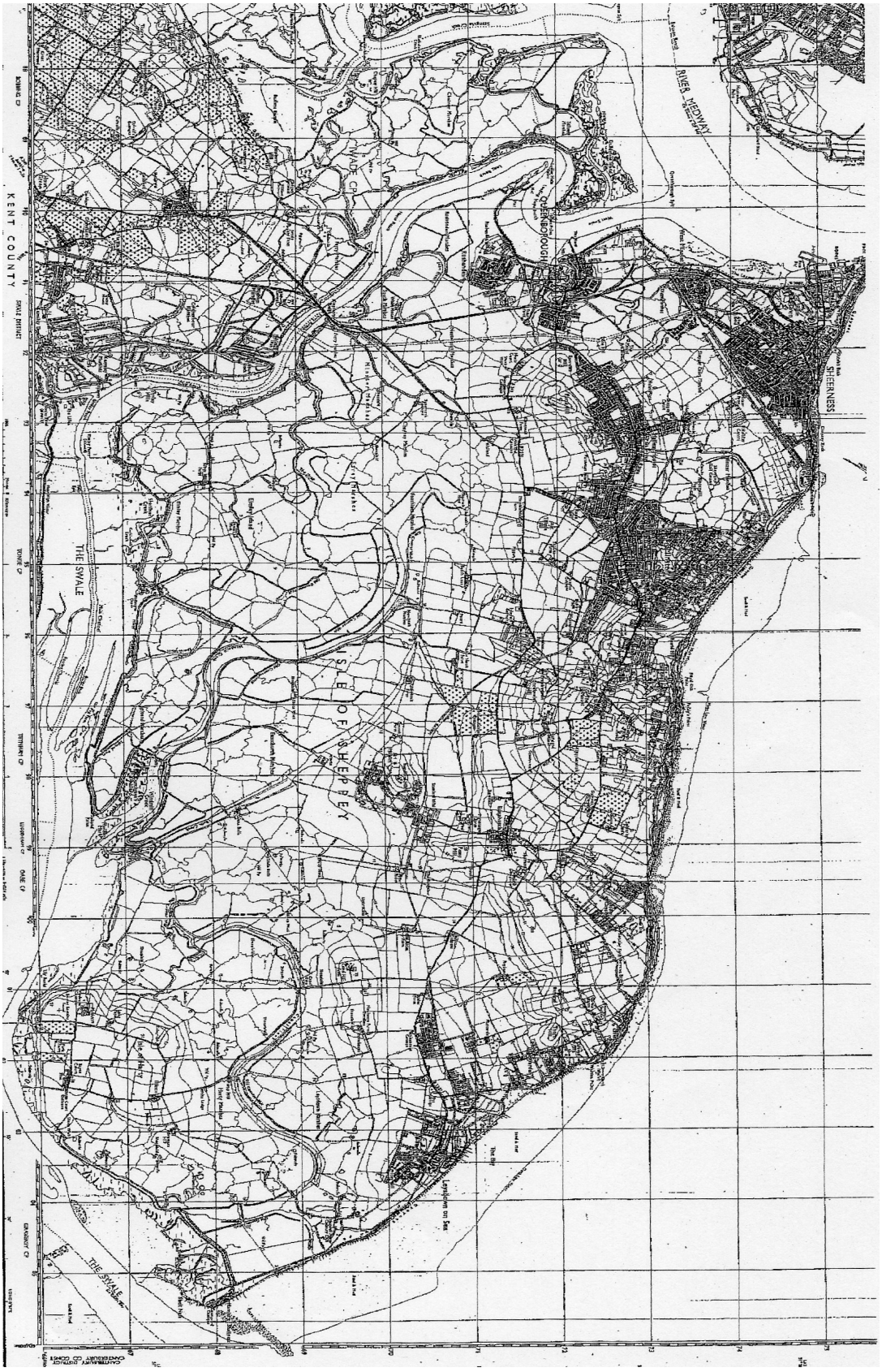
Author	Date	Type of source	Origin
Charles Murray	1990	Book	US
William J. Doherty	1991	Journal article	US
Martin Robb	2004	Book	UK
Paul Tyrer, Elaine Chase, Ian Warwick and Peter Aggleton	2005	Journal article	UK
Sue Pollock	2006	Online research document	UK
Nigel Sherriff	**2007**	**Online research**	**UK**

