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ABSTRACT

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# CONTEMPORARY FATHERHOOD AND MALE EMOTIONAL EXPRESSIVITY

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Two models of fatherhood dominate academic discussions, an older more traditional form and a newer more 'liberal' form. The older model is generally defined as instrumental and detached whilst the newer model is viewed as more egalitarian and engaged. These are polarised models, which sets up the framework for a potential revolution in fatherhood, with a move away from the older model in favour of the newer. However, despite dramatic shifts in motherhood, the 'revolution' in fatherhood is generally seen to have lagged behind. This failure of the 'new man' model of fathering to be realised more fully in practice has created something of a sociological puzzle, since both academic and popular accounts present instrumental fatherhood as being deficient and emotionally unsatisfying. This thesis explores why the expected revolution is unrealised and investigates the space between 'old' and 'new' models of fatherhood, a space that is neglected in the literature. It is argued that if we engage with this space a shift towards a more expanded emotional fathering can be discerned. However, this is a model of fathering that encompasses elements of both the 'old' and 'new' models.

Models of fatherhood are generally measured in reference to changes in the domestic division of labour, with most theorists arguing that there has been little change in the way domestic labour is organised. The methodology of this thesis explores the diverse *meanings* that fathers themselves place on fathering rather than looking at fathering practice, and uses a qualitative research framework. 43 white, predominantly middle-class fathers were interviewed about their experiences of fathering. These 43 men share a concern for 'emotionally engaged' fathering, which allows for an exploration of reflexivity in fathering. The sample offers a critical case for an examination of contemporary fathering rather than offering generalisable evidence of fatherhood more widely. It is argued that closer investigation of the meanings of fatherhood reveals a sphere of transition, and a new form of fathering that makes sense of the apparent paradox of liberal attitudes and illiberal behaviour. Both instrumental fathering and liberal fathering are emotionally important to the men in this study. This evidence is considered within the wider contest of both theoretical and empirical discussions of changing parent-child intimate relationships. The men viewed 'liberal' fathering in terms of their emotional connection with their children rather than in terms of an egalitarian or symmetrical division of labour. Their particular construction of 'liberal' fathering reduced the contradictions between beliefs and practice, since their stress on 'emotional' fathering was still consistent with the instrumental model.

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# PREFACE

## A TALE OF TWO FATHERS

Fathering has, until recently, received very little social scientific research attention and almost no research has been specifically concerned with fathering from a father's perspective. The aim of this thesis is to elevate 'fatherhood' from its lowly position and to explore contemporary fatherhood from fathers' own points of view. It asks whether fathering has changed or shifted from the perspective of men's own experience of fatherhood, and sets out to locate 'fatherhood' within theories of 'masculinity' and 'identity'. The 'new man' and the 'new father' are concepts that have reached the popular imagination; by locating how these are understood, the implications of 'change' on fathering and the meanings and practice of fatherhood can be analysed. This thesis engages with current models of fatherhood that emerge through popular and academic accounts, and investigates the emotional aspects for men of fathering. Thus this investigation is empirically and theoretically centred around notions of change.

The lack of any of kind of substantial research literature that directly engages with issues of fatherhood is striking. Throughout a variety of literatures 'fatherhood' is either absent, or else is explored obliquely through other significant relationships in the family (through research on children or mothers, or the domestic division of labour):

> 'Many influential book-length academic works that feature extended discussions of masculinity...either ignore fatherhood altogether or mention it only briefly.' (Lupton & Barclay, 1997:3)

Lupton and Barclay also argue that:

'less has been written thus far on the sociocultural meanings and experiences of fatherhood compared with motherhood.' (1997:1)

When fatherhood is discussed directly it is often constructed as being deficient in some way. In a series of accounts of 'fatherhood', some form of emotional or expressive deficit emerges. In such accounts two models of fatherhood dominate discussions, an older more traditional form of fathering and a newer more liberal form of fathering.

The older form is generally defined as instrumental. Common to these accounts is a description of fatherhood as an instrumental role. This 'instrumental' model of fatherhood poses men as physically absent, emotionally distant, economic providers and is counterposed to a model of mothers as physically present, emotionally close and economically dependent. The instrumental father fulfils his fathering responsibilities by being closely associated with the public sphere. Through this association financial provision for the family is secured, mediation between private and public spheres can ensue and the focus of father/child interaction is disciplinary and educational. The domestic division of labour reflects this splitting of spheres and is thus gendered and asymmetrical. The instrumental father is seen as both physically and emotionally detached from the familial realm whereas the mother is taken as economically dependent yet as the emotionally expressive parent. Even when this model is critiqued (by feminists, by theorists of masculinity) the assumption is that this is a model that can (and should) be transcended rather than a model that is false.

The debate about new men and new fatherhood carries with it the same tension, on the one hand a rejection of a deficit model of fatherhood (in the argument that fathers now have a greater emotional and physical involvement in families) but at the same time an acceptance of the model (in arguments that men are moving away from a limited emotional involvement and a solely instrumental role). Critiques of 'new man' arguments query whether such a move has taken place (again enshrining and reconfirming the deficit model) whilst research into the domestic division of labour

and men's involvement in family life confirms the picture of heightened change and heightened contact by fathers in the routines of household life. When assessed in relation to instrumental fatherhood, the newer model of fatherhood is generally viewed as more liberal. The liberal father fulfils his responsibilities of fathering by having a closer and more emotionally expressive connection with the household. In consequence the father-child interaction is emotionally close. There is symmetry in the domestic division of labour that coincides with a mother's increased engagement with the public sphere. Thus the 'new father' is characterised by his greater involvement in the private sphere that is situated in notions of egalitarianism.

Therefore through popular and academic accounts two polarised models of fatherhood are evident today: the older more traditional model of instrumentality and a new model grounded in egalitarianism and emotionality. These models are set up as opposites. The general assumption is that a progression from the older to the newer will have benefits for all family members and consequently the older form will become extinct. However such a framework is predicated on an understanding that instrumentality is a model of fathering that is fundamentally emotionally unfulfilling and unsatisfactory. This thesis argues that by polarising these two models of fatherhood a false dichotomy is created, emerging through an explanation of fathering through men's actions rather than the meanings they attach to those actions. We will see that there is no easy way to replace one model of fatherhood by another as each has emotional resonance for the men in this study.

Through this false dichotomy a sociological puzzle emerges: the puzzle of the missing new man. The 'new man' is a man that espouses liberal attitudes and where these liberal attitudes manifests through liberal behaviour. However we will see that new men such as these are few and far between as there is a gap between attitudes and behaviour, between roles and meanings. This project explores that gap and argues that liberal attitudes and illiberal practice can be held in a unified position (the 'wanting more' model). In other words, both the older and newer models of fatherhood are important and inform men's parenting. So rather than exploring the practicalities of

fatherhood, the roles that men undertake, this thesis explores meanings and aspirations and investigates the deficits men perceive in their fathering.

Chapter one reviews and engages with the literature through which the emotional deficits of instrumentality and the puzzle of the missing new man emerge. This literature is overwhelmingly concerned with men's behaviour and as such sets up the gap between meaning and action, the dichotomy between models of fatherhood and the structural and cultural debates pertaining to fathering. Men's own definitions and understandings of fatherhood are key to this thesis; thus men's fathering is empirically studied. This thesis focuses not on evidence of shifts in fatherhood (such as changes in the distribution of domestic labour) but on evidence relating to men's understandings of fatherhood. It is argued that by engaging with definitions and understandings of fatherhood the gap between traditional and liberal models of fatherhood can be assessed. The qualitative design and methods used in this research are set out in chapter two and the focus of this thesis away from behaviour towards meaning is set. Chapters three to six analyse the empirical data.

Diverse meanings of fatherhood are the focus of chapter three. We see that traditional meanings of fatherhood are not rejected. Even though the men understand the emotional limitations of this model they however recognise that aspects are important to their understandings of fatherhood. For the first time we see how both traditional and liberal views of fathering, although theoretically incompatible, are sympathetically combined in the men's accounts in the 'wanting more' model of fatherhood. This model of fatherhood is aspirational, as it is characterised by wanting more from fathering than the traditional model, solely, can provide.

Continuing to assess the contradictions and definitions of contemporary fatherhood, chapter four focuses on 'narratives of transition'. These are used to make sense of an expanded and more involved perception of fathering. Narratives of transition are ascertained through the men's accounts of their childhood memories and experiences. We find that these have been interpersonally and discursively constructed and

importantly continue to be reinvented and defined in this mode.

'Difference' is the key focus of chapter five. How men perceive their fathering as different from the fathering they received is of importance: 'difference' is denoted by 'feeling more', and not so much about 'doing more' as fathers, and is part of the liberal and traditional dichotomy highlighted earlier. This emotional difference between parenting generations is characterised by a perceived emotional closeness with children. This chapter also engages with the mothers views on fathering and their own aspirations for coupledom and parenting. Fathering as processual and tied to a life course becomes evident and shifting notions of masculinity enter the picture.

Masculinity is investigated further in chapter six. 'Father' and 'fatherhood' as gendered categories are explored; thus masculine identity is made explicit. This chapter considers the men's past definitions of masculinity and their present understandings of what it means to be a masculine parent. Presented is the contention that men have shifted their understandings of their gendered selves on becoming fathers. In other words, relational experiences have altered their sense of self. Here clear connections are made with the 'wanting more' that the men talk of, a more emotionally expressive connection with their children. The men's understanding of their masculine identity is strongly (re)shaped by such experiences, however it is also the case that their commitment to 'emotional' parenting is itself gender divided and masculine.

This thesis concludes by over-viewing the chapters and pulling out the key findings. It attempts to answer the riddle of the missing new man/father by offering an alternative view of contemporary fatherhood that engages with traditional and new models of fathering. By ascertaining the meanings and aspirations of fathers and shifting the focus of analysis from roles to meanings a reconciliation of the contradictory models of fatherhood is forthcoming and helps to resolve some of the paradoxes identified in the debate about 'new men'. Thus although structural and cultural scripts of fatherhood themselves contain multiple, ambiguous and

contradictory elements, some fathers do not operate with a single model of fatherhood, and apparently contradictory ideas about fathering (liberal attitudes - 'new', and traditional practice - 'old') are held within a unified model of fatherhood.

# CHAPTER ONE

# CONTEMPORARY FATHERHOOD AND MALE EMOTIONAL EXPRESSIVITY
# AN INTRODUCTION

## Introduction

Contemporary fatherhood has been the subject of much debate, but that debate has been dominated by arguments concerning 'good parenting' and its functions for children and society. Broadly speaking, research has been child-centred, the main focus being the other side of the 'good parenting' coin. Fatherhood has been investigated from the premise that families without fathers are problematic for children and society. Delinquency, low educational attainment and psychologically damaged children are all seen as consequences of families without fathers. The argument advanced by some (e.g. Murray, 1994), is that the absence of clear male role models leads to dysfunctional consequences, such as the perpetuation of poverty or an increase in deviance. So, from within differing schools of thought, children's emotional, educational and psychological development without 'father' is studied. Unsurprisingly, such research has focused on the problematic or deficient aspects of fathering.

At a policy level, however, both 'problematic' and 'unproblematic fatherhood' have become concretely politicised issues. 'Problematic' fatherhood has been equated with the 'feckless father' (Westwood, 1996: 27), the father who is absent and detached from his children, the father who neglects his parental responsibilities and obligations, the father who cedes his financial responsibility for his children to the state. The creation of the Child Support Agency in 1992, for example, was intended to counter just this effect. Thus absent fathers became accountable to the state for the material provision of their children. 'Unproblematic' fatherhood is taken to be fathering that is operational within coupledom and within a family setting. This

'unproblematic' fatherhood has also become politicised thereby institutionalising an expanded notion of men's involvement as fathers. For example parental/paternal leave is to be legislated (HMSO, 1998; Queen's Speech 6/12/00; Budget Speech 3/01).

Media images of 'father' re-categorise and represent men as 'new men', those who openly display their nurturing and emotional sides. The distortion evident in such exposure implicitly invokes a sense that all men are either compliant, or at the very least, should aspire to this new form of masculinity. Consequently, these images view the 'older' model of fatherhood as unemotional and non-nurturing. In other words the older model is set up as a negative as compared to a woman's (or mother's) emotional expressivity. In effect it produces a deficit model of fatherhood. Media representations need to be viewed cautiously and have been criticised for suggesting a higher level of change than has actually occurred (Harris and Morgan, 1991; Duncombe and Marsden, 1993; Woods, 1993; 1996). Harris and Morgan (1991: 532) for example maintain that traditional role of father is highly pertinent today and state, 'The traditional paternal role is the instrumental role of breadwinner...father-child relationships need not be close or compassionate.' This suggests that change or shifts in fathering might not be as immediate as some literature and cultural images suggest, and also suggests that traditional roles are emotionally dispassionate. However, Pleck (1987:94) suggests we do not dismiss the new imagery of the involved father out of hand and that some elements of change are real. He states 'This image, like the dominant images of earlier periods, is ultimately rooted in structural forces and structural change.' So here the two models of fatherhood are laid out, the instrumental model with its emotional deficits and the emotionally expanded model of 'new father'. Implicit is the assumption that there is a transition from the older form to the newer because of an emotional lack. However as Morgan (2001) notes:

> 'People frequently talk about family life and other family members and such talk is rarely free of expressions of feeling or emotion.' (2001:241)

Social research is only just beginning to engage with fathers within families. The little research there has been has focused on the quality of men's interaction with their children, and is more child than father-focused (O'Brien and Jones, 1996; Cooksey and Fondell, 1995), as it concentrates on the positive aspects and effects of engaged fathering for children, such as the educational and psychological benefits for children. Equally, discussions on 'dual-earner' parenting have primarily explored 'mothering', and men's responses to these changes, by analysing the sexual division of labour in the familial arena (Bird, 1979; Thomas and Walker, 1989; Seward et al, 1993).

Alternative approaches that shift the focus from the child and mother to the father are beginning to be considered. Ruth de Kanter (1987), for example, aims to unravel the concept of 'father' at three levels: the person, the position and the symbol of father. She argues that these three positions are unified and that outside marriage this unity falls apart. She also argues that men attach meanings to fatherhood via the interaction with children. Other research that explores definitions and meanings of fatherhood for men (Burghes et al, 1997; Warin et al, 1999; Fthenakis and Kalicki, 1999) is being undertaken but generally concurs with other work that sees fatherhood as following a traditional trajectory, defined by instrumentality, and therefore tied to traditional notions of heterosexual masculinity and men's roles (Harris and Morgan, 1991; Cohen, 1993; Starrels 1994). In these accounts notions of masculinity and fatherhood are problematic as they convey static, fixed notions that are resistant to change. In other words there is a failure to conceptualise fatherhood as an activity that is interpersonally and discursively constructed and reconstructed. Overall the 'role' of father is privileged in these accounts, not meanings, definitions and aspirations, so a consideration of fatherhood as an integral aspect of masculine identity needs to be on-going.

McMahon (1999) is critical of both the media and academia in their discussions of the 'new' man and father and their failure to provide an analysis of the material interests of men and how certain structures, e.g. patriarchy, aid and sustain the status quo. This lack, McMahon argues, is in itself ideological and maintains the interests of men

through the structures that bind and favour them. It is for these reasons that the new imagery of men as fathers needs to be viewed cautiously but not dismissed. In other words structural and familial gendered power relations need to be considered. So, there is disparity, a paradox even, between the general state of research and cultural images of fatherhood. Overwhelmingly, research presents a model of father that is traditional yet a fatherhood that is striving to attain the egalitarianism implicit through the imagery that the cultural model presents. Each model excludes and thus makes invisible other forms of masculine parenting, yet each model is pervasive and has the potential to become the socially acceptable form, the 'ideal' or hegemonic form. In each respect fatherhood is tied to a particular form of masculinity.

Change in 'fatherhood' needs to be located within more general discussions of changes in family life and masculinity in late modernity. Greater reflexivity and emotional expressivity are taken as a general feature of late modernity. So the 'late modern' father as more emotional is part of a general change in society. In particular the emotional aspects of family life have been stressed by arguments that emphasise increasing conjugality and compassion in contemporary arrangements. Giddens (1992) argues that in late modernity there has been an increase in reflexivity and changes in intimacy that are informed by the continuing process of individualisation. This understanding is set within a framework that seeks to explore how individual agency is utilised in constructing identity through practice. Smart and Neale (1999) maintain that 'through this approach...the family (which is location, experience, kinship as well as ideological construct) returns to the mainstream sociological agenda' (1999: 7). So in accounts of late modernity, processes of individualisation and reflexivity involve an active construction of the self, in which traditional status roles are less determining or constraining. Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1995) include a love of children in their analysis of late modernity and the significance that 'love' has to meaning. Noting the vulnerability of traditional male-female bonds, they make the case that through the child the hopes of discovering oneself in another can be maintained and that 'one can love a child...It promises a tie which is more elemental, profound and durable than any other in society.' (1995:72-73). Therefore the 'new

man' can be placed in such accounts, as the father who has a more intense and emotional relationship with his children than he did with his father.

'The new man' representation has arisen at the same time as an expanded literature on masculinity (Horrocks, 1994; Mosse, 1996; Connell, 1995, 2000; Mac An Ghaill 1996; MacInnes, 1998) but this literature does not include fathering as a component of masculinity, nor does it investigate masculinity in terms of its emotional aspects. However masculinity is discussed in a variety of ways through the literature. These discussions are centred around the notion of a multiplicity of masculinities (Cornwall and Lindisfarne, 1994; Barrett,1996; Hearn, 1996), hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1995, 2000) and the social and cultural construction of masculinities (Brittan, 1989; Walker, 1988). However these considerations are rarely placed in a family setting. This work on masculinity is invaluable, in extending our knowledge and understanding of the lives of men by critiquing and exploring diversity beyond the hegemonic 'instrumental' model of un-emotional masculinity. Fatherhood, however, has not received the attention it deserves. It is lost, made invisible as masculinity takes centre stage. An analysis of contemporary fatherhood from the perspectives of fathers, paying particular regard to the emotional consequences of fathering for them (Coltrane, 1996) will contribute to the developing study of emotions within sociology (Duncombe and Marsden, 1993, 1995; James and Gabe, 1997), as well as to the sociology of the family and the study of masculinity.

By taking the focus away from the 'problematic' father and a child-centred approach, and by concretely situating fatherhood within a consideration of the meanings and practice of fathering that are contained within the gap between 'old', traditional and 'new', liberal fathering, a shift in the analysis of men as fathers can occur. By critically engaging with the deficit model of fatherhood that so much analysis on family life and fatherhood has produced, a reformulation of men as fathers can begin. To effect this change however one must engage both with the ideas and debates that have produced deficit models of 'fatherhood', and the assumptions underlying accounts of an emotionally expanded fathering. Questions need to be asked as to

whether an emotionally expanded model of fatherhood has emerged and, if not, then why not? These questions help locate the puzzle of the 'missing new man' by locating the relation between practice and meaning.

## Historical Accounts of Change in Family Life: The Emergence of Instrumental Fatherhood

Research on historical 'change' in the family and the shifting position of family members has been investigated in a number of ways ranging from economic accounts of change to cultural accounts of change. However, common to these accounts is a model of the increasing specialisation of the role of 'fatherhood', in which fathers become stripped of close emotional involvement with children. Classic sociological accounts of change in family life posit a logic of industrialisation that differentiates the roles of 'mother' and 'father' within the family, and marginalizes fathers' emotionality. By implication (and sometimes explicitly) this sets up a deficit model of fatherhood, in which fathers become defined by their instrumental functions alone and are seen as having an unemotional relationship with their children.

Classic sociological accounts of the evolutionary course of the family provide a general model of changes in fathering (although 'father' is a relatively insignificant category in this account) as a process of marginalisation. In a variety of classic accounts essentially the same version of change is presented (Young & Willmott, 1973; Stone, 1977; Engels, 1986; Pleck, 1987). Each sees the pre-industrial family (approx, 1500s-1700s) as a unit of production, patriarchal in character and tied to a wider community base. Change from an open lineage family (pre-industrial) to a restricted patriarchal family facilitates the growth and consolidation of men's familial power within a closed domesticated nuclear family. Separation of the public and private spheres, and a gender division of labour within the home are taken as the defining element of the shifts (Richards, 1987:23).