[88]Online Office of National Statistics (ONS)

		document	
Jean Spence	2007	Book	UK
Hariette McAdoo	2007	Book	US
ONS	2007	Online document	UK
Mark S. Kiselica	2008	Book	US
James Page, Gill Whitting and Carl Mclean	2008	Online research document	UK
David Popenoe	2009	Book	US
Carol Potter and John Carpenter	2010	Journal article	UK
Simon Duncan, Rosalind Edwards and Claire Alexander	2010	Book	UK
Department for education	2011	Online government document	UK
Pippa Lord, Clare Southcott and Caroline Sharp	2011	Online research document	UK
Judy Corlyon and Laura Stock	**2011**	**Online research document**	**UK**
Barnardos	2012	Online source	UK
Department of Health	2013	Online policy document	UK

*Key texts highlighted in bold font

Appendix B: Isle of Sheppey Map



Author, initial, date	Source type	Depot
Bignell, A. (1999)	Book	Sheerness library
Brown, M. (2008)	Paper report	Sheerness library
Buck, N. (1980)	Collated report-Local academic research	Sheerness library
Bygone Kent (2005)	Local journal article	Sheerness library
Eastchurch Parish Council, (date unknown)	Photocopied paper report	Sheerness library
Economy and Administration Scrutiny Panel (2008)	Council report	Sheerness library
Hughes, T.D (date unknown)	Photocopied paper report	Sheerness library
Judge, M.S (1997)	Book	Sheerness library
Judge, M.S. (2003)	Book	Sheerness library
Kent Careers Services (2001)	Collated report	Sheerness library
Kent County Council, (2008)	Collated council report	Sheerness library
Kent Messenger, (22nd February 1980),	Newspaper article	Sheerness library
Kent Today, (3rd July 2001)	Newspaper article	Sheerness library
Kingsnorth, B. Smith, J.D. and Bowen, H. (1992)	Book	Sheerness library
Maur, R. (date unknown)	Photocopied chapter of a book	Sheerness library
Missiakoulis, S. Pahl, R.E. and Taylor-Gooby, P. (1986)	Journal article	British library
Office for National Statistics (2007)	Online statistics	Online national statistics
Office for National Statistics (2009)	Online statistics	Online national statistics
Office for National Statistics (2011b)	Online statistics	Online national statistics
Pahl, R.E. (1978)	Journal article	British library
Pahl, R.E (1980)	Journal article	British library
Pahl, R. (1981)	Collated report-local academic research	Sheerness library
Pahl, R.E. (1984)	Book	University of Greenwich library

Pahl, R.E. and Wallace, C. (1980)	Local academic report-paper copy	Albert Sloman library, University of Essex
Pahl, R.E. and Wallace, C. (1982)	Local academic report-paper copy	Albert Sloman library, University of Essex
Pahl, R.E. Wallace, C (1985)	Book chapter	British library
Pahl, R.E. and Wilson, P. (1981)	Local academic report-paper copy	Albert Sloman library, University of Essex
Pahl, R.E and Wilson, P.A (1986)	Local academic report-paper copy	Albert Sloman library, University of Essex
Ratcliffe, H. (2012)	Newspaper article	Online-BBC News
Rymill, A.J. (2004)	Book	Sheerness library
School Organisation Advisory Board, (2008)	Online report	Online
Sheppey Gazette (27th April 1978)	Newspaper article	Sheerness library
Sheppey Gazette (30th October 1980)	Newspaper article	Sheerness library
Sheppey Gazette (5th February 1981)	Newspaper article	Sheerness library
Sheppey Gazette, (18th February 1988)	Newspaper article	Sheerness library
Sheppey Gazette (20th January 1993)	Newspaper article	Sheerness library
Sheppey Gazette (14th December 1994a)	Newspaper article	Sheerness library
Sheppey Gazette (3rd January 1994b)	Newspaper article	Sheerness library
Sheppey Gazette (2nd February 1994c)	Newspaper article	Sheerness library
Sheppey Gazette (5th October 1994d)	Newspaper article	Sheerness library
Sheppey Gazette (16th March 1994e)	Newspaper article	Sheerness library
Sheppey Gazette (1st March, 1995)	Newspaper article	Sheerness library
Sheppey Gazette (9th July 1997a)	Newspaper article	Sheerness library
Sheppey Gazette (26th March, 1997b)	Newspaper article	Sheerness library y