Engels (1986), for example, argues that family formation and gender role attitudes are historically determined by changes in the mode of production. Accordingly, with the onset of industrialisation, the once coherent family unit became fractured to the extent that two separate spheres arose, with each sex assigned a role as either breadwinner or homemaker. Seel (1987) argues the impact of industrialisation effectively imprisoned women within the home and dislocated them from the area of production, thus diminishing their power. It also had the effect of locking men out of the activities of the home and excluding them from exercising those subjective qualities associated with reproduction, i.e. nurturing and caring.

Young and Willmott (1973) argue that the momentum generated by industrialisation and the opportunities this afforded provided a new degree of choice in the lives of the majority of the population. Not only did industrialisation bring about economic changes; it also brought changes in gender relationships and parent-child relationships. So, with industrialisation different 'values' were placed on women, men and children. Generally, prior to industrialisation, an economic value was placed on all members of the family but with industrialisation and the separation of public and private spheres, women were seen as 'homemakers', men as 'breadwinners' and children took on a 'sentimental' value.

In pre-industrial Western society, the role of the father was distinguished by his authority over all members of his household, and others in the wider community. With industrialisation and the constricting of the family into a less extended unit that authority was still prevalent, but power was provided via the economic dependency of the household on his position as breadwinner, and via his being negotiator between home and the outside world. Yet the position of wage earner necessitated the father's partial withdrawal from participation in the domestic and child-centred activities in the family. In such accounts, the logic of industrialisation leads to the differentiation of roles and an emotional division of labour. This can be seen as the implicit development of a deficit model of fatherhood, in which fatherhood comes to be defined negatively. This is both through the concentration of emotional and nurturing

support in the role of the mother, but also in the physical withdrawal of the father from the site of the household.

Central to such accounts is the dichotomy set up between the sentimental sphere and the instrumental sphere. Of course, this modernist model of fatherhood is not entirely negative. The 'breadwinner' role is taken as the dominant characteristic of fatherhood from the early nineteenth century to the mid twentieth century; and this model stresses the importance of men's instrumental support of households, both economically but also in terms of moral guidance and mediation between the public and private spheres. This essentially traditional conceptualisation of fatherhood has led some to lament its presumed passing.

> ...the breadwinning exploits of fathers, who, through enabling their families (both women and children) to remain out of the workplace, provided their wives time for childrearing and their children time for childhood...Fathers were losing their hands-on role with children, but the roles they played - provider, protector, stabilizer, and guide – were of paramount importance...let us not disregard the majestic significance of the Victorian family....
> (Popenoe, 1996:108)

However, despite the perceived positive aspects of fathers as breadwinners and moral guardians, it is clear that the instrumental model sets up modernist fatherhood as being emotionally deficient. Hand in hand with the changes in fatherhood went changes in the ideology of motherhood. Whereas the model of father emerged as the instrumental breadwinner, with the separation of spheres in the nineteenth century women were invested with the emotional care of children, and seen as nurturers. 'Motherhood' became celebrated, and seen as an essential part of women's lives. This valorisation and sentimentalisation of motherhood clearly sets up a model of the declining emotional significance of men within households. As motherhood waxes, so fatherhood wanes. The 'myth of motherhood' (Oakley, 1974b) which tied biology to

gender behaviour and to femininity, served to establish the private sphere as the emotional sphere, a sphere within the control of women. As Ryan states, there was a move 'from patriarchal authority to maternal affection' (cited in Giddens 1992: 42).

**The Deficit Model of Fatherhood**

Parsons' theory of evolutionary change (1949) is perhaps the most developed account of the deficit model of fatherhood, despite his attempt to set up such transitions as positive and complementary. Parsons' argument is that with the siphoning off of economic production from the household, adults could now dedicate their time to specific tasks and responsibilities that maintained distinct areas of activity. Men took on the 'instrumental' role of provider, and women the 'expressive' role of nurturer, with these roles being functionally complementary. Parsons' concern is to highlight the interdependent aspects of human action and structural constraints. However, this complementary model sets up 'mother' as central in the 'expressive' arena due to the differentiation of tasks in each sphere. We can see thus see that the model of 'father' is constructed as emotionally dependent and deficient. The differentiation of the 'instrumental' and 'expressive' produces a deficient emotional model of fatherhood. Parsons' theory of functional complementarity has, of course, been widely criticised (see Morgan, 1975; Cheal, 1991), but, as we shall see, Parsons' critics share with him the same deficit model of 'modern' fatherhood.

The writings of Parsons, (1955) Bowlby (1953) and others, were influential in presenting a particular model of the nuclear family which presents the mother's role as fundamentally important for the emotional well being of children and for producing a stable population as a whole. Such work was influenced by Sex Role Theory (Hamilton, 1964; Tyler, 1965 and latterly Rossi, 1985; Moir and Jessel, 1991; Kimura, 1992; A and B Moir, 1998) which allocated social roles to women and men by virtue of their biological sex. Prior to the 1950s, SRT was marginal in the social sciences, starting its ascendancy from within biology and psychology. However, from the 1950s to the 1970s it became the dominant paradigm from which to view the

family and family organisation. In sociology the major proponents and advocates of SRT (albeit in amended form) were Parsons and Bales (1955), and within psychology, Bowlby (1953). The reciprocal, complimentary roles of men and women were fundamental to Parsons' thesis, in which the gendered division of labour was reproduced through socialisation. Appropriate roles and attitudes were inculcated and each sex knew their place. The popular interpretation of this paradigm was through Bowlby's (1953) work on maternal deprivation. Here the maternal bond was seen as essential for child welfare. Since the emotional paternal bond is largely ignored in this work men's emotional input was effectively marginalized. As Bowlby states:

> 'continual reference will be made to the mother-child relation, little will be said of the father-child relation: his value as the economic and emotional support of the mother will be assumed,' (Bowlby, 1965:15-16).

Many have since argued against Parsons' distinctions between the 'expressive' and 'instrumental' roles for women and men (see for example, Friedan, 1963 and Millett, 1977) and Bowlby's theory of 'maternal deprivation', (see for example, Bernard, 1968; Kreps, 1973; Chodorow, 1978). Carrigan et al (1987: 80) state 'The 'male sex role' does not exist. It is impossible to isolate a 'role' that constructs masculinity or another that constructs femininity.' In other words there is a rejection of an essential male and female 'nature'. Since SRT has a tendency to universalise action, presenting a nature that is independent from a cultural, historical and social context, feminist critiques of such work have focussed on the contingent nature of sex roles and the possibilities of change. Hacker (1957) articulated a change in the instrumentality of male psyche suggesting that emotionality was becoming an *additional* element that contributed to and extended notions of masculinity, implicitly fatherhood. Here then is a recognition that the patterning of gender roles and behaviour were open to change.

However, what is of interest is what the critiques retain of the original deficit model

of fatherhood. So, for example, the general feminist critique of Parsons proposed that the family did not need to be organised in the way that Parsons outlined, and was the product of men's domination. However, in rejecting the Parsonian account such critics retain the deficit model of men's involvement in families. The gendered division of labour within households is attacked as oppressive, and men's engagement with their families is depicted as detached and dominating. Theorists such as Chodorow (1978), Millet (1977) and Mitchell (1974) adapted the work of Freud and Sex Role Theory to illuminate the social, and therefore contingent, construction of gender roles and highlighted possible routes for change. Explicit in such accounts is an emancipatory project, that promises the transformation of women's lives within families, and thus by implication, the transformation of unsatisfactory fatherhood. However, 'fatherhood' is not engaged with at any substantive level, and the deficit model of fatherhood itself goes unquestioned.

Chodorow (1978), for example, asks the question: why do women mother? Her theory of the 'reproduction of mothering' sets out to answer this question while at the same time offering an explanation as to why change in gender behaviour is possible. Chodorow argues that sex role differentiation occurs as the child gains a sense of 'self' via a process of separation from the significant parent. Chodorow maintains this separation is different for boys than girls, and that boys gain their understanding of masculinity by ending their dependency on their mothers. In this way male identity is formed through separation and a rejection of the feminine. Girls however continue their identification with their mothers and in this way women continue to mother. Change is possible within this framework, for Chodorow sees sex role differentiation as both contingent and a deficit model. She suggests that dual parenting would allow children to identify with both parents, for men to identify more with feminine attributes, and thus lessen men's need to dominate women. The way to break free from the reproduction of specific gender roles is for men to become more involved in child-care. In this account, gender domination is the product of men's detachment from the family and from the emotional and the expressive. So an instrumental,

deficit model of fatherhood again emerges from this account, both as a negative depiction of men's engagement with families, and as a problem to be addressed.

In feminist and psychoanalytic critiques of Sex Role Theory and of Parsons we can see a rejection of the normative approval for gender divided family forms and strong arguments for other forms of familial organisation. Such criticisms accept the description of the family as gender divided, only disagreeing about the possibilities for change. Common to these accounts is a deficit model of fatherhood, in which fathers are constructed as both physically absent and emotionally distant. Indeed, with feminist arguments about families reflecting the power advantage of patriarchal men we see an even more severe version of the deficit model (Barrett and McIntosh, 1982; Delphy, 1984). Contained within such accounts is the assumption of a particular model of change, in which there will be a shift to an egalitarian and symmetrical division of labour in the household, which will entail greater economic independence for women and - by implication - a greater emotionality and intimate involvement in family life for men.

The meanings that men themselves attach to fathering are absent from these accounts; indeed, there is very little discussion of fatherhood at all. The 'instrumental' model of father is seen as emotionally deficient when gauged against a mother's emotional capability, but there is very little discussion of fatherhood itself. More recent work has managed to place men and issues of masculinity more centre stage. However, such work has again largely ignored discussions of fatherhood or the emotional significance of family life for men.

Although 'men's studies' literature was evident prior the 1960s it was only from the late 1960s and into the 1970s that this became a specialisation in its own right. The academic study of men and masculinity was advanced within sex role theory (Hearn and Morgan, 1990: 4) and parallels were drawn between the Women's Liberation Movement and the Gay Liberation Movement. Many writers took their lead from the feminist movement by utilising the concept of patriarchy thus giving coherence to

common issues, which affected both women and men. Such work also provided a critique of sex role theory (Sawyer, 1970; Nichols, 1975) and extended this debate by recognising patriarchy and the male sex role as effective mechanisms of 'entrapment' (Farrell, 1974:207). With the critique of patriarchy and male sex role theory a 'politics of masculinity' ensued. Connell (1995:205) defines this as 'those mobilisations and struggles where the meaning of masculine gender is at issue, and, with it, men's position in gender relations'.

We can see again in such work an implicit critique of instrumental fatherhood. Patriarchal gender relations were defined as constraining not only for women, but also for men. Brannon (1976), for example, maintained that the male sex role was equally oppressive to men and women, whilst according to Pleck (1974), men were dependent on women to validate their masculinity, as women had the power to express men's emotions. However, whilst such accounts were generally critical of instrumental masculinity (arguing for a diversity of masculinities) they did not explicitly explore the emotionally deficient model of fatherhood since they did not engage with fathering, either as meaning or practice, in any substantial way. Most recently, there has been an explosion of work on the diverse meanings and identities of masculinity (Connell, 2000), but almost no work on fatherhood itself (Lupton and Barclay, 1997). Fatherhood is ignored in the recent literature on masculinity as it is seen to represent an older version of masculinity, and one that the literature is attempting to deconstruct.

In the conventional literature on family and gender relations little consideration has been afforded to fatherhood. These accounts, which stress the marginalisation of *fathers,* have themselves marginalized *fatherhood.* At the centre of attention have been dyadic, intimate relationships between men and women, or between women and children, but not father-child relations. A model of fatherhood has emerged from this literature in which fathers are constructed as both physically absent and emotionally distant. This is assumed to be unrewarding and unsatisfying to all the parties concerned: men, women and children. Yet there has been no empirical consideration

of how 'instrumental' fatherhood is experienced or viewed emotionally by the men concerned. It is the argument of this thesis that the meaning of instrumental fatherhood needs to be explored, as the 'instrumental' remains the dominant paradigm that defines men's activities as fathers. Unless such a consideration is undertaken, meanings and aspirations are lost: the 'role' is privileged and the experience of 'fatherhood' is missing. It is important to explore how men themselves view instrumental fathering, rather than simply gauging their instrumental contribution to the home against women's emotional contribution. It is also important to ask if the instrumental father need be viewed in unemotional terms. Through the deficit model of fatherhood the 'emotionality of instrumentalism' is neglected. Instrumentalism has its own emotional logic, and that logic is not one of the lack of emotionalism. However, the logic is powerfully shaped by the deficit model, for example, by understandings of an emotional 'lack'.

**Research on Fatherhood**

Richards (1982) is critical of the lack of investigation into the social institution of fatherhood and equally critical that research, in the main, tends to substitute motherhood for fatherhood. This places the area of study in the home thereby giving a degree of priority to women. He states 'I suggest that a body of work on mothers has been extended to include fathers without any very significant adjustment...better theoretical formulations are required...these must be derived from a consideration of the social institution of fatherhood' (1982:58). Richards seems to be arguing against the deficit model that 'home' and 'mother' constructs yet paradoxically at the same time accepting the assumptions that a deficit model posits. Richards advocates the need to consider male attitudes outside the home, as these might prove pertinent to male parenting attitudes inside the home. In so doing this suggests a reconsideration of the asymmetry of gender roles and meanings. Lewis and O'Brien (1987: 4-5) concur that motherhood and fatherhood have been investigated from within those spheres traditionally associated with men and women, respectively the public and private. They acknowledge the fact that both sexes utilise both spheres and that

privileges can be disproportionately distributed within each thus concurring with McMahon (1999). Thus there is a continuing need to investigate the role of men within the home but with a more critical examination of the deficit model of men's involvement within households thereby questioning some of the assumptions of the deficit model.

In the conventional literature on gender and family relations, 'fatherhood' has been equated with its functionally economic aspects, whilst the meanings of fatherhood have been neglected. However, in historical accounts of cultural shifts in family life (Pleck, 1987; Gillis, 1997) we can see a greater attention to the symbolic significance of the father image, and of shifts in the meanings of fatherhood. Such work moves away from fatherhood as a residual category and instead places fathering centre stage. This does not necessarily equate with a move from a negative to a positive image, since elements of the deficit model of fatherhood are still retained in such account. But it offers a more sophisticated and advanced account of fatherhood as it emphasises the cultural construction of fathering. This work takes us beyond economic models by attaching cultural meanings to the activity of fatherhood. Importantly, a cultural consideration makes 'fathers' more visible.

Pleck's (1987) four phase model of fatherhood sets out to gauge the impact and influence that past dominant images of fatherhood have for fatherhood today. Pleck suggests that 'Contradictory images of fatherhood from the past have left their mark on contemporary attitudes' (1987: 84). Although his work is set with American culture and fatherhood in mind, parallels can be made in a British context. He argues that although there is now support for the involved father, men and women continue to be gender specific in the familial roles they undertake and this is tied to an ambivalence about the role of father that is located in the 'historical legacy of American culture's perceptions of fathering' (1987: 84).

The four models of father that Pleck engages with are: moral overseer, distant breadwinner, sex role model and nurturer. In Pleck's account, fatherhood prior to

industrialisation was culturally signified by its moral attributes. Fathers were moral guides to all family members. This needs to be assessed in relation to the status of women and children at that time. Women and children were seen as inferior and possessing impulses that needed to be supervised: women being less rational and more indulgent than men, and children sinful. The father was also physically present in the family, as the family was the unit of production, with mothers, children and fathers working together. Pleck maintains that strong emotional bonds were formed, particularly between fathers and sons. However, emotion was expressed via the father's approval and disapproval. An outward show of affectionate behaviour would be frowned on as an inferior form of expression, and one more suited to mothers. The paternal influence was the major influence for children, and emotionality in the home took a very particular form which was maintained and sustained by the centrality of the father. What Pleck takes as the 'moral overseer' might also be termed the 'patriarch'. The patriarch through his moral authority had the power to define the status and control the behaviour of all those in his household. He ultimately had control of all aspects of the household. These aspects included the productive, reproductive, relational and emotional life of the unit. However the cultural representation of fatherhood at that time was father as moral guide.

Like the classical accounts of family change, Pleck's model suggests that historical shifts marginalized fathers within family life. First, those characteristics of motherhood which had previously been frowned upon (indulgence and heightened emotionality) were now valorised, elevating 'emotional' women to a position above men. A mother's influence increased with this new ideology about the nature of women. Second, the father's role and influence in the household declined with the rise of wage labour. Demos states:

> 'For the first time, the central activity of fatherhood was sited outside one's immediate household. Now being fully a father meant being separated from one's children...' (1982, cited in Pleck 1987:88)

In this model the father has lost contact with everyday family activity. This model of father is taken as the 'distant breadwinner' and, according to Pleck, has remained the dominant model.

Between the 1940s and 1960s, a further stage occurred in the cultural development of 'fatherhood', the Sex Role Model (SRM). The SRM, according to Pleck, arose through a critique of 'motherhood'. Motherhood at this time took on some of the negative elements of womanhood that were seen throughout the 'moral overseer' stage of family life. The mother was viewed as dominant and overprotective. Unlike the 'overseer' period this was not associated with her inferior status position but located within the husband/wife relationship. The argument was advanced that because the husband/wife relationship was unsatisfying emotionally, mothers invested time and energy fulfilling that dissatisfaction through their children. In this scenario 'mother' had too dominating a role in childrearing, resulting in too close a relationship with children, in particular, sons. Father absence needed to be rectified as a child's total reliance on the mother could be harmful and problematic. These fears were the result of a backlash against 'excessive mothering':

> 'During the post war years, this heightened critique of mothering helped usher in a new perception of the father's direct importance in childrearing as a sex role model' (1987: 90).

At this time, Pleck suggests, there was an attempt to reclaim and rehabilitate fatherhood. Yet it can also be argued that this rehabilitation was set up in relationship to the deficit model of fatherhood, since it explicitly argues that fathers need to be more involved in fathering. Pleck points out that the SRM was the first positive image of father involvement since the 'overseer' phase and sees it as culturally significant. The absence of fathers from the home was linked to delinquency, whilst the increased presence of fathers in the home could provide the role model that children needed. Thus fathers were essential for sex role imprinting. Pleck refers us to mass cultural images of the time which show men being domesticated, being active in

the family.

This image of the active father has not disappeared. It has informed the model of father as nurturer. It presents a 'new image' of a 'new father' a father who can be seen to be emotionally expressive. Although in some respects this model shares similarities with the involved 'overseer' father, it does differ in important respects. Father as nurturer can be present at the birth of their children and they can be active with their daughters. These images can be seen daily. The models and phases of fatherhood that Pleck presents highlight how cultural imagery can shift and reinforce the meanings and understandings of fatherhood.

It is of equal importance to consider the symbolic and ritualistic aspects of fatherhood that, once again, can either sustain or redefine models by the construction of a collective meaning. Gillis states clearly his rationale for considering the cultural aspects of family life:

> 'The myths and rituals we take very seriously when we encounter them in other cultures have been treated as ephemeral when discovered closer to home. They are so embedded in our everyday lives that they remain virtually invisible...these cultural practices also have origins that need to be taken into account if we are to understand family life as we experience it now.' (Gillis, 1997:xvii)

Gillis investigates the myths attached to 'motherhood' and 'fatherhood'. It has been argued earlier that fatherhood has been defined in relation to motherhood and that motherhood attained a privileged position during the Victorian era even though, as Pleck illustrates, the rise of the Sex Role Model from 1940 advocating involved fatherhood was seen as a balance to maternal influence. A distinction between motherhood and nurturing, according to Gillis, was evident up until 1875. Due to this Gillis states, 'Whatever may be universal about the biology of conception, pregnancy, and birth, maternity has no predetermined relationship to motherhood, and paternity

no fixed relationship to fatherhood: both vary enormously across cultures and over time' (1997: 153). Prior to the 1870s there were distinct rituals for birth and for nurture. The reason for this distinction was that women did not necessarily have a life-long involvement with their children due to high mortality rates and large family size. Gillis maintains that where there were once distinct rituals concerning maternity and motherhood now with the unified position that is presented today, identities are forged through birth. Because of birth women are seen as having a unique emotional and nurtured connection to the child. The birth also reinforces the identities of mother, father and the family as well as actually producing a child. 'When a woman gives birth in the late twentieth century, she does so not once but four times: to the child, to herself as mother, to the man as father, and to the group that in our culture we are most likely to call family' (1997: 153).

Prior to the historical emergence of 'mothering' Gillis argues that there was no necessary link between biological parenting and nurturance: 'Being the head of the household endowed a male with the rights of fatherhood regardless of paternity' (1997: 182). However, as childbearing and child rearing became linked in 'motherhood', so fathers became less important figures emotionally and expressively. With industrialisation and the separation of spheres, the 'detached' father emerged. The shift for women was from production to reproduction. Industrialisation thus symbolically detached men from their homes. The legacy of ambivalence that Pleck speaks of is also noted by Gillis. To deal with this ambivalence Gillis maintains that rituals are constructed. For example, homecoming rites are an important way for men to have a mental attachment to the home while maintaining a symbolic distance necessary to operate in the outside world. It could be argued that these rituals represent a concrete response to a deficit model of fatherhood. Gillis is understandably vague about the rituals and symbols of fatherhood today as it is suggested that it is too early to state that a real change in fatherhood has occurred. A real change 'is not just a matter of 'parent training' but of altering the world views deeply embedded in the capitalist economy, the nation-state, and the scientific view of the body' (Gillis, 1997: 199).

Through the work of Gillis the emergence of an emotionally and expressively detached fatherhood is made explicit and defined in relation to instrumentality. When talking of change Gillis notes that change will be concomitant with changes to embedded structural aspects of fatherhood such as gendered assumptions of parenting that underlie the way employment is organized. Gillis notes the lack of symbolic and ritualistic imagery of a new fatherhood. Why is there no clear model of a new fatherhood in place? The popular image of a new fatherhood is predicated on notions of egalitarianism. Thus an older form of fatherhood, that of being physically absent and emotionally removed from the family, is replaced in toto by a new form. A shared division of domestic labour, to balance women's increased participation in the labour market, engendering a greater emotional connection for men with the family can denote this new form of fatherhood. However this change appears not to have happened.

As we will see when engaging with the work of Hochschild (1990) and LaRossa (1988) women have made major changes in their lives, most particularly increasing their participation in the paid work force yet men remain reluctant to take on a shared domestic responsibility. Both authors note a stalled change in the lives of men as fathers even though the overwhelming assumption and impression is that some men, more generally middle - class men, are egalitarian in belief and behaviour. This is a sociological puzzle. If the instrumental model of fathering is so emotionally unsatisfactory then just where are the 'new men'? There is a missing revolution in men's lives, that revolution being a clear rejection of the old in preference of the new. This thesis investigates the paradox that is characteristic in the lives of the respondents: why are men who hold liberal views of parenting resisting domestic egalitarianism? However by exploring the meanings of fatherhood (both 'new' and 'old') that men themselves hold a less paradoxical account of fathering emerges.

**The Domestic Division of Labour.**

The 1970s and early 1980s saw an increase in academic interest in domestic life. This work characteristically noted inequalities in the domestic division of labour. The most obvious of these inequalities was that the bulk of domestic and emotional labour fell to women. Feminists argued that women were being excluded from active economic life and therefore financial independence, with men controlling and benefiting from woman's unequal labour. This was seen as a consequence of a patriarchal family structure, characterised by:

> 'heterosexual marriage (and consequent homophobia), female child-rearing and housework, women's economic dependence on men (enforced by arrangements in the labour market)'
> (Hartmann 1981:19)

Other feminists (Firestone 1974; Daly, 1978; Delphy, 1977, 1984) noted the power relationships between men and women in and out of the domestic sphere, while others (Chodorow 1978) identified mothering as the fundamental cause of both male domination and the sexual division of labour. Oakley (1974a) suggested that the home was a site of consumption whereas the public sphere was the site of production. Due to this division, domestic labour was invisible while waged labour was treated as real work.

With the increase in women's participation in the workforce research attention shifted to the exploration of whether domestic labour was being renegotiated (by partners) to account for women's absence from the home. This renegotiation was predicated on notions of egalitarianism and remains the major focus of sociological investigations today. The concept of the 'symmetrical family' that arose at this time was first advocated by Young and Willmott (1973). This family structure was characterised by an egalitarian distribution of roles and responsibilities within the home. The belief was held that with women's and men's participation in the public sphere becoming

more equitable the home would reflect this and inequalities in the domestic division of labour would be reduced.

Investigating the impact of employment schedules on the domestic division of labour Presser (1994) maintained that variations in working patterns had a determining effect on the types of household tasks that men were prepared to undertake and concluded that there was a small increase in men's domestic participation in the home. This view has been heavily contested. For example Hochschild (1990) maintained that in contemporary American society women had increasingly incorporated the public sphere into their lives but men had not incorporated the private into theirs to the same degree. She termed this a 'stalled revolution' and concluded that women on the whole were working a 'second shift', undertaking waged employment while continuing the bulk of domestic labour.

Cockburn (1991) assessed whether British men would welcome the same benefits as Swedish men – extended paternity leave and a reduction in working hours. She noted that only a small minority of her sample would welcome the opportunity to be active participants in childcare. Most men felt child rearing was essentially a woman's concern and many stated that it would be financially impractical for them to take on more childcare. These studies suggest that very little has changed although the rhetoric of change is persistent and feeds into assumptions of egalitarianism. Egalitarianism is easier to argue if power relations between partners are neglected and if structural factors are minimised. However egalitarianism remains the key focus of much work on the domestic division of labour.

The domestic division of labour also incorporates an emotional division; Duncombe and Marsden (1993) term this 'emotion work'. They highlight the neglect of sociologists of investigating this aspect of relationships and try to redress the balance. Their argument centres on the social regulation of emotion and the assumption that women have the main responsibility for the bulk of 'emotion work' that goes on in the home. In their discussion they pose the question, 'how far can and should men

change emotionally as many women are now demanding?' (1993: 222) By placing the onus of male emotional change on women's heightened emotional demands one might suspect that the authors' field of vision is narrow, focusing purely on the family. This is not the case. They make the connection that through gender segregation in employment the home necessarily became the domain of women and this gendered division of labour created a gendered division of emotion, leading to the reproduction of separate emotional cultures for both sexes. They do not minimise the effects of economic power as they take it as a significant aspect in the creation of the social regulation of 'emotion work'. The authors assert that evidence such as divorce rates and remarriage suggests men find it difficult to communicate their emotional and personal needs while at the same time valuing and needing intimate relationships.

The most recent work on the domestic division of labour continues to refute the notion of egalitarianism in domestic responsibilities and roles, whilst nonetheless finding evidence of some limited change in men's participation. Sullivan (2000) argues that men's contribution has increased but women still perform the bulk of domestic work while maintaining the increase in men's contribution is significant and should not be minimised as it points to a lessening of gender inequality. This highlights a fact that those in lower socio-economic groups participate more in domestic labour than other groups and that the concept of 'egalitarianism' had increased among couples. These findings concur with Kwan (1999) and with Aldous' (1998) contention that men are increasing their participation in childcare. These studies investigate the domestic division of labour with reference to structural concerns, class is an important aspect as too is age (Warde and Hetherington, 1993). Issues of gender identity also contribute to the overall debate, for example, Gatens and MacKinnon (1998) in an attempt to move away from sex role theory focus on the construction and reconstruction of gender differences, the meanings of housework for women and the impact of different institutional settings on patterns of domestic labour. They suggest that changing the way labour is distributed within the home requires a reshaping not just of tasks but also of gender identity.

The debate on the domestic division of labour, whether explicit or not, is characterised by an acknowledgement that egalitarianism in domestic life is something to strive for. Recent contributions assume that women have a greater say than they had in the past in the way the home is organised due to their greater economic independence. The debate appears to be moving towards making gender identity explicit and might temper, in particular, the assumptions that egalitarianism in all aspects of home life is desirable. The debate essentially argues that practice has not changed despite widespread ideas of the 'new man' and heightened emotionalism for men. The issue is why not. That is the sociological puzzle.

**Theories of Stalled Change**

The work of LaRossa (1988) and Hochschild (1990) highlights how fatherhood is seen and defined in relation to motherhood. Both predicate change in fatherhood with changes in women's economic positions. Both highlight tensions in partnerships because of changes in mothering. LaRossa seeks to account for the belief that fatherhood has changed and is concerned with the consequences that result from disparities between the 'belief' and 'actuality' of change in fatherhood. One such consequence, he argues, is increased marital conflict. Hochschild's concern is the 'lag' or 'stalled revolution' between women's increased economic activity and new cultural scripts concerning marriage and work. She uses the concept of 'strain' to illustrate the disjuncture between women's changing position and a lack of change in men. Both approaches are explicitly located in conflict and err towards economic determinism.

LaRossa looks for historical evidence of change in fatherhood. He is critical that little systematic conceptualisation has taken place concerning whether social and economic changes since the 1900s have resulted in change in fatherhood. His evidence is located in the 1970s onwards, focusing on the writings of 'new father', 'new man', middle-class understandings. This needs to be seen in conjunction with the rise of

men's studies and men's movements in the U.S at that time, in this sense being a response to second wave feminism and the so - called 'crisis in masculinity'.
He investigates fatherhood from within the 'institution of fatherhood' drawing on the model used by Rich (1977) when writing on the experience and institution of motherhood. The institution of fatherhood comprises two elements: the culture of fatherhood, 'specifically the shared norms, values, and beliefs surrounding men's parenting' (1988:451) and the conduct of fatherhood, 'what fathers do, their paternal behaviour'. This distinction between the culture and conduct of fatherhood is a useful way to start untangling issues of change. LaRossa argues that culturally fatherhood has changed but that conduct has not. He maintains an asyncratic relationship exists between the two. He states, 'The distinction between culture and conduct is worth noting...it is often assumed that the culture and conduct of a society are in sync' (1988: 451).

Change in the culture of fatherhood is seen to directly result from shifts in women's position. LaRossa states that 'the culture of fatherhood changed primarily in response to the shifts in the conduct of motherhood' (1988: 452). Increases in women's employment together with the privileging of 'motherhood' in parenting have had an impact on the culture of fatherhood. In this model there is a two-way pressure on the culture of fatherhood – the conduct of mothering has an impact, as does the conduct of fatherhood itself. Once again this suggests a reactive response to women's changing public and private position. However in LaRossa's account there is no account of how men might be consciously reflecting or altering the culture or conduct of fatherhood - in other words there is little consideration of the subjective lives of men. Yet the emphasis on culture is helpful. He considers what culture incorporates – shared norms/beliefs – but this is not extended to include meanings of fatherhood that might also be useful in gauging/arguing shifts in the culture of fatherhood.

Like LaRossa, Hochshild's account is economically driven, taking women's greater participation in paid employment as the starting point for change. However, unlike LaRossa there is more emphasis on issues of agency and gender identities. She

maintains that ideas of manhood are forged in childhood and are emotionally embedded, 'a man draws on beliefs about manhood and womanhood, beliefs that are forged in early childhood and thus anchored to deep emotions' (Hochschild, 1990: 17). These ideas can generate tension for some men, between what they really feel and what they think they should feel. These feelings are grounded in gender ideology and informed by cultural scripts, which advance appropriate gender behaviour. She highlights the importance of ideology in the division of labour and the symbolic significance of household activities (gender strategies). 'Gender strategies' is the concept Hochschild employs to illustrate how ideology and practice are interconnected. On the one hand she advances the argument that cultural scripts pattern responsibility for certain activities. On the other hand there is recognition that 'choice' is relevant. A level of agency is considered. Overall, Hochschild argues that the 'second shift' or 'leisure gap' favours husbands, thus economic and cultural trends have differing impacts on men and women. Her findings point to 3 types of marital roles (traditional/transitional/egalitarian).

> 'The 'pure' traditional wife wants to identify with her activities at home...her husband to base his at work...The traditional man wants the same...The 'pure egalitarian'...wants to identify with the same spheres her husband does...A typical transitional (wife) wants to identify with her role at work as well as home...A typical transitional man is all for his wife working, but expects her to take the main responsibility at home too'. (1990: 16-17).

If both partners ascribe to the same marital role, i.e. both are traditional then conflict is minimised. However if roles are not similar, for instance a traditional husband and an egalitarian wife then conflict is heightened.

The discussion has centred on how, through Parsonian and SRT accounts the ideological components of the 'breadwinner', 'homemaker' model of family relations a deficit model of fatherhood emerged and was maintained throughout the third

quarter of the twentieth century. A powerful critique opened up the possibilities of change by shifting the focus from 'sex' to 'gender' and from 'role' to 'meaning' yet this critique was uncritical of the deficit model of fatherhood as they utilised the assumptions implicit in the model sustaining fathers' marginalized position. The critique was therefore overwhelmingly concerned with the individual's place and the individual's subjective knowledge and construction of identity via discourse and performance. This was necessarily a consideration of the impact of heterosexual hegemonic discourse. The 'family' and more specifically the 'father' was not considered.

**Situating the Study**

Like LaRossa and Hochschild this thesis focuses on the lives of middle - class men. Whereas the two authors look to women's changing economic position as the site of change, this research looks towards men's changing economic position as *one* area that needs to be considered. With the restructuring of the employment market in the 1980s and 1990s the old notion of a job for life disappeared. For the first time some men could re-evaluate their investment to work and family. Thus for some men this was a beneficial time. Traditional notions of masculinity could no longer be attained through employment – so why invest time and energy in a sphere that was characterised by instability? The economic sphere of action is important. Unlike Hochschild the interest here is in the way men negotiate their working lives to suit their home life; changes they are able to make in their employment and the benefits that these bring them at home as fathers. Hochschild's understanding that a 'new culture' is lagging behind the advancement in women's position is interesting in respect to LaRossa who argues that it is the conduct that is lagging. But these studies are nearly a generation old and we know that some employers are operating flexible employment schemes – even though not enough. The respondents here are generally in a position to, at least in part, set their work agendas. This is a difference.

This study differs in a number of respects from LaRossa. Rather than exploring the culture and conduct of fatherhood as a reactive response to changes in women's social and economic position and as being asyncratic, by looking at meanings this thesis is able to investigate whether there is a syncratic or even sympathetic relationship between traditional and contemporary cultural models of fatherhood and the subsequent conduct employed. If there is not a complete rejection of the old model is this because some elements of the traditional model inform and are utilised in the contemporary model (breadwinner – disciplinarian etc). More than that, do certain aspects of the traditional model satisfy ideas of masculine identity and what it means to be a masculine parent? However the understanding that men can be seen to be emotional and expressive is made explicit by the respondents. There is a 'mix and match' going on. Traditional cultural models of fatherhood work alongside the contemporary model, these have not been synthesised. Aspects from each are being utilised at different times and in different situations, dependent on the type of activity being played out. In other words culture and conduct are not antipathetic. In LaRossa's account changes in the culture of fatherhood are structurally constructed, we will see that this is not so clear to argue. The fathers in this study seem to be adapting structural constraints in a positive way – to aid their understanding of fatherhood and fathering. Here (like LaRossa) mothers are important in that construction.

There is not necessarily a template to parenting that is followed. The perception is that both the mothers and fathers differ in their parenting when compared to their parents (chapter 5). The men's own childhoods in part informed this (chapter 4). This study extends LaRossa in some respects. It takes the culture and conduct of fatherhood as a starting point (chapter 3) then looks at relationships more closely whether father/son, husband/wife, work/home. It looks at how these interpersonal relationships aid the construction of fatherhood and how discursive aspects are important in that construction. There is an inclusion of the subjective side of life. This study moves the discussion from role to meaning and suggests shifts in the meanings attached to fatherhood are reflected in the culture of fatherhood rather than the

behaviour/conduct of fatherhood or the amount of time men spend on the practical tasks that are involved in child-care.

By focusing on the masculine parent (chapter 6) it is possible to assess many aspects that have an impact on how contemporary fatherhood is constructed. By looking at the structural, private and subjective spheres of men's lives the picture is extended. The structural and public world of employment and how that has been adapted through choice, to aid a balanced life, is important but is not privileged. The experience of being a child and being fathered has an impact as too do the aspirations and expectations of coupledom. Masculinity itself is seen as fluid and open to reinterpretation: this is important. The way fatherhood is performed can encompass all these. Tension is apparent but unlike LaRossa and Hochschild it is not purely focused on the way partnerships are played out, in their view through conflict. Fatherhood is constructed with reference to other tensions. Being parented and parenting, wanting to be different from their own fathers, a mutual negotiation between parents, not a reaction to mothering per se. In this way fatherhood is taken as processual. It is discursively and expressively constructed in reference to interpersonal relationships, experience and ideas of gender identity.

The models of change that have been outlined set up certain distinctions that need a fuller investigation. These distinctions are economic and cultural, conduct and culture, role and meaning and structure and agency. How fatherhood has been theorised in light of these distinctions is of interest and importance for future theorisation of fatherhood. The distinctions highlighted are investigated throughout the empirical chapters of this thesis. Overall this thesis aims to elevate 'fatherhood' and explore fathering from a man's perspective. It aims to reconcile popular imagery of fatherhood with contemporary practice of fathering, thereby necessitating an engagement with the deficit model of fatherhood that academic accounts set up, utilise and take for granted. In this way an analysis of the 'instrumental' as emotional can take place as the focus is shifted from women and children to men. Moreover, to gain a coherent understanding of contemporary fatherhood the interplay between

structure, intimate relationships, gender identity and emotions needs to be investigated alongside the historical, cultural and economic context in which it is played out.

# CHAPTER TWO

# METHODOLOGY

## Introduction

The literature on fatherhood, as reviewed in chapter one, presents a sociological puzzle, the puzzle of the missing revolution in men's behaviour, the gap between 'liberal' beliefs and apparently 'illiberal' behaviour. The concern in much research on fatherhood has been - where is the 'new man'? This thesis is an exploratory piece of research that tackles this puzzle by focusing on the gap between meaning and practice, the gap between 'liberal' attitudes towards fathering and 'traditional' action. Research into the domestic division of labour indicates that egalitarianism in the familial realm has not happened. Why not? To answer this question it is necessary to explore the gap between 'liberal' attitudes and 'illiberal' behaviour by investigating men's perceptions and understandings of fatherhood. Meanings are therefore a key consideration, meanings rather than action as we ask why is there an apparent disjuncture between the concept (meaning) and practice (behaviour) of an expanded fathering? To extend our understanding of contemporary fatherhood requires a shift in focus, a shift from behaviour to meaning. This in itself extends the nature of investigation and explanation of fatherhood by moving away from sex-role theory towards a more meaningful, experiential and holistic consideration that retains and continues to engage with the instrumental or deficit model of fatherhood through which the puzzle emerges.

The shift in focus from practice to meaning is relevant, as the general debate concerning the domestic division of labour remains a debate characterised by gendered divided roles that has failed to engage with and make explicit the perceptions, emotionality, definitions and meanings of fathering. Although the debate shows that some men are making changes in the domestic sphere this does not

however meet the criteria of the 'new man' tenet as domestic practical life for men is overwhelmingly characterised by continuity and not change.

David Morgan (Morgan, 2001) is critical of the lack of understanding engendered by looking solely at demographic information on family life. He maintains these fuel political and public debates of family living (centred on problems) without telling us anything about the 'experience' of family living, consequently social understanding 'is not enhanced'. Morgan provides a conceptual framework of three economies that connect different aspects of family life with wider social life. The three economies that Morgan talks of are: the Political Economy, the Moral Economy and the Emotional Economy. The Political Economy is concerned with household consumption and refers to the well-rehearsed and extensively researched debate about gendered decision-making and the distribution of resources. Less well researched, according to Morgan, is the Moral Economy which reflects day-to-day decisions about family life. Morgan (2001:238) states:

> 'I use the term to convey the idea that family members routinely have to make choices around matters of considerable importance...care, human need...and, at the same time, use language of morality in order to evaluate and account for their decisions.'

The Emotional Economy refers to the family as a site of expression and control of emotions, in which there are gender differences between how men and women talk about and experience emotional labour. The Moral and Emotional Economies are clearly very closely connected, and Morgan uses the concept of 'feeling' to make his point about the types of decisions that are made concerning where and how to devote feelings. This is clearly connected to the Emotional Ecomomy: 'the everyday expression and control of emotions involves the allocation of time to others and time is a finite resource'. (Morgan, 2001: 240).

It has been argued in Chapter One, that research on fatherhood has concentrated on the domestic division of labour whilst neglecting the meanings and emotions of fathering for the men concerned. In Morgan's terms therefore, this thesis proposes that research on fatherhood should turn from the Political Economy of the family to a greater attention to the Moral and Emotional Economies of family life. A methodological approach capable of ascertaining the fathers' views while assisting a shift in focus needed to be established. If men's experiences were to be viewed as valid then to pre-judge their experience by placing an analytical frame from the out-set would have been to disregard the very experience under investigation. Accordingly a flexible methodological approach was adopted. In this sense an analytical framework emerged from the data collected rather than being predetermined. Because the focus of the study is on the meanings of fatherhood, a small-scale qualitative framework was adopted, which used an exploratory approach to men's narratives of their own fathering.