Sheppey Gazette (30th July 1997c)	Newspaper article	Sheerness library
Sheppey Gazette (20th April, 1997d)	Newspaper article	Sheerness library
Sheppey Gazette (9th December 1998a)	Newspaper article	Sheerness library
Sheppey Gazette (23rd December 1998b)	Newspaper article	Sheerness library
Sheppey Gazette (24th November 2004)	Newspaper article	Sheerness library
Sheppey Gazette (3rd March, 2005)	Newspaper article	Sheerness library
Sheerness Times Guardian (14th February, 1958a)	Newspaper article	Colindale library
Sheerness Times Guardian (21st February, 1958b)	Newspaper article	Colindale library
Sheerness Times Guardian (29th August 2004)	Newspaper article	Sheerness library
Swale Borough Council (1998)	Council report	Sheerness library
Swale Borough Council (2002)	Council report	Sheerness library
Swale Borough Council (2008)	Council report	Sheerness library
Tyler, L. (1994)	Book	Sheerness library
Wallace, C. (1979)	Local academic report-paper copy	Albert Sloman library University of Essex
Wallace, C. (1980)	Local academic report-paper copy	Albert Sloman library University of Essex
Wallace, C. (1981)	Local academic report-Hardback copy	Sheerness library
Wallace, C. (1984)	Local academic report-paper copy	Albert Sloman library University of Essex
Wallace, C. (1987)	Book	Sheerness library
Wilson, P. (1986)	Local academic report-paper copy	Albert Sloman library University of Essex

Appendix D: Recruitment Poster

Have your SAY...

Calling out to all FATHERS AND GRANDFATHERS!

the UNIVERSITY of GREENWICH

University of Greenwich

Family perspectives on young fatherhood

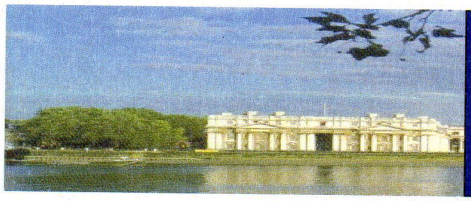
A research student at the University of Greenwich would like to invite you to take part in this new and exciting research project, studying fathers and their families.

Who can get involved?

- Fathers/Grandfathers who were aged 16-25 when they had their first child
- Fathers/Grandfathers who have spent at least ten years on the Isle of Sheppey
- Fathers/Grandfathers who had their first child on the Isle of Sheppey

What are the benefits for me?

- For your time and expenses, you will receive £50.00
- You will have a chance to retell your lived experiences through academic research
- Through your help, it is my hope that we can encourage and inspire local organisations to help other fathers and their families



For more Information contact Gemma:
Telephone/Text: 07727 657 882
Email: mg44@gre.ac.uk

Appendix E: First Newspaper Advertisement (October 2009)

Young fathers wanted for research help

A PhD student is appealing to young dads to come forward and help her with her research.

Gemma Mansi, 23, is a post-graduate research student in the School of Health and Social Care at the University of Greenwich.

She wants to speak to island dads aged 24 and under to gain a better understanding of their experiences, family life and the services available to them.

She also wants to speak to people who were young dads in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s to add a historical perspective.

Ms Mansi, who is in the second year of her studies, said the field research she produces will be published as part of her PhD thesis in a health and social care community journal and long-term she is hopeful it could lead to more in-depth work being carried out on Sheppey. She has also been linked with Seashells Children and Families' Centre.

Fathers will be reimbursed with £50 for any expenses.

Ms Mansi said: "I want to get a real clear understanding from teenage parents and young fathers today and from various other generations about their experiences. I have chosen the Sheppey because I don't think people there get enough say."

■ If you think you could help Ms Mansi, contact her on 07545 264094, 020 8331 7768 or email mg44@gre.ac.uk

Academy's welcome for its own police officer

by Emma Grove
emma@thetimesguardian.co.uk

PUPILS at the Isle of Sheppey Academy will have to be on their best behaviour as they now have their very own bobby on the beat.

PC Kelli Gardner has taken up a post at the academy's east site in Minster Road, Minster.

Her main responsibilities will be to maintain student and staff safety and raise public confidence. She will be checking children are safe as they travel to and from school, and also being aware of bullying and child protection issues.

PC Gardner, who joined the force 12 years ago, is a member of the Island Neighbourhood Team and a former town beat officer in Sittingbourne.

She will be working closely with police community support officer Karen Robson, who is based at the academy's west site in Jefferson Road, Sheerness.

The posts are funded by the academy, which opened its doors last month on the sites of the former Cheyne Middle School and Minster College.

The school runs a BTEC in public services for 14- to 19-year-olds and PC Gardner will be giving advice in these lessons so students can get a perspective from someone who is not a teacher but is involved in the public services.

PC Kelli Gardner talks to pupils at the Isle of Sheppey Academy

She will also be going into lessons to talk about personal safety issues and the consequences of carrying knives and drugs.