This chapter deals with three main concerns. Firstly it engages with the philosophical debate over choice of methods, describes how the sample was located and how the data were collected. Secondly, the ethical issues generated by the research process and the use of particular methods will be highlighted. Thirdly, key areas of interest that have emerged from the research are outlined. Although what ensues would suggest fieldwork is a straightforward process that follows a fluid an unhindered path, this is, in some sense, a fallacy and more a consequence of textual coherence.

**Data Collection: Rationale**

Research in the social sciences is characterised by an ontological and epistemological pluralism. That is, research is framed by a diverse set of assumptions about the nature of reality and what constitutes knowledge (Jones, 1993:144). Knowledge is sought through a variety of means. Whereas realist ontology is utilised by positivists who strive to discover the nature of reality as an external entity, a generalizable truth for the object under investigation, this approach has little utility here. The objects of this

particular sociological investigation are most definitely not innate ahistoric subjects. Rather the objects *are* subjects who possess a worldview that comprises both subjective and objective elements. From this viewpoint reality cannot be seen as an independent variable, separate and separated for the sphere of ideas. It is taken here that the choice of methods are reflective of the researchers preference and as such cannot be deemed neutral or value-free. It is also important to recognise the possibility that the respondents' views of fatherhood and emotions might be at a tangent from that of the observer. Recognising this tension, between the researcher and the researched, the production of research knowledge as problematic had to be acknowledged before progress could be made. Cuff et al state that until 'we are clear about this point, all consideration of specific techniques of data-gathering are merely ritualistic' (1993: 224).

The ontological and epistemological approach used here is grounded in feminism. Simply put, feminism sees reality as a set of structural constraints that oppress, and that knowledge is best gained through enabling and listening to 'others' speak. There is a recognition that diversity exists within feminism. It is not a unified approach therefore it is difficult to speak of universal truths pertinent to all (Harding, 1987). If epistemologically the feminist political project is to give women a voice, then now at the beginning of the twenty first century, at a time when feminism is undergoing a restructuring, this political project needs to be extended to become more inclusive and needs to encompass men. It has been argued that men's voices – at least in relation to their fatherhood – have been comparatively neglected. The meanings and emotions of fatherhood for men have been taken for granted or ignored. This research aims to allow men's narratives of fatherhood to take centre stage.

A qualitative approach was seen as essential to gain an understanding of contemporary fatherhood and male emotional expressivity. Research into the emotional aspects of relationships is at the very least difficult if utilising a quantitative framework. The way data are generated must encompass a flexibility and

sensitivity capable of offering respondents opportunities to reflect on their experiences and feelings. Mason (1996: 5) states:

> 'qualitative researchers should make decisions on the basis not only of a sound research strategy, but also of a sensitivity to the changing contexts and situations in which research takes place.'

Qualitative methods must be not only rigorous, but they must also leave room for manoeuvre so that diversionary paths of investigation may be followed (Allan, 1991:180). Consequently the methods used in this project were adopted for their flexibility in exploring masculinity, fatherhood and male emotional expressivity and to continue the feminist political project by listening, valuing and responding to the experience of others. A case study - life history approach, which necessarily follows a chronological method, was felt most appropriate for these tasks. Space is created through these methods that allows men to define and frame the phenomenon being investigated their way (Marshall and Rossman, 1995: 88). In other words, by adopting a life history approach, it was hoped that the men would be able to focus their narratives on those elements of fatherhood that were of central significance to them. Bell (1993: 8) points out that the 'great strength of the case study method is that it allows researchers to concentrate on a specific instance or situation...', allowing for the exploration of those situations that the men thought were most important or revealing. As for the life history approach, Connell (1991: 143) maintains that due to the difficulties of investigating change in masculinity this investigative tool has the capacity to map personal experience and social and institutional interaction.

**Data Collection: The Sample**

What constitutes contemporary fatherhood and male emotional expressivity? To initiate this investigation a preliminary exploration was undertaken to establish some issues and concerns which men felt were important to them as fathers. These issues encompassed; 'fathering' as informing identity, aiding role-fulfilment and emotional

self-fulfilment. Although some questions were asked about the men's level of involvement with practical domestic tasks, this was not directly observed, and the emphasis in both the pilot and the full sample, was much more on how men described and viewed their fathering activities. It was hoped that through considering these areas contemporary fatherhood and male emotional expressivity could be mapped and more fully conceptualised.

A 'pilot' study generated informal conversations with six men. All defined themselves as 'active' parents, that being, emotionally and physically involved with their children. The purpose of this pilot sample was to explore fatherhood with those men who defined themselves as 'liberal' or 'new man' in their parenting. All but one undertook paid employment. Of these, two were self-employed while the reminder were employees. Each lived with the mother of their children in traditional families, monogamous and legally married. Five fathers were introduced via the mediation of acquaintances. One was personally known to me. Conversations were casual and informal averaging one hour forty-five minutes and ranging from one hour thirty minutes to two hours. The utility of this issues - raising exercise cannot be overstated. Not only did it provide the means through which a comprehensive interview schedule could be constructed (appendix iii), but also highlighted the need to interview partners together and strive for an historical understanding of their dyadic relationship as well as an understanding of the relationship between themselves and their parents. This was of particular importance where some fathers were concerned.

Gaining access to a sample of fathers has been notoriously difficult as others have commented (see for example, McKee and O'Brien, 1983; Lupton and Barclay, 1997). This is not least because mothers (particularly of new born and very young children) are more visible and tend to carry out the day to day organisation of child care. Nevertheless the focus of the particular aspect of fathering to be investigated does open up certain possibilities to gain a sample. McKee and O'Brien (1983) instigated initial contacts with mothers when locating a sample for their 'new fathers' research. Lupton and Barclay (1997) utilised the services of ante - natal and parenting classes

when seeking fathers of 0-18 month old children. Both these methods seem an appropriate way of gaining a suitable sample, however, the approach used in this research was rather different because of the need to explore with fathers the meaning of fathering. Research has indicated that new fathers and the fathers of very young children operate a more 'traditional' and gender-divided form of parenting than in later years (Warin et al, 1999). For this study it was important to locate older, more established fathers who might be expected to be at a stage where fathering and parenting in general was more patterned and stable. Many milestones of early childhood would have been reached, thus heightened emotionality was not necessarily a part of everyday life. The decision was accordingly taken to locate fathers of children of late primary school age (9-11 years).

Whereas McKee and O'Brien (1983) felt that using schools as a point of entry brought its own disadvantages this was the preferred choice for the collection of part of the total sample. The main sample of 43 fathers was located at two distinct times. This was necessary as problems arose with the initial generation of the sample. The original intention was to gain as broadly representative a sample of fathers as possible, in terms of social background. However, only twenty three parenting partners were obtained from the school sample, and these couples were overwhelmingly middle - class. The sample was obtained with the assistance of the head teachers of five primary schools. Meetings were undertaken with the heads where the research was verbally outlined. At that time a letter of introduction (appendix i) together with a short questionnaire (appendix ii) were shown to the heads so that approval could be sought to deliver these to the children of years five and six. The letter of introduction was aimed mainly at fathers. It explained who I was and the questions I was seeking to answer. My intention of interviewing partners together was mentioned, the assumption being this would serve to put partners at ease and gain their support for the subsequent one to one interviews that were to follow. The short questionnaire was used as a gauge for the types of employment the couples engaged in, the number of children they had, sex of the children and reasons for participating in the study or reasons for refusal. In all cases permission was granted and the

numbers of children in each class established. A total of five hundred and thirty four letters together with questionnaires and stamped, self-addressed envelopes were delivered.

The original intention was to gain three distinct economic groups by way of comparison. However it was mainly middle-class fathers, the self-employed, managerial and professional men who came forward. Why should this be? Replies from those not wishing to participate noted reasons such as 'lack of time', 'none of your business', and more often than not 'no men here'. Female-headed households made up the majority of negative replies. Nevertheless the reasons for not participating inevitably raises the question, 'why participate?' Reasons for taking part in the study ranged from wanting to help with the project to having an interest in children and to finding out more about themselves. It can be argued that the men who responded were those who had agreed to be reflexive about their fathering, and thus in this respect they can be regarded as a sample biased towards 'new men' with a more 'liberal' approach to fathering.

The sample locating strategy was primarily an exercise of self-selection, in other words it is suggested that some fathers recognised the legitimacy of the topic and responded accordingly. Recognising that a fairly homogenous group had put themselves forward led to a consideration of what it would mean to investigate this specific group of fathers. However, given that the aim of the project was to explore the meanings of 'liberal' or 'new man' fatherhood, the nature of the sample presents less of a problem than the researcher originally anticipated, despite the lack of comparison to other groups. The men in the sample had interesting things to say about changing masculinity, self-identity and the important of fathering to this *because* of their homogeneity not *in spite of it.* Indeed, their narratives led to a more nuanced consideration as to what the full implications (and limitations) of 'new man' fatherhood meant even for those middle-class, reflexively 'liberal' men who espoused it.

Because of the relatively poor response rate from schools, an alternative strategy was employed to gain the remaining sample. Finance was a major consideration. Letters to schools, with such a small response rate, made this approach costly when providing stamped address envelopes for replies. Thus, the remaining 20 fathers were located through a variety of children's sporting activities: 5 from basket ball, 3 from goal-keeping, 7 from girls football and 5 from trampolining. Again, the choice of this as a sampling strategy, may predispose the achieved sample to those men who are more actively 'involved' in their children's lives. However, again, since the study was concerned to explore precisely what 'involvement' meant for fathers, this achieved sample can be regarded as a useful group in which to examine 'new man' fatherhood. These groups were more manageable than the large year groups utilised in the previous sample finding stage. The process for gaining permission to letter drop these sports groups replicated the earlier phase. Once again a letter of introduction together with a questionnaire were given to the children of the groups to be passed on to parents. However, unlike the previous occasion, I restricted the time for returns to 1 week and rather than providing stamped addressed envelopes I collected the returns. Of a total of 170 requests sent out to parents 20 positive replies were returned. Reasons for not wishing to partake in the project echoed the reasons given in the first stage. It is noted that the use of sports groups to gain a sample was less time consuming, less expensive and most importantly had a higher return of positive replies than the previous method.

Two entry methods have been utilised here: schools and activity groups. Although both approaches relied essentially on children as a means of locating fathers, in each case this contact was kept to a minimum, and required no more of the children than to pass a letter home. Within the schools method it was felt appropriate to keep disruption, of staff and school time, to a minimum. Letters and questionnaires were supplied enveloped, and staff kindly passed these to the children. Parents were then free to return them direct in the pre-paid envelopes, if they so wished. This necessity did not arise with the second strand of the sample generating scheme. Parents made their returns back to the various clubs where they were subsequently collected.

Replies were immediately acted on and arrangements made to interview. Interviews from the school replies took place between November 1997 and February 1998. All were undertaken in the respondents' own homes and were taped. Interviews from the sports club took place during the autumn of 1998. Of the overall sample of 43 fathers, 8 were self-employed, all running and managing their own businesses. 19 had what they described as flexible employment (having some say in the organisation of their working week). A further 15 had little say in their working patterns. 1 father worked part time. The male sample had mainly middle-class occupations. Of the 43 mothers, 5 were self-employed, 19 had full-time paid employment, 18 part-time employment and 1 mother no paid employment. Thus 25 couples worked full time. Of this group 15 men were able to operate some flexibility in their employment. 29 parents had children of both sexes, 7 had sons only and a further 7 daughters only. The children's ages ranged from 5 years to 14 years.

**Data Collection: Interviews**

Noted earlier was the importance of the exploratory conversations. These assisted with the structure of the interviews. Although the fathers, during this stage, raised areas of concern, there was equally a need to include questions that would illuminate the organisation of the household, the role of 'mother' and the impact of paid employment on fathering and ideas of masculinity. With these things in mind, together with the preference of a life study - case history approach comprehensive interview schedules were constructed, one for the partner interviews and one for the father only interviews. Overlap was both inevitable and desirable. It was felt that inconsistencies between couples, their notions and expectations of family life, would be illuminated.

Before the partner interviews proceeded the areas that were to be covered were out lined. By stating the areas, concepts and notions that were to be included, a major ethical issue was resolved: whether to be explicit or implicit over intention and purpose. Some have argued that this privileging of the ethical subsumes a coherent

theoretical and methodological strategy, but this decision sat lighter on the mind of the researcher. Topics still emerged from the respondents' own definitions and understanding of the general phenomena of 'fatherhood'. Brannen (1988) suggests that a 'sensitive' researcher starts an interview slowly and tentatively: does not reveal all. She maintains that by being explicit in purpose and intention the emergence of topics, as set by the respondents, is impeded. Disclosure of sensitive information should therefore be the outcome of this particular strategy. The strategy is one for allowing the topic to emerge and boundaries to be set by respondents while the researcher takes and maintains the position of 'stranger'. All this, according to Brannen, should assist with the disclosure of the sensitive. This is, of course, debatable. Not only does this approach set constraints on the individual researcher's techniques but it also calls into question the rigorousness of alternative methodologies. What does cause a degree of consternation is the implicit manipulation of respondents that appears inherent in this approach. Why hide the intention and purpose of the interview and why stay as a stranger? The general assumption and hope is that researchers are capable and professional enough to extrapolate information in an open and non -judgemental way. It should therefore be possible to be explicit from the start. A level of acceptance can be gained by gauging the type of rapport permissible to the respondent. In this way the interview can start 'soft' and progress by taking up the more substantial points that need to be covered as they emerge. This seems more ethically acceptable as through each stage one has gained the understanding and consent of the participants.

The 'partner' interviews produced interesting data and elucidated certain issues pertaining to interviewing couples together. Allan (1980:132) maintains that a variety of benefits can be achieved by using this strategy, for ultimately there are two accounts of any particular event produced. In these particular interviews other implicit connections were being made. Couples appeared to be in some sense revisionist, recreating and reaffirming their own histories. The gender dynamics of the interviews were also noted time after time in the field notes. Depending on the

question asked, one voice was privileged. It is suggested that questions were being interpreted as gender appropriate rather than parent appropriate.

Areas for future discussion were tentatively opened up at the end of the first interview. This was to act as a guide to both partners about what was to be included in the 'father' only interviews and reassure each that their parenting abilities would not be judged. It was anticipated that by interviewing partners together about 'family life', men would be more relaxed at their individual interviews and more inclined to be open about the emotional impact children had on their lives (Cornwell, 1984). The 'partner' interviews averaged one and half hours whereas the one-to-one interviews with fathers tended to be longer averaging two hours. There was little reluctance to talk and disclosure specific emotional and gender concerns. The only difficulties, at times, arose from misunderstandings between the interviewer and interviewee over the definitions of particular concepts.

The interviews concluded with an unrecorded debriefing. Respondents were thanked for their time and input and asked whether they had any questions or comments. Many wanted to know what would happen to their interviews. They were told about the continuing process of analysis and reassured about confidentiality. The majority of fathers said they enjoyed talking about being a father and what it meant for them. They appreciated the opportunity to do this and felt the interviews had made them aware of issues that they had considered as disconnected from their ideas of fathering, such as, the notion that explicit or implicit models of feminine and masculine behaviour might be instilled in their children.

### Cross Gender Relations in Interviewing: Negotiated and Contested Power

During the interview stage of the data collection, the gender dynamics of the 'partner' interviews held some meaning. This dynamic is equally salient when considering the gender and type of interaction that takes place between the interviewer and interviewee. These interviews in one sense lacked spontaneity. They were

prearranged and their purpose and intent outlined. This being so one might assume them to be rather staid, perfunctory and unexciting, yet they were all undertaken in unique contexts, so this assumption is not sustained. Each interview brought to the fore certain dilemmas, one dilemma concerned the contention that interviews are built round notions of power and that in some way this power is negotiated. Here normal social relations between the sexes are inconsistent and for the interview to progress a suspension of normative gender dealings were at times apparent. Whereas Morgan (1981:83-109) rightly suggests one should seriously consider gender and its deconstruction in sociological investigations, McKeganey and Bloor (1991:207) suggest this should encompass gendered fieldwork relationships. A partial consideration is undertaken here.

A dichotomous situation arose from the perceived differences between the interviewer and respondent. These differences were not solely due to gender, although it can be argued they are inextricably linked and a major factor in this research, they were also due in part to the acquisition of knowledge that one does not 'naturally' possess. In other words the interviewer is, on the one hand, subordinate to the respondent who is in the enviable position of possessing the information of which the interviewer is ignorant. On the other hand the interviewer is seen as holding some authority over the respondent yet this authority is ultimately negotiated. Concurring with Georges and Jones (1980: 334), this ambivalent situation is derived from the significance one places on difference. Recognising these differences allows compromises to be reached; compromise between the researcher and the subject and one's own notions of dependence and independence throughout the interview.

Normal social relations are not usually built on the overt, immediate 'need to know' context of the interview. Over time one's position within a relationship, whether that position be one of power, dependence or independence, evolves. Yet within the context of the interview all these elements are condensed and one needs to negotiate a satisfactory relationship for that moment, at that moment, encompassing, circumventing and at times upholding taken for granted notions of gender and power.

Denzin (1989:116) believes the sex of both the respondent and the interviewer has an impact, and that the interview is a microcosm of the social world; a world that is defined by a cultural and paternalistic social system which differentiates gender. This suggests a hierarchical gender relationship between the interviewer and respondent. It is this which is problematic; when that interviewer is female, and the respondent male aspects of normal gender relations are suspended. This suspension can be manifest only if the interview itself is not inherently built on a masculine paradigm that has traditionally encompassed hierarchical notions of gender, which in itself includes those old binaries of man/woman equals nature/nurture, rational/irrational, dominant/subordinate. Many have advocated a shift from this essentially masculine paradigm (Clough, 1992; Reinharz, 1992; Smith, 1997).

Although a suspension of normative gender relations was at times apparent during the interviews, at other times a return to stereotypical gender assumptions occurred. This departure from and return to everyday social interaction is best viewed from the context of power being either negotiated or contested. When interviewing men it has been reported that an implicit manipulation of the researcher has been evident. Scott, (1985:211) and McKee and O'Brien (1983) highlight the intention of some respondents to use the interview as an opportunity to verbalise the disquiet, stresses and strains in their personal lives. These articulations might be disconnected from the main focus of the research, and the researcher finds herself in the position of counsellor.

This type of manipulation was evident in three interviews. The underlying motives of the respondents were recognised and engaged with. It was felt that by engaging with this hidden agenda a degree of reciprocity had occurred and the commitment to listen and allow men to set and frame the interview had not been neglected. It is only by analysing the interviews that do not fall within the expected pattern that one can argue most of the interviews upheld the methodological commitment to give men a voice. Nevertheless what was obvious throughout these particular interviews was the return to the normal assumption that the emotional side of life was clearly located in the

female realm and that the associated emotional labour that emerges fell within the province of the researcher. The male respondent held an advantage over the researcher whereby he could reorganise certain sections of the interview to satisfy his needs. Here one sees clearly how the gender power within an interview can fluctuate as it need not be concentrated and distributed from one source.

Gender difference in an interview situation has been shown to operate at a level that includes compromise and negotiation. If one takes the interview to be a socially constructed event in itself then social and cultural notions of gender difference do have an impact on the process and need to be recognised. Notions need not be fixed as it is shown they can be negotiated or contested and ones place and position in the process can straddle both sides of a dominant and subordinate divide. This is seen in the fact that at one level the researcher is automatically reliant on the knowledge which the respondent holds, this places the researcher in a subservient position yet, at another level, the researcher holds some authority as the general movement of the interview is usually left to their control although as noted a manipulation of this can occur.

**Emotional Disclosure**

A second dilemma that came to the fore during the interviews was whether or not the respondents freely gave consent for the amount and type of emotional information obtained. The previous section suggested that at times the interview could be manipulated by respondents to satisfy their own agendas, but this was not a general occurrence. The majority of men engaged with the process enthusiastically including the disclosure of emotionality. The issue of whether consent was free and informed needs some consideration as initially consent was required for delving into the personal and emotional lives of these men. Having already contested Brannan's framework for eliciting sensitive and emotional testimonies without being explicit in intent, and placing an alternative if somewhat ideal framework in its place, the

practice of researching the family and its individual members brings to mind cross gender ethical concerns which can not easily be dispelled.

Consent needs to be placed in the context that certain assumptions concerning male emotional disclosure were initially taken into the interview by the researcher. These assumptions were that men are reluctant and in some ways unable to be emotionally articulate. The major flaw of these assumptions was that consent was being asked implicitly from men to be emotionally expressive in a way that was understandable to the researcher. In other words it was expected that men would articulate the emotional from within a feminine definition. This position is obviously untenable, and became evident while sifting through the transcripts that men do articulate sensitive and emotional information but not always in the overt and de-coded way that women are presumed to do. A sub-narrative is often apparent. It could be suggested that in this case, unintentionally, true consent was therefore not sought and could not therefore be given. A more coherent understanding of male emotional disclosure needed to be undertaken.

Gender power and notions of how power is institutionally operated also affect the type and degree of emotional disclosure. This has a particular resonance where men are concerned. It has been well documented that women tend to articulate the emotional with a greater ease and less reluctance (see for example Oakley, 1974 and Boulton, 1983) yet, if we are to take gender seriously, the presumption that men in some way fail to be emotionally articulate must be questioned.

The emotional realm has traditionally been the sphere of women's power, for men to articulate emotional sensitivity would require a more balanced emotional sphere of action, a more equitable terrain. As a female researcher I cannot neglect the simple fact that institutional power is not only operated by and operates on men differentially, but is differential across gender. According to Sattel (1976) the 'inexpressive male' is functional for society, as power cannot be distributed effectively if it were tied to the realm of emotion. The consequence of this argument

is that ambiguity between the instrumental and expressive arenas exists for men and to cope with this ambiguity an inexpressive existence permeates through both spheres. This argument can only be sustained if we continue to place the emotional realm and definitions of emotionality firmly at the door of women. It can only be sustained if we continue to be dogmatic about whose emotional experience is taken as valid and accepted as knowledgeable.

Male emotional disclosure during the interviews did appear to raise cross gender issues. These issues were generated by the preconceived ideas of the researcher concerning the appropriate manner in which emotional expressivity should be demonstrated and what constituted the emotional. The data however contradict these initial assumptions and consequently the following chapters will argue that male emotional expressivity cannot be conceptualised solely from within a feminine understanding of the emotional sphere. Here the importance of listening to men is crucial.

**Why Listen to Men?**

Spending time and energy investigating contemporary fatherhood and male emotional expressivity might be viewed as contravening the feminist project. Initially it does not fall neatly into the category that normally defines feminist research, that being to focus attention on women's lives and the areas which impact on those lives in an oppressive way (Kelly, 1984). But most women happen to like men, and for the majority of women much emotional time and energy is invested in securing a long-term committed relationship with them. If women are prepared to invest emotional time and energy on men, it is worth asking if men might be making an equivalent investment.

This however creates its own problems for as Layland (1990:126) points out even men that we might see as marginal have the ability and power 'to define women according to their own views and needs.' It could be suggested that this might be of

particular relevance within the familial arena, as to view men as marginal here could be taken as a subversion of normal power relationships. Nevertheless one cannot discount the possibility that for some fathers the emotional sphere of activity might be unsatisfactory due to social and cultural constraints and therefore they might have a marginal existence within this realm. This is one reason why we should listen to the voices of men. It is only through asking the appropriate questions and hearing the replies that we might gauge an understanding of the forces that impinge on the emotional and which consequently might affect the level of satisfaction that some men feel as fathers.

The feminist critique, in general, illuminates the need to consider the lives of those viewed 'less significant', for it is only through doing this that a picture of everyday existence can emerge. It has been argued here that men are viewed as less significant than women within the emotional sphere and therefore have a marginal status. This being the case then it is appropriate to extend the feminist project to include a consideration of their lives. Men's activities within the home cannot be seen as independent, there are children and partners that need to be considered, in this sense their marginality has an effect on others. This in itself legitimates a feminist consideration of their lives. To analyse these and other key areas of men's lives is essential to give men a voice, to give them the same consideration feminist researchers have given to women.

Utilising a life history or case study, chronological approach has been guided by particular areas of interest in the meanings of emotional life. Recent research attention into interpersonal relationships has focused consideration on the interconnections between the public and private spheres (Duncombe and Marsden, 1996). The interviews suggested that this shift needed to be extended to include a third aspect, that being the inner aspect of self-satisfaction. This thesis engages with the social and cultural spheres of fatherhood and attaches these to the memory and experience of fathering to explore both the satisfactions and discontents of fathering.

Arguing that gender, identity and emotional expression are not fixed, and thus socio-cultural scripts can be either accepted or rejected, brings notions of agency and the active construction of 'self' into the equation. It is taken here that homogeneity in any area is a myth and diversity is an inherent aspect of the human condition and consequently human relations, in this sense a wide view is needed when trying to ascertain change or transient conditions.

There was a need to explore socio-cultural influences such as: the ideology of fatherhood, hegemonic masculinity, employment (lack of and restructuring), family structure, households, ideas about child-rearing and of course women's position in the public and private spheres. These were some of the influences on fathering that men noted. Structural determinism is not the dominating factor: for the belief held here is that parenting does not have a fixed agenda. Class, race, sexuality all have an impact but as this study is located within one homogeneous group, these other aspects can not be commented on with reference to the findings and analysis from these data.

The areas covered in the 'partner' interviews pertained to their experiences as a couple before parenting. These included their employment histories, domestic division of labour and their desire to parent. Of significance were the changes in these areas once the respondents had become parents and also changes in the roles they undertook, ideas of male and female behaviour and how these were put into practice as regards the types of parenting responsibilities they took on. Included in the 'father only' interviews was a consideration of their own parents' roles and responsibilities and ideas of male and female place in the home and appropriate masculine and feminine behaviour. There was a need for the men to consider their own role during their partner's pregnancy and the opportunities and choices they felt they had for involvement and whether they felt there were any occupational constraints to this involvement. Many of these areas look at the traditional or normative aspects of home life and parenting, yet if tradition is based on normative ideals and ideal types then the argument can be advanced that modifications at an institutional level may have a bearing on the degree and type of changes located at an individual and in the familial

realm. Social, family and economic policy are set by normative ideas of family life and men and women's position in both the public and private spheres, this being so, then the dialectic tension between these realms would in itself precipitate change, although degree and type are debatable.

If these institutional modifications are mediated through communication and interaction then the question of agency (pragmatic creativity) becomes pertinent, as modifications can be either accepted or rejected. Here borders are defined for the individual by the individual thus not defined solely by structural influences. Personal histories had an impact on the construction and notions of masculinity, identity, fatherhood and emotions for the men. It is suggested that by adapting the modifications of the macro level pragmatic creativity is established.

Throughout the interviews personal histories and expectations were noted. Expectations and concerns were voiced over what parenting meant for each partner and whether this had led to changes in their own 'partner' relationships and relationships with friends and colleagues and whether parenting added to a sense of satisfaction felt in a partner relationship. Fathers spoke of their own parents and the type of interaction their parents had with each other and other siblings. Positive and negative memories of being fathered were important. Not only, for some, did these memories inform their own parenting styles and role expectations but of interest when viewing childhood retrospectively are the inconsistencies and false impressions that some hold throughout their adult life which also might be salient to parenting behaviour. As adaptation deals with the 'inner' workings of an individual's social identity then accordingly notions of roles and types of role were important. It was evident throughout these interviews that self-identity and roles were viewed and placed in a hierarchical structure that combined and utilised ideological, structural and cultural notions of appropriate role behaviour. Here also a connection was being directly forged between institutional opportunities and constraints and personal history and experience. It is suggested that personal history and experience tends to moderate and give meaning to changes in other spheres.

Masculinity and fatherhood are not only internal somatic and biological states. They have an interactive component that is visible through the behaviour and practice of fathering. The men's narratives illuminated how roles and a sense of identity were adapted and made acceptable. The familial arena was one place to locate and analyse the emotional expressivity of fatherhood. This is the main sphere of action where father conduct is observed. It is recognised that types of activity and conduct could be constrained by other factors, i.e. women's position in the home. This, potentially, could be an area for conflict, both internal and external, for the father, however outward conduct is generated and seen through activity. Time and again men spoke of an economic imperative that negated activity and contact with children. Although this was a source of inner tension this was circumvented so that ideals of fatherhood as emotionally satisfying and masculinity and roles as either set or negotiated could be sustained for these men. There was a need during the interviews to establish the space men required for emotional expression and ask how this space was achieved. Whether the activities of fathering met individual notions of fatherhood and self-identity was also considered. Thus it was important to ascertain the types of activities that brought pleasure and were self-satisfying.

By straddling structural opportunity and individual choice (Cohen, 1987) and the culture and conduct of fatherhood (LaRossa, 1988) objective and subjective aspects which inform and impact on a man's ability to father have been considered. It is suggested in this thesis, that by focussing more on the meanings of fatherhood it is possible to move away from debating fatherhood from within a rather staid and incomplete model of 'instrumentality', whilst at the same engaging with the contradictions that emerge from the 'old' and 'new' models of fatherhood, assessing and exploring the gap between the two. Here is a greater consideration and recognition of the diversity that exists within masculinity, fatherhood, families and emotionality. All this should assist with providing an understanding of those areas which men articulated as important and which comprise contemporary fatherhood and male emotional expressivity.

## Conclusion

As we shall see in subsequent chapters, all of the men in the sample were cognisant that the instrumental model of fatherhood was publicly viewed as being emotionally deficient. Most of the men in the sample stated that they shared this view of instrumental fatherhood and in their accounts presented their fathering practice as more engaged and emotionally involved. It is possible that, since the men were aware of the negative implications of instrumental fatherhood, that they were at pains to present their own practice in a more 'liberal' light and to emphasise the emotional aspects of their fathering. This may also have been influenced by the fact that they were talking to a female researcher, explicitly researching issues of emotionality in fatherhood. The extent to which a research subject may try to 'second guess' what the researcher wants to hear is always an issue when assessing interview material. However, it is worth noting that in the 'couple' interviews, the men's partners were corroborative of the men's accounts, with little or no disagreement about the extent and meaning of the men's involvement with their children.

More importantly, it should be remembered that the men's accounts are (necessarily) subjective narratives and that the purpose of the interviews was to explore the meanings that men ascribe to their fathering practice. The point of the research was not to try and discover some underlying objective 'truth' about the real nature of the men's fathering, but rather to listen to how they described it, and to ascertain what they thought was important and meaningful in their fathering. The narratives give an insight into the aspirations and values that this group of men place on contemporary fatherhood, and thus are valid and meaningful in their own right.

As will be discussed more fully in Chapter Five, the men in the sample saw their own fathering practice as 'liberal' and involved, however, there were important continuities with older 'instrumental' or 'traditional' models in their accounts. The researcher's interpretation was that aspects of the men's narratives revealed the men's fathering to be rather less 'liberal' than they themselves viewed it. However, it should

be stressed that the methodological and ethical implications of this conclusion are not that the men's narratives should be called into question. In particular, the researcher is not arguing that the men's narratives were incorrect or misleading when they discussed their fathering as 'liberal', nor is it being suggested that the men's beliefs and practices were asynchratic. Rather, it will be shown in Chapters Five and Six that a key issue is how the men themselves construct 'liberal' or 'new man' fatherhood. The 'involvement' that the men describe as being essential to their view of themselves as 'new man' fathers took a very particular form and one which does not necessarily square with academic accounts of 'liberal' fatherhood.

The important point, however, is that the research strategy undertaken in this research project was to take the men's narratives at face value, as important statements of what *they saw* as being meaningful. By exploring the complexities and ambiguities in their accounts of fathering, a fuller understanding of 'liberal' fatherhood in practice was achieved.

# CHAPTER 3

# MEANINGS OF FATHERHOOD

## Introduction

With the qualitative methodology in mind a fundamental question can be asked that empirically starts to address the problem of the missing revolution in fatherhood. What are the implications for how men view their own fathering when the dominant script of fathering is the instrumental model? This model, by definition, views fatherhood as being emotionally deficient, and the men in the sample were clearly aware of the emotional limitations of instrumental fatherhood. However, it will be argued in this chapter that a tension exists for men in how they view their own fathering practice. All the men in the sample viewed their instrumental input as being crucially important to their understanding of themselves as fathers and as men. There was also a strong emotional component to this. It will be argued here that strong emotional satisfactions are gained from instrumentality and the instrumental model should not be regarded as being as emotionally deficient as is conventionally depicted. Yet the men also viewed the instrumental role as being inadequate in certain aspects. All the men had a clear understanding of the limitations of fathering in terms of the instrumental model, that is, they all saw it in some way as being emotionally deficient. As we shall see, the men talked of wanting to be 'more' as fathers themselves, and in terms of reaching beyond the instrumental model. However, the men were unable and unwilling to jettison instrumental fatherhood, which was clearly a central component of how they viewed fathering. In their accounts, therefore, we can see ambivalence about how the men viewed their own fathering in relation to general scripts of fatherhood. Thus a further question to be addressed is, how can men view their own fathering positively when there is not a wholly positive script of fathering available to them?

## Roles and Meanings

This chapter sets out to explore both how men view 'fathering' in general, and how they situate their own fathering in relation to such wider understandings. How do the men relate general cultural scripts of fatherhood to their own experiences of fathering and being fathered? In thinking about how views of fathering are developed a number of different levels need to be considered. Clearly, wider cultural models of fatherhood are available to men in a number of ways: from their own childhood experiences of being fathered (which will be discussed more fully in the next chapter); from popular culture and the mass media; from the parenting of friends and acquaintances; from the expectations of partners; and from the embedded assumptions about gender and parenting institutionalised in employment and financial arrangements. As we shall see, the men in the sample clearly referred their own fathering practice to stereotypical models of fathering, and were aware of the limitations of such models. They also negotiated appropriate models of fathering with their partners, whilst structural opportunities and constraints (for example, the way work is organised) also had an impact. However, it will be argued that most of the men in this sample did not have a single model of fatherhood, and that apparently contradictory ideas about fathering were contained within a single framework of fathering.

This chapter draws on Cohen's work on the transitions men make when becoming husbands and fathers, and the degree of attachment men have to these roles (Cohen, 1987). Cohen's focus is on *initial* transitions to fatherhood, whilst the fathers in this project have passed through that initial stage, and it is clear that their attachments, commitments and definitions are constantly under review. However Cohen's general framework of how men readjust their level of commitment to the public sphere, and how they restructure their intra-personal and interpersonal lives with these transitions is useful for exploring shifts and tensions in the obligations, satisfactions and meanings of fatherhood.

Cohen's work challenges the 'men work' version of the male role (1987: 59). He is

critical of the way family research has continued to use gender assumptions (that woman equals mother, whilst man equals work). He argues that sentiments and values are denied when men are viewed as being wholly work centred. This chapter explores the emotions and meanings that the men attached to fatherhood and, following Cohen, argues that 'emotional' fathering is fundamental to men's understandings and definitions of fatherhood. The men in this study all wanted 'more' from fathering than the instrumental model, and saw their fathering practice in emotive terms which were clearly an important aspect of how they constructed their masculine identity (the importance of fathering to 'masculinity' will be further explored in chapter six). However, it will also be argued that, paradoxically, instrumental fathering was itself viewed in 'emotional' terms. Whilst the men expressed disquiet and ambivalence with many aspects of the instrumental model, it is also clear that this model was centrally important to their understandings of what it is to father. In this sense, the men held contradictory models of fatherhood within their accounts. They stressed the need they felt to provide economic support and discipline for their children (and expressed great emotional satisfaction at fulfilling these obligations), yet at the same time saw 'good' fathering in terms of a more expanded notion of emotional and practical contact with their children.

Cohen sets out a distinction between men's reports of their behaviours as husbands and fathers and their stated role attachment, emotional involvements in, and self-images derived from family roles. He suggests two prerequisites need to be present to enact a role: opportunity and choice:

> ''Choice'...is related to 'role attachment' (Goffman, 1966). The degree to which men will choose to enact a role depends largely upon their degree of role attachment. 'Opportunity,'' on the other hand, is dependent largely on the commitments one has made and the consequences of those commitments (Becker, 1970; Goffman, 1966).' (1987: 60)

Cohen argues that conceptualisations of what constitutes 'husband and father' can range from 'narrow', traditional notions through to 'broad' conceptualisations of appropriate behaviour. He suggests that occupational and social constraints may restrict opportunities to perform roles although there may be no constraints on opportunities for involvement. He therefore produces a fourfold typology of opportunity and choice. Cohen is arguing that whether men adopt an expanded or traditional approach to fathering is dependent on two aspects: firstly, their varying 'attachment' to different models of fathering; and secondly, the structural opportunities that will permit (or prevent) men from enacting these preferences. So for a 'broad role', or expanded approach for fathering to develop (what might be called the 'new man' approach), both preferences and structural opportunities have to be in place.

**Conceptualization of Roles (Choice)**

| **Opportunity** | | **Broad Fatherhood Role** | **Narrow Fatherhood Role** |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **High** | **A** | **C** |
| | **Low** | **B** | **D** |

(Cohen, 1987: 61)

Model 1

In cells A&D behaviour reflects matched levels of opportunity and role conceptualisation, whilst in cells B&C discrepancies exist between what men wish to do and what their opportunities allow. Cell B represents men who would like more involvement as fathers, but lack the opportunity to enact this expanded role.

Cohen's suggestion that for a 'broad' role to exist both choice and opportunity needs to be present produces a problem when viewing the men in this study. Many of the men in this study had relatively privileged employment situations. As we shall see in chapter five, which explores the men's renegotiations of their working lives, the men in this sample had what may-be regarded as high levels of structural opportunities, as well as expressing 'broad' views of fatherhood. Opportunities and choice are apparent yet the 'new man' as a distinct, observable entity has not emerged. Structural constraints have not colluded to produce a 'narrow' conceptualisation of fatherhood for as we have seen liberal views co-exist with traditional gender-divided practices. Whereas LaRossa and Hochschild argue a disjuncture between the culture and the conduct of fathering and a distinction between liberal and traditional views of fatherhood this simple division is problematic. The men in this study often expressed both liberal and traditional views of fathering; therefore the continuum highlighted through the work of Cohen is rejected here.

Cohen's use of terms suggests that the 'broad' fathering role is simply a much more expanded version of 'narrow' fatherhood, and that there is a clear-cut continuum of fathering. However, the evidence of the men in this sample suggests that a continuum is not the best way of describing cultural scripts of fathering. Cohen's use of terms (which suggests a fathering continuum) implies that 'involved' fathering can simply be developed out of 'instrumental' fathering, through increasing emotional and practical engagement with children. However, this research suggests that 'involved' and 'instrumental' fathering do not sit so easily together, since 'instrumental' fathering (as it is currently conceived) places necessary constraints on practical and emotional involvement, and defines emotional fathering in a gender-divided way. The men in the sample wanted to be both 'instrumental' and 'involved' fathers, but also recognised the tensions between these two models. Good fathering was about attempting to reconcile these tensions or maintaining a 'balancing act'.

Cohen identified a reduced self-interest in the public sphere as men's self-image changed with the transitions to fatherhood that they made. Here there is a tension

between Cohen's work and the findings of this study. Whereas the fathers in my project in some part gained their definitions of father from their activities with their children, their interest in the world of work was not necessarily diminished with becoming fathers. We have seen that employment held an emotional resonance for these men. Thus there was no clear-cut reduction in their commitment to work.

Cohen also found that men's experiences of becoming husbands and fathers were not simple additions to 'breadwinning' responsibilities. He found that the role of husband unfolded gradually whereas the role of father was sudden – there was no transition, socialization or training. However, as we shall see, the decision to parent and pregnancy can be seen as an important first transition in a continuing process in which the men reflected upon the meaning and practice of fathering.

Cohen's work looks at the opportunities men have for involvement and the types of choices they make with regards to the opportunities available. The emphasis in Cohen's work, however, is on the performance of fatherhood tasks and roles. The meanings and definitions of being a father - what it feels like - are neglected, and the consequences of fatherhood for masculine identity is minimised. Cohen also falls back on some of the gender-divided assumptions he critiques. For example, he suggests that women are socialised to be more expressive and because of this, any change in men's emotionality might actually be more significant than woman's emotionality. By critiquing Cohen's model, engaging with fatherhood in longitudinal terms, and by stressing the diverse meanings of fatherhood, a more complex understanding of contemporary fatherhood emerges. This understanding highlights the diverse meanings of fatherhood while illuminating how apparently contradictory views are held in a unified model. This is illustrated clearly when the men talk of 'wanting more'.