PC Gardener said: "I love being around the students. They are good kids and have been very welcoming. I like the fact that I can break down barriers and remove any preconceptions they might have about the police.

"I see the school as my new beat, my community. There's no such thing as an average day. I'm finding it all very rewarding."

David Rahman, executive head of the east site, said PC Gardner has been a welcome addition to the school and students are warming to the 'human face of the law'.

He added: "We want the youngsters to be able to trust the police and see the police as a positive force in the community rather than the negative connotations that some students might have that the police are only there when bad things happen."

Tasty treat for contest winner

THE winner of the Times Guardian "Win a Chef" competition has been chosen.

Minster resident David Lester will "win" community chef Mike Speckman's services for an evening. Mr Lester correctly answered that Mr Speckman was a former teacher.

He will now enjoy a culinary lesson at his home for him and his family.

False alarm

LIFEBOAT crews were scrambled amid reports of a microlight crashing into the sea off Minster on Sunday.

Thames Coastguard called out both RNLI Sheerness lifeboat crews at around 4.30pm.

But as volunteers got ready to launch their dramatic rescue it was revealed the crashed plane was nothing more than a bunch of helium balloons.

Visiting preacher

THE Rev. John Thackray, chaplain of King's School, Rochester, will be the visiting preacher at Sunday's service at Holy Trinity Church, in Broadway, Sheerness. The service starts at 9.30am and all are welcome.

News updates
www.timesguardian.co.uk

Appendix F: Second Newspaper Advertisement (May 2010)

Young dads needed for PhD study

YOUNG Sheppey fathers are being sought by a PhD student to help with research.

Gemma Mansi, 24, is carrying out a generational and local community study on the Island at the University of Greenwich.

She wants to speak to dads who were 25 or younger when they had their first child, and who have been living on Sheppey for at least 10 years.

The aim of the study is to gain an understanding of community and family life on the Island, which will be published as part of her PhD thesis.

All fathers who take part in the study will be reimbursed with £50 for their time and expenses.

■ If you think you could help Gemma or would like more information about the study, contact her on 07727 657 882 or email mg44@gre.ac.uk

This week's planning applications

SWALE council has received the following planning applications this week:

■ 3 Shurland Avenue, Leysdown. New house.

■ Land at Kings Road, Minster. Development of two four-bedroom bungalows.

■ 6 Neptune Terrace, Sheerness. Listed Building Consent to insert timber doors and a bay window in new and existing openings on the rear elevation. Minor internal alterations including replacement staircase between basement and ground floor.

■ 17 Queenborough Drive, Minster. First-floor extension to bungalow.

■ Land Opposite Brights Lodge, Kent View Drive, Eastchurch. Change of use of land to residential garden.

■ 216 High Street, Sheerness. Change of use of ground floor shop to Estate Agents.

■ Former DIY Store, Jetty Road, Warden. Variation of condition 3 to change opening hours to 7am to 11pm on any day.

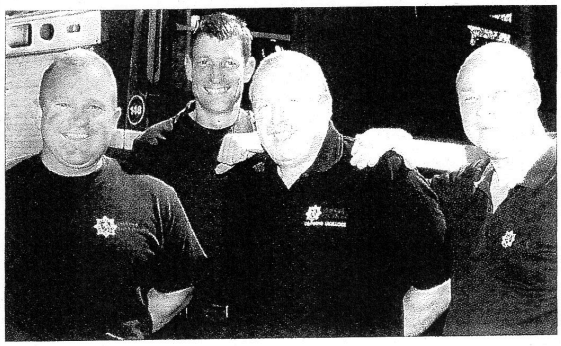
Anniversary variety show

SHEPPEY Little Theatre is hosting an evening of entertainment to celebrate a performing arts school's 10th anniversary.

Pupils from Starquest will be taking part in Jubilee, a variety show at the theatre in Meyrick Road, Sheerness, on Tuesday, July 27 and Wednesday, July 28 at 7pm.

Tickets on 01634 400177.

30 years as firefighter end for retiring Chris



Chris Ross, centre, with colleagues, from left, Ron Selfe, Andy Bridger-Smart and Peter Jones at Sheerness Fire Station Picture: Mike Smith PD171011I2

After almost three decades of service on Sheppey, a firefighter is retiring from what he calls the best job in the world. **Emma Grove** discovered why.

CHRIS ROSS has decided he has had enough of meals left half-eaten and call-outs in the early hours and has now called it a day.

The Halfway resident joined Kent Fire Brigade in December 1979, when he began training in Maidstone.

Three months later he became a firefighter at Strood, before joining Green Watch at Sheppey in February 1981.