**Becoming a father**

At the time of the 'couple interviews', the couples were asked about their initial decision to have children. Of the 43 couples, 38 were married between 2 and 4 years before serious conversations took place between the couples about planning their families. What was striking among these couples is that all expected to parent, and that this was a taken for granted assumption. For fathers this assumption was less evident than for mothers, and initial conversations about parenting had normally been instigated by the woman. But once parenting was raised as a possibility, fathers recognised and wanted this. In other words, it was through conversations, initiated by women, that the emotional 'wanting' to parent developed. Timing was an important aspect of these conversations. Stability in the couple relationship, together with a degree of financial stability created the space needed to instigate conversations about starting a family. Janet and Gordon set the scene:

> 'When we first got married, children weren't high on the agenda. They were there but we had the house to do up and we were strapped for cash. Weren't we? I always wanted to have them. It was a question of when.' (Janet)

> 'Yes but having kids wasn't something I really thought about upfront. It was only when you thought the time was right, you know, we started planning, then I felt yes, you know, let's do it. I don't think I needed too much convincing?' (Gordon)

> 'No...well...We didn't know, did we? We didn't know what it was going to mean. We did talk about what it might be like. Um...giving up work and how to keep all that together. But...it was...we'd been married a couple of years. You know still quite romantic it all seemed to fall in place.' (Janet)

'Yes it did. I think once you'd suggested that we might...it did fall in place it was all...it just seemed right. The time, how we were. I started to like the idea.' (Gordon)

Clive and Linda were married for two and a half years before the subject of having children was broached.

'It was something I took for granted. I always thought I would have children. Clive's always liked kids. We think the same. I just thought the time was right...It was important that I could stay at home well at least until they were at primary...So I...not very subtly suggested that we start trying.' (Linda)

Clive, on the other hand, had not considered the possibility of becoming a father until that time.

'I hadn't thought about having children until then. Not really thought. I was quite happy with the way things were. You know, the two of us. Yes but when you started dropping hints it was a possibility and yes was something I wanted to do then. So...um you can say yes I wanted them too but maybe I needed you (Linda) to start it all off.' (Clive)

Peter supplies an overview to the start of family life with Jane:

'There was no sort of slow build up, or anything like that...I think that most of my friends were getting married and having children, so I could see that they were getting a lot of fun out of having kids. So it was always at the back of my mind that yes, that would be quite fun, something that I would probably enjoy doing. Being a father.' (Peter)

Jane had a different initial opinion of parenting. Unlike Peter she did not embrace the possibility of being a parent enthusiastically:

> 'I was shocked. I am not one of those people who are joyful when they're pregnant and who go around saying this is naturally me. I hated being pregnant. I really hated it. I was very fearful and worried about the whole thing. I kept saying to Peter that I was not a mother earth character. Quite simply, I found it very awkward.' (Jane)

Unlike the previous accounts, it can be suggested that Peter had aspirations to parent prior to setting up a home with Jane. So for some of the couples it was not the women who initiated thoughts about parenting. For these couples their discussions to parent were related to their view of their life course stage and the family building of their peers. This was the case for Martin. He was the one who first expressed the wish to have children a year after his marriage to Sue.

> 'I spoke about the possibility for us to become parents. I was convinced we could be good parents and I was ready to take on that commitment. Sue you were far more cautious.' (Martin)

> 'Well yes, for good reason. I'm four and a half years older than Martin and when we started to think about becoming parents seriously I was thirty five. That was..I had set an arbitrary deadline of thirty-five in my mind. In that sense then yes I was open to the idea but there were other things, important things that we needed to resolve.' (Sue)

> 'I think it was more a question of me reassuring you about those things. I remember those long conversations about whether having

a child would make you dependent on me and stop your development at work and as an individual.' (Martin)

'Yes, yes. I was hesitant. Rightly. But we did eventually take that decision and we were right not to take it lightly.' (Sue)

Paul and Lorna had no strong desire to parent and were married for longer than any other couple in this project before a decision was taken to try for children.

'When we started, as a couple, we had no desire what so ever. But we were basically open, we're both Christians, we were open to God changing our minds. Not that we wanted him to, but if it happened, and over a period of ten years we came around to the decision that we would like to have children. I think it was completely mutual...We both gradually came around to that. I think it helped to an extent...My brother had a child, it was nice to see. I think that influenced us.' (Paul)

'And friends. David and Sandra. I used to think that babies were revolting on the whole and I started feeling...You start looking in prams and thinking ahh instead of thinking urr. So I decided to come off the pill and I...' (Lorna)

'Got pregnant.' (Paul)

From an initial simple question concerning the respondents' aspirations and desires to parent, a complex, wide-ranging and diverse understanding of decision making becomes apparent. Economic situation, age, the recognition of a desire, the time in an intimate relationship, all these had a bearing on how decisions to have children were made. The generally taken-for-granted nature of parenthood was typical. The discussions (which were normally first advanced by women) that initiated the process

towards parenting were mediated by cultural scripts, in which parenting was an expected assumption, the life-course stage and comparisons to the transitions of their peers.

**Meanings of Fatherhood: The Instrumental Father**

This section focuses on the meanings the fathers attached to fatherhood. The section reflects the diversity of meanings attached to fatherhood, but at the same time it highlights how men aspire and perceive themselves as different from their fathers. Here for the first time the implications of a deficit model of fatherhood on the way men view their activity and experience their emotionality as fathers is forthcoming.

The normative role of 'father as material provider' was extremely important to the respondents. When asked what they felt were their primary obligations towards their children, the respondents attached meanings to fathering in association with instrumental, biological and 'natural' assumptions of childrearing. Within all these assumptions, the need to be a good material provider was evident. At the same time, however, the men were aware of and critically engaged with the notion that instrumental fatherhood was a deficit model of fathering. The men in the sample spoke of instrumental fathering as traditional or stereotypical, and spoke of the stereotypes attached to 'mother', 'father' and 'masculine' and 'feminine'. They spoke of a father's emotional detachment and marginalisation (particularly during the early years of childhood). They were aware of the limitations that their position as financial provider had on their practical and emotional engagement with their children. Yet at the same time as being critical of the limitations of instrumental provision they all presented their position in terms strongly endorsing the instrumental model.

A gender divided view of 'mothering' and 'fathering' was particularly apparent when the men discussed the early stages of their parenting practice. In this sense, early fatherhood can be taken as strongly traditional, being bounded both by biological assumptions and structural constraints.

> 'When you first have a baby it's about the only thing you can do. You know go out and work. If you like it's...it's the only useful thing you can do. Anyway it...this is going to sound like I'm a chauvinist (laughs) but Janet was far more capable than me... (Gordon)

In a similar vein, Clive recounted that, in the early stages of parenthood, he and his wife Linda wanted:

> 'the kids to have , you know, stability. Yeah, so my responsibility was to work. Earn enough so Linda could stay home. You know, that was my territory. Good job so guess it could work...It was right. You know I wouldn't know how to do things, what to do with really little babies. If you like all that side of it is just naturally taken on. So yeah, we both did the things we could do, you know me work and Linda stay home.' (Clive)

> 'My job was to bring in the money. That was my major contribution then. Still is to large extent but things have changed. Then it was a matter of necessity. I didn't know precisely how I'd fit in...There were certain things I could do but there were things that only Jane could do. You know we can't feed kids. There are certain things we can't do but other things we can. I just got on with doing the things I could and one was to work hard. It was important.' (Peter)

This general understanding that early parenting roles are in some ways 'natural' and inevitable, and that through these roles children were given stability was articulated by many of the respondents. The father's contribution was seen as being in terms of material provision which aided the stability of the young family. Horna and Lupri

(1987) found that during the early years of parenting men worked longer hours than men without children, likewise Lupton and Barclay (1997) also found that men's responsibilities to provide for partners and children were an important aspect of initial care. As we shall see later, for some of the men in this sample, these constraints were adapted over time via employment and partner negotiation to partially provide an opportunity for the men to obtain the 'wanting more' that they voiced.

The difficulties of disentangling roles and meanings did not occur in every case. For example, Tom started with clearly traditional expectations of what the fatherhood role meant for him:

> 'From my point of view I've always felt that, call it stereotype, but it still seems the case and it works that my task was to work and earn the money. It was a conscious decision...Jackie (wife) to be at home.' (Tom)

The notion that there is a biological, naturalistic basis to gendered roles, particularly when children are very young was commonplace. Yet for many of the men, this 'natural' division of the practical organisation of early parenting was also seen as being emotionally limiting for fathers. The idea that instrumental provision emotionally marginalizes and detaches fathers was articulated by Paul:

> 'To be honest I was quite envious of, I feel it a pity that there is a closeness there that I can never share. It does have an ongoing effect. That's something no father can have. I think because of that there is a tendency to fall into...Yeah well roles...You start off thinking well this is wrong...What's the difference between man and woman? But the more you observe the people around you, the more you realise that there is something, some underlying differences, which seem to be there naturally. The...The sort of male psyche, if you like, tends to be more concerned with, more

> cerebral, more concerned with knowing and understanding, whereas the female one tends to be more concerned with feeling and understanding. I don't know whether that is a good thing or bad thing, I just think that there is that there. It does tend to express itself.' (Paul)

Similarly, Martin recalled the tensions he felt when he first became a father. From his response we can see both a sense of the inevitability of gender roles when children are young, yet also the recognition that these roles are less than emotionally satisfactory.

> 'This whole debate about roles is surprising. I wanted to have children, I felt I was ready to take on that commitment and really I actively encouraged the idea. Sue was very cautious... But I had the belief, still have the belief that I hold different values than my father. I had every intention to be supportive and take a less traditional role. As I say, surprising, because when Alex was born there I was going out to work to provide financially for my family...In this respect I was my father but I was emotionally strong and knew that we could be good enough parents. But we were in unknown territory. We knew it would take time and effort to be the parents we wanted to be.' (Martin)

These accounts fall within the instrumental and complementary model. The fathers all saw their role as material provider as necessary and important, complementing the mother's role as prime carer in the early days of parenting. However they did not see it as an all-encompassing definition of what fathering entails. The recognition that fathering need not be confined to the area of material provision was emphasised, with many of the respondents emphasising that they wanted more from fathering.

**Wanting More From Fatherhood**

'My biggest constraint (to fathering) was my work.' (Peter)

Employment as a constraint on fathering was a common theme among the respondents. During the early parenting years their positions within the workplace held little authority or power. The men in the sample found balancing work and family life difficult. These difficulties were not overtly grounded in the practicalities of domestic life or determined by marital conflict as LaRossa (1988) and Hochshild (1990) found. Rather they were generated by the men's notions of what was necessary to be a 'good father' and to sustain a healthy family life. Repeatedly, we see the perception that the instrumental model of fatherhood was not satisfactory. The men felt they should be giving, and receiving, more.

This perception was very strong when their children were very young and men felt less control over their working lives. However, some of the men were able to use their privileged employment positions to modify their instrumental approach to fatherhood.

'I didn't have any say in the hours I worked. I worked long hours. Long compared to what I do now and...you know, I felt guilty.' (David)

'I thought work was the one thing I should be doing...my efforts were for everyone here. As I say, that's what I thought.' (Phillip)
*Are you saying your thinking's changed?*

'Yeah but not recently. It changed when Richard (first child) was a baby...the money was good but the hours were crap and I never saw him.' (Phillip)

With financial provision secured, other meanings and satisfactions were annexed to their understandings of 'fatherhood'. With promotions and changes in jobs, some of the men gained the opportunity to explore a more expanded notion of fathering. However, although some of the men were able to loosen their overall commitment to the provider role, it remained a central responsibility for these men and an enduring feature of what it meant for them to 'father'.

In Cohen's terms this development might be a move away from a 'narrow' role of fatherhood, as men with preferences for more liberal parenting seize widening structural opportunities to enact the 'broader' fathering role. However this does not adequately reflect the views and meanings of fathering held by these men. The fathers expressed preferences for both 'narrow' and 'broad' fathering, thus there was no simple move down a fathering continuum. Liberal and traditional views were held in a unified position and as such were not divorced or separated as a need for more emotional and more engaged fathering (that is, an 'expanded' model) went hand in hand with a continuing commitment to instrumental fathering.

The shift in instrumental parenting to accommodate more expanded notions of fathering is seen by Cohen as a lessening of self interest in the public sphere with the change in men's self image as fathers (1987:66). However, this argument cannot be upheld here. Although some men in the sample spoke of a shift in work commitment, the world of employment still remained central. It also fulfilled an important emotional component of fathering and enabled the men to extend their emotional understanding of fatherhood. So although there was a loosening of work commitment, self-interest was retained. Exploring such shifts in commitments helps to extend the meanings and definitions that men attach to their fathering and goes a little way to rectify an area that Clarke and Popay (1998) see as lacking empirically. They argue that whilst there has been an increased research interest in the practice of fatherhood, fathers' *perceptions* and *understandings* of fatherhood have generally been neglected (1998: 203).

Taking fathers' accounts and placing them within a processual framework which explores the diverse meanings that they attach to fatherhood enables a more comprehensive understanding of contemporary fatherhood. Peter illustrates how with time, opportunity and choice his fathering was extended:

> 'I think my expectations were to try to...I mean my experience, my philosophy was to try and make sure they (children) enjoyed life...That's how I always felt my role would be. In this particular case bringing in the money...In fact I felt the position I was working then was actually suffocating my ability to spend very much time at home...I felt this was not what it was all about. Eventually I was able to step back and reduce my working hours...I sort of cut back on that as I felt that in the long term it wouldn't be good for the family.' (Peter)
>
> *And was that something that you felt you wanted to do for yourself?*
>
> 'I felt that within the family...It wasn't good...I wasn't enjoying it.' (Peter)

However, 'choice' is not to do with replacing one mode of operating with a clear new mode. It is not about moving from one end of a continuum to another. It is about holding apparently contradictory views of fatherhood in a unified model.
The accounts of the respondents have highlighted how paid work was not seen as their overriding definitional understanding of fathering. A total commitment to, and responsibility for fathering, could not be defined in this purely instrumental fashion. Most of the fathers stressed that there were other important aspects to fathering missing from instrumentality. Yet at the same time, instrumental provision was seen as being vitally important to their fathering. So whilst there was a tension and ambivalence about the instrumental role - which highlights the perceived emotional

deficit of this model - the instrumental model could not be jettisoned from their understanding of 'fatherhood'.

The men were asked specifically whether they considered their role as 'father' and their role as 'worker' to be distinguishable from one another and whether one role took precedence over the other. Most would not make this distinction.

> 'Being a father is everything. You know...I can't say what that means if I weren't working. That's part of it.' (Christopher)

For almost all of the men it was difficult to separate instrumental provision from fathering. Most respondents articulated the difficulty in distinguishing these roles and prioritising them. Alan stated that he felt 'father' should be the right answer.

> 'But' he continued, 'if I didn't work I would...I wouldn't be doing the whole bit.' (Alan)
>
> *'What, working's part of it?'*
>
> 'Yeah. A big part. I'm not saying it's expected you know. I could be a 'house-dad' but I think the two go together. I'd feel um not a proper dad.' (Alan)

Martin also acknowledged the same sense of tension that Christopher highlights:

> 'It's a balancing act. It's important for me to know that I'm providing for my children in every way. That's where my father was incompetent. No, no - that suggests he had no control. He chose not to father in the way I do. In his position he could have.' (Martin)

Alan's usage of the words 'expected and 'proper' together with Martin's criticism of his father's ability to choose are illuminating. On first reading expectations and normative action appear conflictual. Alan's testimony points towards a culture which is at ease with the total engagement of fathers in the familial realm more reminiscent of mothering, yet at the same time there is a recognition that had he pursued such a role his own beliefs and understandings of what fatherhood constitutes would have been in contention with dominant cultural representations. This also comes through in Martin's account. Here, it can be suggested, he not only transposes today's 'culture of fatherhood' on to a time that is no more, but operationalises the stereotypical masculine image of that time to fit his own sense of fathering. Synthesising these two opposing cultural images of masculinity to aid fathering is not unusual where the respondents are concerned. Peter when asked the question about his role as father and employee had this to say:

> 'I get a lot of satisfaction out of both, as a matter of fact...The strange thing is I'm more worried about my job now. I realise that if anything ever happened within my job (redundancies), I'm quite well paid... That now worries me.' (Peter)
>
> *So are both parts of your life important to you?*
>
> 'I'd like to think my parenting is. Because at the end of the day your career is not going to develop any further...I could go and work for anybody part time.' (Peter)

Here, once again, is the recognition that whilst 'father' need not be defined solely by economic activity, this is nonetheless regarded as a central aspect of fathering and a component that is essential for understanding what is appropriate 'father' behaviour.

'What's more important? Well if you've taken on having kids you've got to be responsible for them. For everything about them. That's your priority. What more can I say?' (Marvin)

*Some might answer differently. The status thing of employment might be quite important to them.*

'Well I'll tell you what, we've got quite close friends and their marriage is breaking up because he works and works, where is his family in this? He's blind to what's happening to his family and kids. Work's important, don't get me wrong but...It's some of it, you know, not all of it.' (Marvin)

The men in the sample are, at least in socio-economic terms, a relatively privileged group. They are also relatively liberal and reflexive about their own practices. They often spoke, for example, about their desire for an expanded practice of fathering and of how important the emotional side of fathering was to them. They were also, at times, highly critical of the perceived limitations of instrumental fathering (which we might see as Cohen's traditional 'narrow' role). Because of the relatively favourable structural opportunities and the liberal preferences of the majority of the men in this sample, we might therefore expect them to be precisely the sort of men who would adopt the 'broad' role of fathering, since both role opportunity and role choice are in place. However, although a number of the men had modified their employment arrangements to become more 'hands on' fathers, it would be wrong to suggest that they had made any simple kind of role transition from 'traditional' to 'broad' fatherhood. This is because even these men (who might be regarded as the closest thing to 'new fathers' in the sample) retained important elements of the 'traditional' role in their accounts of what it meant to father. Rather than moving from 'instrumental' to 'involved' fathering, these men saw both cultural models as essential to their understanding of what it is to father. The traditional elements of fathering were retained in their accounts of 'wanting' and 'being' more.

**Definitions of Fatherhood**

It is important to recognise that men did not view instrumental fatherhood solely in terms of financial provision. 'Instrumental' fatherhood was seen not just as an economic role, but also as a commitment to provide protection, discipline and guidance. During the interviews the respondents were asked what they felt their primary obligations and responsibilities were with regard to being fathers and how these might pervade their social world.

> *What would you say was your primary obligation towards your children?*
>
> 'I think just ensure they're well and happy. That's the most important thing. I mean I don't think...I say the same about Vera (wife) really, I can't function properly if they're not happy or ill. It's as simple as that.' (Marvin)
>
> 'Primary, I think one, try and lead them in the right direction. I think to try to sort of keep them happy mentally and physically and socially. Not specifically in those orders. They all tend to overlap don't they? And try to make it so that they enjoy life. The other thing is I...I think that I want to try and make them appreciate life.' (Peter)

Tom differs for the majority of respondents in the overwhelming emphasis he places on economic provision:

> 'Yeah I take the financial side. Everything stops with me so yeah, that probably.' (Tom)

This could be a consequence of operating family life on traditional grounds and therefore a more concrete attachment to the traditional father role. However when asked further about obligations and responsibilities that were important to him he stated:

> 'I would say teacher and protector. I want to be their friend. Because I think this is the mistake my mother and father made. The thought of shaking hands with your son...no...high fives or a spontaneous cuddle, you know I feel that if you want to do it then you should do it...Be a friend an approachable human being.' (Tom)

Thus obligations and responsibilities extended further than the provider role, even in the case of Tom and the other three fathers who held traditional beliefs.

Many of the men in this project reported a range of obligations and responsibilities that they took to be their domain and, like Tom, these included, educator, disciplinarian and friend:

> '...to provide them with opportunities. I've always said I don't mind what the children do, as long as they don't turn out to be one of three things, a mass murderer, a stock broker or a Manchester United supporter.' (Paul)

> 'To offer up to them the opportunities. Whether they take them or not.' (Stuart)

> *Basically to show the choices that are available?*

> 'To make sure they're in the position to have choice. And are capable of taking up those choices.' (Stuart)

*Yeah. Do you feel as though you have any other obligations?*

'Yeah obviously there's to serve and protect, if you like, to make sure they enjoy their lives.' (Stuart)

Many of the fathers reported that they undertook discipline differently than their partners. They felt there was a responsibility on them to exhibit to their children the harsher side of life, to prepare them for the social and working world. Here Frank and Alan highlight a clear gender division to certain tasks.