The 58-year-old says he decided to give the job a try after speaking to someone who was a retained firefighter and never looked back. He had previously worked as a labourer.

Grandad-of-three Chris has seen three sets of new doors at Sheppey fire station, and his colleagues affectionately say he is part of the furniture there.

Nightclub

Chris wasn't on duty for many of the most memorable incidents on Sheppey, such as the duct collapse at Minster College last year and the fire at Woody's Nightclub in Sheerness in the early 1980s.

But he was there when the squash club in Blue Town burnt down at about the same time, and also when an arson attack caused £250,000 damage to Sheerness Windmill in January 2008.

Chris said: "That was a severe fire. We broke down the door and went inside but had to retreat because of how dangerous it was.

"The ground floor wasn't alight but you could look up and see the fire.

"It was quite intense with making access for height vehicles and rushing around."

It isn't just fires the crews get called out to, either.

Chris recalls one amusing incident with a woman who had locked herself out of her home in Minster. He said: "When we got there we found a bloke who had climbed in through the window to help her had got himself locked inside.

"So she was outside looking in and he was inside looking out."

He said the job has changed massively over the years, with more time spent on the computer and less of the social side, but the camaraderie is always there.

Thanks

He said: "It used to be a lot more social – raising a lot of money for the benevolent fund and taking part in dances."

However, he said despite the changes and the job, he has always enjoyed the relationship Sheppey firefighters have with their community.

Chris, who is married to Jennifer, added: "We are very well respected among the community – it's rewarding.

"I really believe it's the best job in the world because nearly everything you do gives a reward – you can save something.

"We get a lot of cards, like one from a little kid that says thanks for saving my toys, and that means a lot.

"The quicker you can put a fire out, the more of their history and lives you can save.

"I will miss the boys, but not the getting out of bed and the weekends.

"I would like to say thanks to the boys for years of friendship, and to Jen and my family for their support."

To celebrate his retirement, Chris and Jennifer will go on a Mediterranean cruise before Chris finds himself a part-time job.

His last day will be tomorrow (Friday) and his retirement party will be at Sheerness Golf Club on Saturday.

He will also be presented with his fireman's axe when he leaves, as well as having his name added to the list of retired firefighters at Sheppey fire station.

A wealth of experience will be missed

Sheppey Fire Station watch manager Andy Bridger-Smart said Chris is always one of the first to come up with ideas and suggest doing things a certain way.

He said: "Chris will certainly be missed.

"He has a wealth of experience which you can't buy. There's going to be a lot of experience that is lost, and firemanship.

"I have come from a firefighter working with him to a watch manager, and Chris has always been willing to impart advice."

'We get a lot of cards, like one from a little kid that says thanks for saving my toys, and that means a lot.'

Appendix G: Interview discussion points

1.0 **Local community (social, socio-economic, cultural)**

- Can you tell about the area?
- Can you tell me about the local community whilst you were growing up?
- Can you tell me about your friendships/peer groups?
- Can you tell me about your education and employment?
- Can you tell me about your employers/bosses?
- Can you tell me about local organisations you/you and your child/your family are involved with?
- What was it like growing up as a young man during this time? (mid 40's, 50's, etc)
- Do you feel that the local community has had an effect on your life?

2.0 **Family/family history**

- Can you tell me about your relationship with you and your father?
- Can you tell me about your relationship with your grandfather?
- Can you tell me about your relationship with other family members?

3.0 Young fatherhood

- What is life like as a young father?
- Can you tell me about the relationship you have with your child? What sort of things do you do together?
- Can you tell me about a good day and a bad day as a parent?
- Can you tell me about the relationship you have/had with the mother of your child?
- Can you tell me about your relationship with your partners/wife's family?
- Can you tell me about your relationship with your family after you became a young father?

Appendix H: Participant information sheet

the UNIVERSITY *of* GREENWICH

Participant Information sheet

Generational perspectives on young fatherhood

What is the purpose of this study?

The purpose of this voluntary study is to understand the life experiences of young fathers throughout three generations. This research wishes to find out how family life is changing, how the local community on the Isle of Sheppey is changing, and how social history has affected young families.

Who can take part in this study?

The study is looking to recruit young fathers (aged 16-25). The study also wishes to recruit fathers/grandfathers who had their first child (aged 16-25) during various decades. For example, 1950's, 60's, 70's, 80's, 90's to today.

What will I have to do and what will happen to me if I take part?

After you have contacted me (Gemma Mansi), I will arrange to meet you to discuss whether you are suitable candidates for this research, what the research includes and whether you still wish to carry on with the research. If the decision has been made that you would like to carry out the research, I will arrange a meeting for an interview. IMPORTANT NOTE: based upon the results of the interview, you may be asked to attend another interview to go over any remaining details from the last interview. However, at the end of the first interview you can let me know if you do not wish to be contacted or carry out another interview.

The interview will take place within a local organisation/centre. Before the interview begins, you will be asked to sign a consent form, which tells you all the information about the research and your role as a participant. Whilst the interview is taking place a tape recording will be taken. The use of the tape recorder is completely voluntary and can be stopped at any time.

All data will be locked away in personal files, which only I have access to. All information will be kept for a maximum of 36 months and will be destroyed after that time. Your identity will be altered throughout the research to maintain full confidentiality. However, if cases of significant harm or illegal activity have been mentioned during interviews, appropriate authorities may have to be notified e.g. Social workers, police etc.

PLEASE NOTE: All participants will receive **£50.00**, thanking you for your time and expenses incurred for the benefit of this research.

Appendix I Themes:
Local community on the Isle of Sheppey

Codes	Issues discussed	Themes
Industrial Island Naval history Aviation history Military history "Barbed wire Island"	History of the Island	Social cohesion through employment and festivities Dockyard and local festivities (symbolic)
Carnival Local industries	Local festivities	
Negative image Unemployed Welfare dependent Crime and delinquency Pinpointed	Results of industrial closures	Socially discredited Island since the closure of the dockyard
Escaped convicts Inbreeding Swampies Sheppey myths	Stereotypes about the Island	Derogatory perceptions from the mainland
Stable population Closely-knit community Limited geographical mobility Self-contained Insularity	Roots behind the stereotypes	Closely knit community-Familiarity strengthens security Commonality, providing safety and security
Mentality Attachment Familiar surroundings	Not wanting to leave the Island	Place-attachment-being able to associate and identify with the Island
Closely-knit community Infrastructure Self-sufficiency Manual employment Cinemas Working men's clubs Dance halls Leysdown Finances	Rarity of leaving the Island	Infrastructure maintained a closely-knit community and self-sufficiency
Kingseferry Bridge S.S. Louisa Gorthon Ship Patricia Kent County Council Negligence	Inability to leave the Island	Social and financial hardship Self-sufficiency

1953 floods Housebound Paddle boats		
Low pay Family size Families in the same position Local contacts	Poor families	Social cohesion through obligation to the local community
Working long hours Wages to the mother	Financial responsibility	Responsibility through financial support
Lock house doors, windows, leaving street doors open, house keys inside the letterbox	Safety of the Island	
Newcomers Londoners Eastern Europeans	Changing population of the Island	Shifts in mobility breaking down the closely knit community Lack of recognition, losing place-attachment
Cheaper housing Employment	Reasons for changing population	
Overwhelmed Taking over Socially deprived Neighbourhood Overpopulating unemployment	Reactions to newcomers	Cultural conflict
Co-op Local industries	Local businesses on the Island	Local businesses supportive of local people
No immediate plans for improvement Community regeneration Poor relation Loss of Sheerness council	Local council	Structural change
Drink Drugs Binge drinking Underage drinking Cannabis Socialising Recreational	Drink and drugs culture on the Island	

Boredom		
Adolescence Army Navy	Those associated with drinking culture on the Island	Drink and drugs attributed to adolescence socialising Armed forces associated with alcohol fuelled evenings
Peer groups Secondary school	Beginnings of drink and drugs	
Relationship Birth of child	Reasons for giving up drink and drugs	Maintaining a relationship and birth of their child was a turning point in their behavior and lifestyle
Mods and Rockers Punk Hoodies	Youth subcultures	
Fights Just a punch up Purple hearts Certain Drinks Leather jackets Dirty Motorbikes Scooters Punk rock Gang culture	Characteristics of subcultures	Lifestyle rather than 'gang'
Violent Territory Primacy Contempt	Behaviours towards other subcultures	Building status and credible masculinities amongst the group
Fashion Music Mode of transport Freedom Political structures	Reasons for joining subcultures	Post-war children, beginnings of freedoms
Intimidating Drug gangs Cannabis Hanging out with mates Vandalism Theft	Changing nature of subcultures	