'It's the discipline. Jenny always take the softly, softly approach. This is where we disagree...not always. It's no good sweet-talking them when they've been rude or they've badly misbehaved. I can't see the point. They need to know, to be taught that there is and isn't good behaviour. Don't give pocket money...good times. They need to know if they want to get on.' (Frank)

'Sounds a bit soft but...well I'd like to think they could come to me. You know...I'm approachable. I know we can't be friends as such but getting near it. It's one of those things that I'm trying to do. They go to their mum when they're upset or whatever. Sometimes it would be good if they came to me.' (Alan)

Many spoke of the need to provide a secure and stable home for their children, to be educator and disciplinarian. However, most extend these traditional notions of fathering and fatherhood by locating and shifting these definitions and meanings to a more subjective sense of being a father. As we shall in more detail, in chapter four, for many of the men 'wanting more' from fatherhood, was clearly related to desiring more practical and emotional involvement with their children than they had received from their own fathers. Gordon states:

'At the end of the day, if you like, it's up to me to make sure the family has the things it needs. But – but that's what I should be doing – it's part of it (fathering). I don't mind having that responsibility but it doesn't stop there...I think it did for my dad but that's not what it's about. You know I can't just say that I'm a dad because I work.'

'It's more than just providing the money. You need to provide opportunities...You need to be there whatever is going on. I want to be there...So how do I define being a dad?...It's how I feel. You know does that make sense? It's not only about doing stuff. It's knowing they know I'm their dad.' (Gordon)

This response highlights how Gordon 'wants more' than his own father provided, yet has not rejected all aspects of how his father operated and the fathering that he received. It suggests that Gordon believes he is operating with a more extended model of fathering than that of his own father, but at the same time carrying on the instrumental model. This lack of rejection, yet ability to extend the meanings of fatherhood was common throughout the sample. The inability to separate instrumental and expressive definitions of fatherhood could be a cause of this extension. Clive illuminates this difficulty:

'Definitions of fatherhood? Well that's quite obvious in a way. I guess all the usual things. You know to provide and teach them how to behave, what's right and wrong. To respect people. That's one part then there's the...well anyone can do that provide side of it but it's also letting them know that there's someone here that they can be comfortable with, when things don't turn out for them that's worth a lot more than that other security. It's knowing that they know they can do that. If you like it's knowing that in some

way they can rely on me for stuff that they can't get from anyone else.' (Clive)

Martin notes the interconnectedness of defining fatherhood: in this extract structural, and instrumental notions bleed into more emotionally expressive understandings:

'Fatherhood, my ideal, goes beyond that practical provision side of things. Yes it's important. I'm not saying that. I'm saying that to be the father I want to be requires me to open up opportunities for my children to show affection. I know what it's like to desperately want that type of contact. That was closed to me I need to know the children have the opportunity to have a close relationship with me. They do but I'm aware that it is they who take the lead. I've enabled them to feel comfortable enough with me to do that. So I'm saying a father should provide for their physical and psychological needs.' (Martin)

Equally, Paul emphasises an expressive definition of what it means to be a father. He directs his children towards viewing the world in a certain way as well as combining a traditional element of the father role:

'to help them understand the world they're coming into, basically. To give an understanding that there's good and bad. That there's tremendous opportunity for love and affection, there's also dangers. And the fact that when they're in a society or a group, let's say group, there are certain things which are appropriate and certain things which are not. Helping them to cope with that.' (Paul)

This account shows that where once it was viewed as a mother's responsibility to elucidate the emotional side of life to children, the men accepted this as a part of their

role too. However this was a very particular aspect of male emotionality and was not understood with reference to a mother's emotional input. How the men achieved this was an important component by which these men gained meaning from fathering. Peter highlights this paradoxical relationship of being both an instrumental and expressive father:

> 'I've said I'll turn my hand to anything. But that's hard when in one moment you're laying down the law and in the next...well it's more tender, fun. But that's it. It's not about one thing or another. It's not that easy. It's all of it.' (Peter)

These definitions can be taken as structural obligations and responsibilities at one level, yet at another level, it can be argued that *through* the practicalities of instrumental provision the emotional aspects of fatherhood were also expressed. When the men discussed their instrumental fathering they presented the instrumental in emotional ways. It is clear that instrumental fathering had a huge emotional resonance for these men. Yet there is a sense that they want to move beyond the level of emotionality contained within the instrumental. Thus to an extent they reject the emotional marginalisation and detachment inherent in the instrumental model, and strive to extend their emotional lives with their children in other ways. The men in the sample did not necessarily *experience* these apparently contradictory models as being contradictory in practice. That is, the particular model of an 'expanded' or 'involved' notion of parenting that the men adopted was one that was consistent with their continuing commitment to instrumental fathering (for example, one way of being more involved was phoning home several times a day from work to talk about the childrens' day). So we might see the continuing gender-divided view of instrumental parenting and the centrality of this model to fathering (and to masculinity) as a continuing basis and limit to what 'involved' fathering meant to the men. The men gained emotional satisfactions from instrumentality, but also defined greater emotional involvement in particular ways (playing with kids, quiet time with kids, pride in their achievements etc.) which could be accommodated alongside

instrumental fathering. It was apparent that their view of 'involved' fathering had to be compatible with a continuing and dominant commitment to 'instrumental' fathering. That is, they defined 'involved' fathering within the prior parameters or constraints of instrumental fathering.

Many respondents reported that through their interaction with their children, in the ways their children relied on them to fulfil certain roles, they gained a sense of being a father both physically and emotionally. Rather than accepting the assumption that parents operate altruistically, the exchange of benefits between father and child needs to be recognised. By exploring fatherhood in terms of the exchange of satisfactions and benefits between parents and children, we can see that the meanings attached to fathering is in part defined by their version of their children.

**Meaning Through Activity**

For the majority of men in the sample, practical activity with their children was an important element of how they attached emotional meanings to fathering. When asked to speak about the activities which brought pleasure and were self-satisfying for the men as fathers, activities were divided into two main groups, physical and emotional.

> 'I do feel very proud of them when they've achieved something they've set their hearts on. Worked hard at. I get a great kick if I've helped them achieve. That's part of being a dad...you know, I feel different at different times. I do stuff with them, swimming, footie and that's good. You know just having that contact.' (Gordon)

Initially the men found it difficult to talk about the more emotional aspects of fathering. One way in to this subject was to talk about physical activities. It is easy to misconstrue this as placing a privilege on the physically active component of what it means to father. This would be false, however, because for these men the physical

*was* emotional. Physical contact, the interaction between father and child, gave a sense of the intimate.

However physical activity, per se, is not always necessary and gaining a sense of what it means to be a father also emerged from quieter moments:

> 'I love just sitting and watching them. Not doing much...but being there. You know I'm there, that's the difference...I'm dad.' (Gordon)

For Paul a key quality of satisfaction that surrounds diverse engagements with his children is clearly the result of physical intimacy and shared activity:

> 'Displays of affection, yes. Just sitting with them. Doing puzzles and going to the football. There is a degree of closeness there. I think...I think the things that really gives me a big kick is being cuddled when I come through the door.' (Paul)

What is common to these two accounts is how public and private activity with children were both seen as intimate. Clive legitimates the way he renegotiated his working life to free up time to operate as a father in a way that was satisfying for him and met his sense of what it means to be a father:

> 'Well it's much better now. I get to do a lot of stuff with them. That's what I...we wanted. You know I can take them to their clubs, friends whatever and we do a fair bit ourselves. Swimming and I'm teaching them to climb. They listen and do as they're told. They know they can rely on me to keep them safe. That's not questioned. I guess that's what it's about...I don't know if they would have had that trust if I was a weekend dad...It's doing

things with them that's what...that's how I know...that's what I wanted to be as a dad.' (Clive)

This recognition that through an intimate interaction with their children a fuller meaning of fatherhood is achieved can be seen in Martin's and Peter's accounts. For Martin physical activity and emotional involvement are intertwined and for Peter an exchange of benefits is noted:

'The benefits I get at that very personal level comes from my involvement, interaction with them. There's an emotional and social richness, which they bring to me. I do believe without the children I might have never been able to express the more...well altruistic, emotional side of my character.' (Martin)

'If I can sit here watching TV and all of a sudden they're on my lap and we're all sitting together and to me that's what it's all about. Obviously they will get to the stage where they're not going to do that. With Gemma we play these games like how to make her laugh. Stand in funny ways and make her laugh. That's one of her favourite things. She loves that sort of thing. I think that's when I feel like yes I'm a father because I feel like I'm close to my children...I think the whole thing just opens your mind up.' (Peter)

For Peter there were clear differences in the way he fathers from how he was fathered. This contrast was contextualised in terms of physical contact:

'My father is quite old fashioned so he's not one to put his arm around you, never like that. So physical contact is the one thing I look back on and think that's a pity. For some people it's natural and for some people...I have no problems. With any of the

children. David, girls, we can push and pull and tumble and fight and touch and arm around. No problem at all.' (Peter)

Interaction through activity tends to extend definitions and meanings of fathering. The men in the sample certainly felt that their fathering was broader than that practised in the past. As we shall see in more detail in chapter five, they saw their own fathering as a more extensive and emotionally engaged set of practices than those they had received as children themselves. In other words, the men viewed instrumental or traditional fathering as deficit in certain important respects, and they wanted to move beyond this in their own practice – which they characterised as 'being different'. It is necessary to consider 'being different' more concretely. This will be undertaken in the next chapter which considers how the experience and perceptions of being parented affects understandings of parenting. For now, however, there is a need to analyse the satisfactions and benefits men derived from their expanded definitions and meanings of fatherhood.

**Satisfactions and benefits**

The respondents stressed how their fathering activities frequently brought pleasure and were self-satisfying. The choice to undertake certain activities is of interest for these can assist the analysis by illustrating how and to what degree these men are committed to their role as 'father'. A consideration of 'satisfaction' is useful to the extent that it places a definition on fathering within the individual. It becomes more than an objective, institutional or cultural phenomena or role as it is taken as an intrinsic aspect of the men's identity. This moves the discussion forward by opening the possibilities of considering fatherhood at a subjective level. Thus the father not the role becomes the object. It has been argued that the traditional representation of father as provider is still pertinent for the cohort. It has consequences for emotionality and further it is argued that the doctrine of self-interest remains intact although there have been shifts brought about through the ways the opportunity and choices of a restructured labour market has been modified and utilised outside the workplace by

these men. Thus there is a need to assess whether definitions of fatherhood from within the familial realm are informing the cultural realm. If so what are the political consequences of an emergent culture of fatherhood? However, before this discussion can take place there is a need to examine the fathers' accounts from which these questions derive. Therefore an initial consideration of those activities cited by the respondents as bringing a sense of pleasure and self-satisfaction shall ensue.

> 'I think one of the greatest pleasures I get is being involved. My father did very little with me and I really didn't enjoy living at home from about twelve...until I left at twenty. I don't want my kids to be unhappy like that. So yeah I spend time. Not always doing things...but when I have them on my own, when I'm in charge then that's the level of involvement I enjoy most.' (James)

At one level James's activity can be seen as pleasurable and of benefit to his children, yet at another level total engagement and involvement with his children brings a measure of satisfaction that is his alone. This type of satisfaction is tied to the increase in reflexivity and individualisation that Giddens (1992) and Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1995) speak of.

This differentiation of the quality of satisfaction that surrounds diverse engagements with children was not unusual. There was a divide between a satisfaction that incorporated all those involved in an activity and a silent more personal satisfaction. Equally Martin's account illustrates how some men gain satisfaction from the reaction of others:

> 'I get a great deal of pleasure when the children show me things that display a new-found knowledge. Their eagerness and enthusiasm is at times highly entertaining but it shows they have an ability to be engaged, engrossed. This has been seen in school.

That's pleasurable. When others see in your children the positive traits you see.' (Martin)

As noted the responsibilities and obligations these men take on as fathers are displayed by their children in social settings. The pleasure some men receive from the reaction of others appears to validate how they parent:

'To be told they're well behaved children is pleasing. I'm proud of the way they can hold their own when we're out.' (John)

'At home yeah they fight like hell sometimes but when we go out you know for a meal whatever...to be told we've got good kids is...well we've done ok. They're sociable.' (Marvin)

When asked further about the pleasures of fathering it became clear that many of the respondents did not perceive fathering as centring purely in the child. They enunciated the importance they attached to ensuring they brought up healthy children and equally they enunciated the need to be involved in the activities that brought both themselves and their children pleasure; however, there were personal benefits to fathering:

'What benefits have they brought me? What you want me to list everything like pride and joy?' (Tom)

*Anything like that.*

'Well it's everything like that. You name an emotion a child doesn't provoke in you when they're your own. I can't say...I haven't got any stepchildren or foster children, so you know, they are *my* children. So they give me the whole gamut of emotions.' (Tom)

'It's seeing them enjoy themselves. You know it's the knowing that I'm in some way responsible for that. Knowing them...nobody else...well not a man could really know them like me. It's that unconditional thing. Yes I expect things from them, you know, to behave, do their best but they give me more than that.'
(Christopher)

These accounts infer an exchange of benefits between father and child. The child benefits from the father's involvement and interaction and likewise the father benefits at a subjective and emotional level from these. Thus it is suggested that through the father's ability to choose to be actively involved with their children diverse satisfactions and personal benefits are gained. It is suggested that these personal benefits aid an attachment with and commitment to fathering.

Traditional and liberal views and practice of fathering have enlarged the men's experience and meaning of fatherhood. Although the men in this investigation worked, the majority of them saw employment as only one aspect of fatherhood. However, they did not see employment and financial provision as distinct from fathering, indeed they had difficulty in distinguishing the two. The respondents in this study show that there are contradictions within the culture of fatherhood. Men's accounts of the meanings of fatherhood, of appropriate or good fathering, contain ambiguous and contradictory elements.

This view is at odds with most research on fatherhood, which emphasises a simple shift in fatherhood from traditional to more progressive models. Here, fathers with liberal views can, if they have sufficient structural opportunities, enact a more progressive and non-traditional version of fathering. The difficulty in such accounts is to explain why men with liberal views of fathering are not progressive in their fathering practice. Indeed, this enigma is the focus of much of the literature on fathering which explicitly explores why there has not been more of a change in fathering practice, given the apparently liberal views that men hold.

Cohen's account of the links between opportunity and choice, sets up a very particular model of fatherhood in which a clear transition must be achieved before the practice and meanings of liberal or non-traditional fathering can coincide. The arrows in Model 2, indicate these possible transitions. In this model, for views and practices to coincide, new structural opportunities must open up for men with liberal views, and/or men with traditional views must experience a change of views and circumstances. To explain the lack of 'new man' fathering, it must either be because limited opportunities restrict liberal men, or else because men retain traditional fathering beliefs.

The data presented here adds a complexity to the argument concerning transitions that has not been considered in previous literature and research. The men's beliefs about fathering were diverse and contained apparently contradictory accounts. Even amongst the most 'liberal' men who had seized work opportunities to practice a more expanded notion of fatherhood, there was still a commitment to older, more traditional instrumental versions of fatherhood. The 'culture' of fathering contained a strong commitment to instrumental as well as involved fathering. So the culture of fathering may not be as far removed from the conduct of fathering as some studies suggest. In other words there cannot be any simple transition from old to new fatherhood, and may account for the missing 'new men' in most accounts of contemporary fatherhood. More work on the diverse meanings and perceptions that men attach to fatherhood is needed.

Model 2

**Opportunity** **Role Choice**

| | **Broad Fathering Role** | **Narrow Fathering Role** |
|---|---|---|
| **High** | **High Opportunity 'new man'** **A** | **High Opportunity 'chooses not to be new man'** **C** |
| **Low** | **Low Opportunity 'frustrated new man'** **B** | **Low Opportunity 'traditional/instrumental man'** **D** |

Hochschild, for example, uses the concept of 'strain' to illustrate the disjuncture between women's changing position and a lack of change in men (what she calls the 'stalled revolution'). Her findings point to 3 types of marital roles: traditional, transitional and egalitarian. Hochschild sets out to investigate why there is a 'lag' between women's increased economic activity and cultural scripts concerning marriage and work. Hochschild maintains this 'lag' is present in both the public and private spheres in varying degrees. This she terms the 'stalled revolution'. She argues that men have changed very little about their contribution as husbands and fathers in the home. She thus divides marital roles into 3 types depending on the amount of change: 'egalitarian' – those wanting to share; 'transitional' - those who acquiesce; 'traditional' – those who resist.

In Hochschild's study only 30% of those who were 'egalitarian' in their attitudes had in fact also changed their practice. Like Cohen, Hochschild is presenting cultural scripts of fathering as a continuum, ranging from traditional to egalitarian. She is attempting to explain an apparent paradox - why is it that men who espouse apparently liberal, egalitarian views of being a husband/father have in fact changed their behaviour so little? She therefore attempts to look at the degree of strain that can spring up in the gap between egalitarian views and inegalitarian practice.

LaRossa has a very similar model of disjuncture between cultural models of fathering (liberal or egalitarian) and the conduct or practice of fathering (inegalitarian or traditional). He argues the culture but not the conduct of fatherhood has changed (that is, that there is an asynchratic relationship between the culture and conduct of fatherhood). In this account, whilst men may have changed their views about appropriate fathering and adopt a more liberal, egalitarian cultural attitude, their practice is at odds with this and remains gender-divided and traditional. Like other research ( Henwood et al 1987; Cockburn 1991; Presser, 1994; Amanto and Booth 1995) LaRossa and Hochschild focus on the practical aspects of domestic life and the intrusion of outside employment when assessing men as fathers. It is the contradiction *between* beliefs and practices, culture and conduct, which is the key focus of these studies. Alternatively, this study focuses on the diverse meanings within *accounts* of fatherhood, and the contradictions, ambiguities and ambivalence which men express when they talk about what is important in their fathering. If conduct lags behind culture, if practice contradicts beliefs, it may be because the beliefs and culture of fatherhood are not themselves unambiguous or straightforward.

Throughout the interviews in this study it was never suggested by the fathers that they felt pressurised into certain activities as a response to their partners' other commitments. Indeed they held quite firm beliefs about what constituted 'good' fatherhood and clearly saw involved, emotional fathering as a necessary component. Although this project differs in its focus it is recognised that women's employment and the general restructuring of employment have an effect on family life and the roles each member undertakes. 'Tension' suggests a degree of strain even resistance to overt representations of what it means to be a 'good father.' The provider role appears not to have fully satisfied many of the men's own understanding of what it means to be a father. This finding is borne out by other research in this area (Warin et al,1999; de Kanter1987; Edley and Wetherell, 1999). However that instrumental provision was still crucially important and an emotionally significant aspect to fathering has been demonstrated through the men's accounts.

'Wanting more' is not about contemporary fatherhood moving from one model of fatherhood to another, from broad to narrow, it is not about a transition. Rather, contemporary fatherhood for the men in this project was precisely the 'wanting more' model. Thus contemporary fatherhood for these men is characterised by instrumental and involved emotional fatherhood at the same time. In other words contradictory views of fatherhood are held in a unified model of 'wanting more'. This model can clearly be seen operating through the respondents' accounts. In order to sustain effective instrumental fathering (and all the men in the sample saw this as an aspect of fathering that had to be retained), the men had to balance their need for greater emotional involvement. This is because the men saw instrumental fathering in clearly gender-divided ways. To be an instrumental father was to be a particular type of male worker and provider, in ways which set limits on emotional and practical care. Some of the men had been able to re-order their employment to free up more time with their children (opportunity and choice for 'broad' fathering, in Cohen's terms, coinciding), but even for these men the obligations of instrumental fathering remained paramount.

So rather than adopting Cohen's approach, which sees 'narrow' fatherhood as something that can sit neatly within an expanded 'broad' model, it is necessary to consider 'instrumental' fatherhood as a discontinuous model that pulls against 'involved' fatherhood. The men in the sample clearly endorsed *both* 'instrumental' *and* 'involved' scripts of fathering, so there could be no easy transition of increasing involvement up the scale from narrow to broad fathering. Instead, what we can see are various attempts to reconcile potentially contradictory models of fathering within their own understandings and practice.