Chapter five: secondary education on the Isle of Sheppey

Codes	Issues discussed	Themes
Two tier system Three tier system Conformed to three tier later than other schools	School structure Changing from a three tier to a two tier	Struggling education system
Opposition of parents Single sex middle schools		Parents resistance to change
No grammar school No special school		Failing secondary school
Minster college Special measures Isle of Sheppey Academy Quality of teaching and learning Pupil achievement Pupil attitude and behavior Leadership and management School environment Adequate sixth form provision	Ofsted inspection	
Apprenticeships Technical school Grammar school University Social class	Types of education	Vocational education Appropriate labour markets based on ability
Pressure Slower transition to employment General process Money	Importance of education	Changes in the economy Income was prioritised
Entry level Skills Work experience Life experience Qualifications Commitment Non-compulsory education Unemployment Local economy Educational maintenance allowance Updating certificates Cost	Requirements for employment	Assessing the practicalities of entering non-compulsory education Complexity of entering non-compulsory education Preference for vocational studies Local economy prioritised over academia

Incentive Long journeys		
Parents Family members Fathers Parental choice Parental ambitions	Family education	Family being key influences on educational choices made Working with their father
Tell them what to do Confrontation with teachers Confrontation with staff members Detention Authority Negotiation Boring Dyslexic	Relationship with school and teachers	Oppositional to authority
Interest from the teachers Interest of the subject Praise		Engaging through relationship shared with teacher
Boisterous Popular peer groups		Developing credible masculinity
Lack of control Support of pupils Oversized classrooms Advise from parents	Failure of school system	
Cane	Discipline in schools	Deterrent of bad behavior
Parents Police	Reinforcing discipline	Enforcing control and authority Enforcing moral standards

Chapter six: employment on the Isle of Sheppey

Codes	Discussion	Themes
Manufacturing and port related activities Semi-skilled labour Weekly wages Declined Redundancies Haulage companies Factories	Local economy	Manual labour is central to the Island Casual labour has been the norm
Co-Steel Abbott laboratories Killippon Electricals Local holiday industry ThamesSteel	Major companies on the Island	
Vocational Naval apprenticeship Engineer Unskilled work	Education	Local economy influenced education
Education Healthcare Prison service Retail Public sector Bankrupt	Changing economy	Public sector-more feminised More security in the public sector
Computers Manpower Make money Pound note sign on a spreadsheet Hierarchies Shortage of jobs Deprivation		Deindustrialisation Individualism Neo liberalism-free market
Car ownership Public transport Arriva Plc Operating service Kingsferry bridge	Transport	Structural issues
Learning a trade Full time jobs Apprenticeships Working with their hands Heavy	Previous economy	Employment associated with social class Certainties in employment 'Masculine' work

Dirty Long hours Dangerous		
Accessible Working class Born to work Structure Local jobs Local paper Local people Stable		Employment centralised to the local community
Permanent Faithful Commitment Obligation		Importance of employer-employee relations
Manual labourers Factories Relatives	Family	Employment influenced by family background
Family budget Parental pressure Housekeeping Provide for yourself Everybody had to work Mum worked three jobs Dads always worked Provider		Financial responsibility
1980s recession Over-manned Sufficient Compete Working class Dockers Trade unions Fear for the future What is the future Police state	Thatcher government	Uncertainties in the workplace
Right to withdraw labour Relationship of equals Radicalised State owned Right to work Right to expect a job It was a given	Reaction to Thatcher government	Neo-liberalism versus socialism
Employment	Social networks	Parents largely responsible

Waiting for chances Word of mouth Neighbour Parents Social contacts Put in a word for me Trust Responsible Married It's not what you know It's who you know Boss Manager		for building social capital Main strategy in gaining employment Importance of closely knit community
Job centre Never got a job	Formal interviews	Not hugely successful strategy
Laid off Eastern Europeans Needs of local employer Unemployable Unemployment benefit Appalling jobless figures	Unemployment	Economic change
Choosing not to work Earn more money on the dole Unsuitable Poor quality jobs Menial jobs Adequate employment Minimum wages Long hours Hard workers		Practicalities of taking employment Predictability of a long term job in the future
Loyalty Greedy Competition Financially viable Female factory workers Lower rates of pay Semi skilled Part time basis		Obligation to natives Advantages of free market culture
Island on the dole Magnified here	Welfare state	
Acceptable Before benefits you didn't eat	Reasons for being on welfare	Older generations, independency through responsibility was

Independency Social money making tool Too easy No responsibility		fundamental
Mental attitude Mobility Declining industry Support structures Surrounded by benefits	Reactions to welfare dependency	Inter-generational concern Structural support
Guilty Ashamed Recession Confidence Depression		Impact on mental health Social stigma

Chapter seven: young fatherhood on the Isle of Sheppey

Codes	Discussion	Themes
Slags Outside marriage Sent away Out of view	Teenage pregnancy	Immoral and socially unacceptable
Taunts Rumours No association Shameful Friends Family Ashamed Funny looks Dirty looks Shock Marital status	Reactions	Social order through closely knit community
Wasting their life You're too young	Discussions about the pregnancy	Wider opportunities- economic change
Running away together No involvement in parents discussion Accept decision You're getting married Don't believe in abortions Don't believe in killing a life State will keep her		Choices were previously controlled. Today parents have a greater degree of choice Changes in morality Erosion of morals
Responsibility Life affirming experiences Coping skills	Marriage	Independent culture Deep sense of responsibility
We were told we had to Today they do a runner	Family structure	Change of morals
Natural progression Everyone was married Now go to social services	Parental relationship	Marriage less important, weakened institution Erosion of morals
Two parent family Single parent family Step parent family		Family breakdown in recent years
Emotionally closer to mother Distant from fathers Unsociable hours Totally separated		Employment impeding engagement with child Gender stereotyping,

Never a hug It felt awkward Always a man thing There's no emotion Physical discipline from step father Granddad was there I'm not interested Runaway father		masculinity affecting emotional attachment with father
Silly kids Just had a baby, cant fall pregnant Was on the pill Drunk	Conception	Risk taking behavior resulting in pregnancy Immaturity
Second go Chance to put things right Interfering Saw him as her baby Taking control Extreme grandparent She's got absolutely no right You're my mum back off!	Birth of the child	Building positive relationships with parents Reconciliation Boundaries Enforcing parental roles
Engaged Close proximity Do the right thing Childcare Happy playful dad Excitement	Relationship with child	
He was interested in groups Took him to his first gig		Bonding through common interests
Get dressed up Be made up I've sat there and played dollies Boys we would have had train sets, scalectrix		Built emotional attachment Differentiation from femininity and masculinity
I will constantly be looking over her shoulder		Protection, worry qualities of femininity
Never raise my hand to them Sometimes I struggle I feel I cant cope Got to be strong	Parenting	 Hardships of being a parent

Proved him wrong Done something right Well you got it wrong didn't you Decent male role model		Prove ability as a parent
Stopped the drink and drugs Grow up Pull your finger out She really did help me I would still be doing it now I was so angry	Previous behaviours	Fatherhood brought positive change in behaviour
Partnership Getting paranoid Cause rows We started to change I didn't want to be around her It got really bad We use to row a lot I wasn't at home	Relationship with partner	Relationship breakdown
I wasn't allowed to see him She wouldn't let me take him out I wasn't allowed to have girlfriends around him She moved away, run away with him I couldn't find him I can't say no anymore because he understands	Breakdown of the relationship	Difficulty accessing the child Embittered feelings after the breakdown of the relationship
I would go down and get a bottle I'd have shopping to do Looking after the baby Did lots of playing with them	Roles within the family	Fathers were involved in domesticated chores
Going to work Six months without a day off Starting at four in the morning till ten at night		Role as a financial provider was paramount
I took over the children myself I had to look after the kids Take them to school I had to be there for them		Adaptability to events changing family roles

I never use to change them I didn't do much washing up You didn't go to the birth of your kids It was the thing that mother brought them up		Some gendered boundaries
Work that's what men do work That's what makes me respectable It's a way of life to work She brings up the kids and I bring in the money to feed the kids	Employment	Fundamental to identity-breadwinner Traditional discourses of fatherhood
Lily wants me to have a job		Employment provides security for the whole family
She wants to see her dad back at work I was always the provider		Looked up to within the family-role model
Shift work you see, I would hardly see them I didn't see them a lot because I was always working They're at school and I'm on nights		Creating distance from the family
Marriage Full time employment It was expected and never questioned	Familial support	Security and independency
Paternal grandmothers She'd help us out a lot My mum was more than happy to have the girls I mean if she wouldn't have the girls we wouldn't be spending time together		Parental support has become important in recent years
Very welcoming My interactions with authorities were very good Single father Sympathy	Feeling towards social support	

Grateful for any help I was comfortable going for help Introduced by partner, male friends, professionals Trust Sceptical Children social services Negative experiences with other authorities		
Structured Lazy Ignorance Have to be told to do it Mollycoddling		Independent to the state Take responsibility as independent parents Nanny state
Employment Housing Young dads worker Female dominated environment Intimidating Female staff Embarrassed to come Word of mouth What are they going to think of you, Are you doing things right Stigma	Children's Centres	Handling wider social issues Public perceptions are possibly detrimental
Let off steam Exclusive groups It helps dads out Gives a bit of daddy time with the kids Have a chat It's all about the mothers It's always been about the woman never about the dads Day trips	Groups	Therapeutic Mother focused model