Equally of interest is that these men reported little tension between balancing work and family life. This produces a paradoxical situation where the 'culture of fatherhood' is concerned. It would appear that the traditional cultural model of fatherhood is working alongside an emergent model. Emergent in the sense that it is not a clear-cut 'new' cultural form but a synthesised form. The old and the new: resistance to and compliance with the traditional model going hand in hand. It would appear they are at

times juxtaposed, yet at other times fused. Thus one possible effect of this position is less resistance to and more compliance with the tradition model produces less tension over issues of balance. This could be a consequence of the traditional cultural model focus on 'role' whereas the emergent models focus is that of 'meaning'. It is suggested here that the majority of respondents in this investigation are resisting, to a degree, the dominant 'traditional' cultural model of fatherhood.

The respondents' accounts raise many interesting issues. Among them are the type of satisfaction that certain roles can bring, the balance between work and home life, the restructuring of the working week and the opportunities that some paid work can bring. Analysing 'satisfaction' and 'benefit' moves the discussion forward by illuminating a subjective element to fathering. Past research, as noted, has concentrated, in the main, on the man's practical domestic and economic responsibilities. This thesis differs in the fact that it shifts the focus from 'role' to 'meaning'. Initially engaging with the role of father has been useful to the extent that it has necessitated a consideration of economic activity and the structural and cultural realms. Equally it has been suggested that these have contributed to the way the men in this research father. Economic security, flexible working, 'father' as provider and the notion of self-interest have all aided the men's own definition of what makes a father. Through the decisions and choices the men have made, they have secured a more self-satisfying and personal attachment to that part of them which is the father. In the majority of cases this attachment takes precedence over other attachments.

An alternative view of contemporary fatherhood is offered here. This view of fatherhood as the reconciliation of contradictory models of fatherhood may help to resolve some of the paradoxes identified in the debate about 'new men'. It suggests that there will be no easy transition from traditional to broad fathering, or from 'old man' to 'new man', since those men who explicitly commit to a more involved and emotional model of fathering still retain important elements of 'traditional' or instrumental fathering alongside that model. It may also help to explain the apparently illiberal activities of men who identify as 'new men' but whose measured

practice (as husbands and fathers) seems more traditional. This apparent disjuncture (between ideas/beliefs and practices) may in fact reflect the continuing importance of instrumental ideas of fatherhood which exist alongside ideas of 'involved' fatherhood. That is, it may be that cultural scripts of fatherhood themselves contain multiple, ambiguous and contradictory elements.

# CHAPTER FOUR

# NARRATIVES OF TRANSITION: CHILDHOOD MEMORY AND EXPERIENCE

## Introduction

'Life is lived forward but it is understood backwards.'

(Kierkegaard)

This chapter explores how *recollections* of being fathered are important for the construction of fatherhood. Of course, this is not to argue that the childhood memory and experience of being parented is determinant of future parenting practice. Parenting and fatherhood cannot be treated as unchanging roles and identities, inherited from the past, but rather as emergent. The impact of childhood experiences on current parenting is often oppositional, always relational and necessarily subjective. This chapter continues to focus on the *meanings* that the men attach to fatherhood, paying particular attention to the men's narratives of their own childhood. *Perceptions* of change are shown to be important in how the men view their own practice. Through the narratives that the men present of their childhoods, we will see how men construct and reconstruct the fathering they received and relate it to the fathering they give.

The decision to consider memory and experience is not an arbitrary one. Childhood memory and experience are taken as the baseline from which a wider analysis of contemporary fatherhood and male emotional expressivity can be undertaken. The influence of the memory and experience of childhood are gauged through the narratives the men supply. What the men's narratives have in common is a strongly expressed sense of difference: a difference between their own fathering and the

fathering they received themselves as children. In this chapter it will be argued that the men present a 'narrative of transition' in which they present their own fathering as a move towards a more expanded, emotionally engaged form of parenting compared to the instrumental and deficit parenting of their fathers. The men are thus able to construct their own fathering as emotionally engaged and expressive on the basis of the comparisons they make to what they perceive as the emotionally deficient fathering they received as children. In Chapter Three it was argued that the men in the sample aspired to good fathering in terms of 'wanting more' than the instrumental model of fathering alone could provide. This 'wanting more', it was argued, was defined in terms of the emotional connection that men wished to have with their children. As we shall see in this chapter, the importance of this emotional connection was partly constructed from the men's sense of emotional detachment from their own fathers.

Psychological research has argued that the experience of early childhood is a strong influence on later parenting capacity (Glueck & Glueck, 1962; Belsky et al, 1981, 1984, 1991; Sagi, 1982). Snarey (1993: 285-301) for example, poses the question, 'Does the fathering that men received during their own boyhood years predict their subsequent parental generativity as adults?' Snarey concludes that the characteristics of future fathering are predicated by background characteristics, and that men tended to imitate the positive and redress the negative aspects of their own fathering. Hoschschild's (1990) concepts of 'upbringing stories' and 'gender strategies' also makes this point. Hochschild argues that ideas of manhood are forged in childhood and become emotionally embedded: arguing that current practice emerges as: 'a man draws on beliefs about manhood and womanhood, beliefs that are forged in early childhood and thus anchored to deep emotions' (1990:15). These beliefs bring tensions between what a man really feels and what he should feel. These feelings are grounded in gender ideology and informed by cultural scripts that advance appropriate gender behaviour. Thus gender strategies are employed to overcome these tensions and in this sense ideology and practice are interconnected and cultural scripts pattern responsibilities for certain activities. Therefore 'A gender strategy is a plan of

action through which a person tries to solve a problem at hand, given the cultural notions of gender at play' (1990: 15).

It will be argued in this chapter that the men in the sample use 'upbringing stories' to place their own fathering. Making comparisons to their fathers enables the men to have a sense of their own fathering as being more expansive and emotionally engaged. These can be seen as narratives of transition – in which the men express their feeling that they do and feel more with their children than their fathers did with them. Such narratives were used by the men to make emotional sense of their childhood memory and experience, but can also be seen as ways of expressing their aspirations and beliefs about 'good' fathering in the present day. In particular the men constantly compared their childhood recollections about a mother's and father's place in the home to their own emotional and practical division of labour in the family. The 'gender strategies' employed by the men's parents are noted in this chapter, while in the next chapter 'gender strategies' as utilised in the men's intimate relationships are once again seen as a means to make emotional sense of their fathering practice.

The men in the sample presented 'narratives of transition' when discussing fathering and being fathered. The stories they told were of detached fathering and of insufficient involvement of their fathers when they were children. By contrast, the men presented strongly emotional narrative accounts of themselves as fathers, stressing a move towards more emotional fathering, with this move perceived as being very different from the fathering they received. Thus the men aspired to become more involved and emotive as fathers themselves. In the previous chapter this was described as a 'wanting more' model of fatherhood. As we shall see, the men had a clear understanding that their version of fatherhood was constructed as 'being different' from their fathers. However, it will be argued that the men were also aware of contradictions in their narrative accounts, and used these contradictions in a critical fashion to reconstruct how they were fathered and to reflect on their own fathering practice.

It should be stressed that this chapter presents a *narrative* of transition rather than presenting a straightforward account of actual inter-generational change. This argument is at some distance from, for example, Cohen's (1987) model of a structural shift from 'narrow' to 'broad' fatherhood. Previously it has been argued that empirical research provides comparatively little evidence of shifts in fathering practice despite an apparently important shift in the meanings of fatherhood. Much research, therefore, has been concerned with the gap between liberal ideas of fathering and traditional practice. In Chapter Three it was argued that this apparent gap between ideas and practice might be explained by diversity and ambiguity in the meanings of fatherhood, with most men in the sample endorsing both 'instrumental' and 'involved' models of fatherhood simultaneously. In this chapter it will be argued that the men *felt* very strongly that their fathering practice was different from that of their fathers, and spoke of their greater emotional and practical involvement in the lives of their children.

To what extent the men's fathering practice is in fact different from that of their own fathers is difficult to say. As mentioned, most quantitative research on men's practical engagement in child-rearing and domestic tasks reports comparatively little change over time. This study looks at the meanings rather than the practice of fatherhood. It considers men's perceptions of change. Thus it is difficult to argue that an actual generational shift in the meanings men attach to fathering has occurred. What we have access to are the men's accounts and *feelings* about the way they were fathered and how they father themselves. The men *wanted*, *believed* and *hoped* that their children experienced being fathered differently than them. However it is important to note that neither the men's fathers nor their children were interviewed. The research of Warin et al (1999) has suggested that each generation of fathers feels that they are parenting differently from the generation before, with little evidence that this does indeed get translated into a different experience by the next generation. In other words, perceptions of change run throughout generations without necessarily being reflected in practice or offering a different experiences of being fathered to children. The men in this project express the same hopes, but we cannot directly address

whether their children's experience of being fathered is in fact different.

The children's own 'upbringing stories' have not been considered and we cannot explore whether this third generation would echo their father's accounts of emotionally engaged parenting. Recent work (for example Frosh et al, 2001) that engages with teenagers' views and experience of parenting, suggests that young people today express similar dissatisfactions with their parenting to earlier generations. Such research suggests that the instrumental role of fathering remains a defining element in children's understanding of fatherhood. In other words the current generation of children might still perceive the role of provider, as in part, defining their sense of their own fathering. Equally there is no account of how the men's *fathers* felt about their practice. We cannot determine what narratives and meanings the grandparents would make of their own fathering, whether they aspired to a more emotionally involved fathering, or felt any sense of emotional detachment in their own practice. We are left only with the son's experience and memories of their fathers practice and not their fathers' intentions.

However, it is important to stress that the *accuracy* of the men's recall of their past, or of their current self-understandings of their practice, are less important than the significance of these narrative self-understandings in shaping how the men order their lives, and aspire to be different. Freeman argues that life history knowledge 'should never - indeed can never - be judged according to its "correspondence" with what was; as a matter of course, it is a going-beyond what was, an attempt to situate the experiences of the past in a comprehensive interpretive context, such that their interrelationship is made evident (1993: 30). Freeman sees the process of autobiographical reflection as a fundamentally metaphorical one, in which 'a new relationship is being created between the past and the present, a new poetic configuration, designed to give greater form to one's previous - and present experience. The text of the self is thus being rewritten' (1993: 30). For the men in the sample, the narrative of transition served to define aspirations of fathering – to be different from their own fathers – and helped to consolidate their feelings of closer

emotional contact with their children.

Particular attention will be paid, in this chapter, to memories of the gender division of labour. Through the men's accounts of this division in the past we can also identify their ideas of appropriate behaviour today. However, it is argued here that primary, initial memory is impossible to locate. Memory is layered and with each layer a reformulation of the initial memory-producing event is made. Through what might be considered mundane action, a dynamic process emerges. Memory is experienced and reconstructed with reference to the structural and cultural realms. In other words a symbiotic relationship between childhood, structure, and fathering ensue. Locating the memories of being fathered is key. By exploring an individual's personal narratives, their present day understanding of parenting can be more fully established. Narratives of transition are constructed around an individual's biography of how they were fathered and how they father.

**Childhood**

It is essential to give some time to consider the concept of childhood and how it has altered, even within the lifetime of the fathers in this study. Hendrick argues that childhood 'as distinct from biological immaturity, is neither a natural or universal feature of human groups but appears as a specific structural and cultural component of many societies' (1997:9). Thus childhood can be considered as a social construct. The majority of the men in this project were young children in the early 1960s. Which childrearing ideas were prevalent when the respondents were children and how do ideas differ now? As we shall see, the men in the sample report being raised in families characterised by a strong gender division of labour, in which intense parent-child emotional bonds were formed, but were mainly the province of mothers. This is a very typical portrayal of the family structure of the period.

It is generally argued that new, more intensive parent-child relations developed in the late nineteenth century with the extension of the role of 'mothering'. Rich (1995: 44)

notes that 'the idea of full-time, exclusive motherhood takes root, and the 'home' becomes a religious obsession'. Thus in the twentieth century it is the 'mother' who emerges as the primary and emotional care-giver (Ryan, 1981). These shifts in the aspirations and attitudes of parenthood were associated with substantial changes in technology and the decline in family size (Gillis, 1992) together with the rise of romantic love (Giddens, 1992). Thus, as the mother/child relationship solidified and childrearing overwhelmingly became feminised.

The interwar years saw the family and home environment as an important site for child development and, as stated earlier, the theory of 'maternal deprivation' was extremely influential by the mid twentieth century, not least as it encouraged the state to view the family as offering the best opportunities to children. By the 1950s ideas of 'family' and 'child' reflected this dominant discourse:

> 'Within the family...with its powerful natural ties of affection, is found most abundantly and most exclusively the power to teach the child behaviour, self discipline, values and the code of society. The whole art of living is interpreted and handed on to the child by his parent in the way most acceptable to him. And family life to be understood must be experienced...' (Heywood, 1970:139)

This view of the child at this time was that of a dependent individual in need of a close parental relationship, one aware of the child's emotional needs. DeMause (1982:57) refers to the era up to the mid-twentieth century as the 'socialization mode' in the periodization of parent-child relations. Children became precious, they were to be actively treasured and nurtured for longer than past generations of children. However, this nurturing and care was still located and bounded by the concept of 'natural mothering' that included an intense emotional relationship between mother and child (Oakley, 1974; Jamieson, 1987; Glenn et al, 1994).

This is the form of parenting the men in this study felt they had received. Parent-child

relationships were constructed within and bounded by an instrumentality and emotionality that was highly gendered and in consequence a division of labour in childrearing practices operated. 'Upbringing stories' are remembered and talked about in this context. The men all view their fathers as operating a particular model of instrumental fatherhood, which they regard as being emotionally deficient. They see their own fathering as a development on from this model of fathering to a more emotionally engaged form. Can it be assumed that different upbringing stories are being produced by the men's children in line with these perceived changes and other shifts in parent-child relationships? It is clear that shifts in childhood and parent-child relations are continuing and go hand in hand with the rise of the child-centred family. The child-centred family is characterised, on the one hand, by 'childhood' being a worthwhile and valued experience in itself and, on the other hand, for parents, the experience of being involved with children and general home life bringing its own satisfactions (Harris, 1977; Allan, 1985). Here intense relationships with children are seen as being fulfilling and self-defining, not only for the child, but also for the parent. The notion of a relationship of 'dependency' between children and their parents is no longer assumed as independence is a 'mark of personhood' (Jenks, 1996:110) and once again alters the value placed on childhood. The value placed on parent-child relations at the end of the twentieth century is an egalitarian value. The men in this project, through their reflexive capacity, when presenting their narratives of transition do not necessarily talk of a transition from traditional to egalitarian practical parenting either between their partners or their children. Instead they move from the experiential position of 'mother' as the emotional parent to emotionality being a key element for them as fathers. Here, perhaps, we can see a 'transformation of intimacy' (Giddens, 1992), as the men view their emotional connection to their children as being an central element defining themselves as fathers and men.

It will be seen through the father's statements, that they saw 'traditional' notions of childrearing practices as undergoing another transformation. This transformation can be located in notions of 'being different' and can be seen in the concerns the fathers had about their own experience of being fathered. Their notion of appropriate

'fathering' today had *partly* been constructed by their understanding of their experience of being fathered in the past. In other words in experiencing what they perceived to be the deficient aspects of 'instrumental' fathering.

**Memory and Experience**

Of course the 'memory' of past experience is by no means a straightforward construct. What is this abstract landscape called childhood memory? What definition could succinctly encompass its complexities? Childhood memory, for the purposes here, is defined as a trace of a past event or particularity that an individual recalls, usually in association with an external stimulus with the initial, raw memory revaluated with each recollection and new experiential event. But how is experience reflected through memory to become a coherent, individual self-narrative? And how does this resonate on every day activity? As humans we build self-narratives that are temporal and akin to stories (Ricoeur, 1984:3). An individual's experience is meaningless unless it is assessed with reference to other and other's experience. In this way meanings become attached and re-attached. To do this requires a critical reflection on the particular event. The men critically accounted for the fathering they received through discourse, 'a narrative mode of thought,' (McAdams, 1993: 30). It was this story telling capacity, structured by time that was utilised during this project. The men's narratives of being fathered were used to explore their understandings of their own fathering practice and from these a 'narrative of transition' can be discerned.

Scott (1992) rejects the contention that individuals 'merely' experience. She maintains that experiences are not only located in the subjective, played out in the emotional and personal spheres. She places the individual in a social and historical arena, whereby they become subjects who are constituted through experience. As she states, 'we know that difference exists, but we don't understand it as constituted relationally. For that we need to attend to the historical processes that, through discourse, position subjects and produce their experiences' (1992:25).

Childhood memory and experience are the baseline from which analysis into contemporary fatherhood starts. Taking a broad sociological perspective, arguments can be offered concerning the connection of memory in association with the structural and cultural realms, and suggest that memory can indirectly be concomitant with active choice concerning present-day practice. It will be argued that the memory of childhood has partially influenced the choices men have made about their present fathering practice. The respondents' accounts of the gender division of labour (practically and emotionally) at home when young, their parent's interaction with each other, and memories and understandings of the wider sexual division of labour and being fathered all had an impact on childhood and family life for the men in this study. Throughout their childhood these men gained a clear sense of the cultural scripts associated with parenting. Equally it can be suggested that they formulated a template of what they wanted from their fathers and a template of what they wanted as fathers. The fathers' accounts will demonstrate how these elements are discursively reconstructed and re-imagined.

**Parental Interaction**

The narratives in this section were collected at the time of the 'father only' interviews (appendix iv). This was the first time that questions were asked about the men's own childhoods and were focused around issues of early family life. The men were asked to reflect on where they were located with reference to siblings and their memories of their parents' roles and partnership interaction. Their own understandings of being fathered were also discussed. These considerations assisted with the exploration into the three key areas of this thesis namely fatherhood, masculinity and emotion. When asked about the roles of parents this was interpreted by the majority of respondents to equate with, not only the distribution of practical tasks, but also the distribution of emotional labour.

It needs to be noted that the majority of the men in this study grew up in stable families unbroken by death, divorce or separation. 32 of the 43 men in the sample

lived with both of their biological parents for the whole of their childhoods. Of the remainder, 6 of the 43 respondents had fathers that died when they were young, all before the age of 12. Consequently, their memories of their fathers are vague. 5 of the 43 had divorced parents, of which 3 had remarried. Of these 1 had a stepmother, the remainder stepfathers. 8 lived most of their childhoods with their mother only. These are a distinct group. Yet even though this group had little or no memory of being fathered, their belief that there is an 'ideal' father, and their construction of that fatherhood was very similar to that of the other men in the sample. These notions were generally gained through uncles and adult family friends as well as through their own friendship networks. What was striking was that, when reflecting on their childhoods, a 'narrative of transition' emerged from almost all of the sample. Almost all of the men in the study felt that their own fathering was different from the fathering that had prevailed when they were young. The respondents in this chapter have been chosen for the commonalities in the narratives they present. Although their family backgrounds differ in some respects (as for example, Martin lived with his father and stepmother, and Matthew had parents who had little in common with each other) they nevertheless present strikingly similar narratives of childhood, narratives that are shared with most of the men in the sample.

By concentrating, in this section, on childhood it is possible to gain a clearer picture of their early years and how the men's memories of interactions have been reinterpreted in the light of new experience. Their interpretation highlights a clear division of economic and emotional labour. Parental interaction was an area that the respondents deemed pertinent to their childhoods and this is the first area to be considered.

When asked about parental interaction, the majority of respondents initially interpreted the question to equate with disputes and tensions and the emotional context of family life. Within this context male and female roles were well demarcated. Ideas of distinct 'maleness' and 'femaleness', or in other words gender identity, were clearly understood. Fathers worked, mothers cared. Fathers disciplined

and mothers mediated. Mothers thus came across as the primary expressive parent.

Peter's narrative of family life, parental interaction and roles, for example, highlights how arguments were centred round issues of discipline and how his mother mediated. Many of the men reported discord, at times, between their parents; however, overall, parental relationships appear to have operated at an affectionate as well as functional level. The following responses illustrate this commonality. When asked how his parents 'got on', Peter highlights how his mother's role of mediator was a source of tension:

> 'I remember them having arguments, my father banishing us to our bedrooms and my mum trying to fight our corner. Not on every occasion. I think she felt he was too hard on us. Once...(pause)... he walked out of the house...but generally they were fine. I'm not sure what that was about. They sorted out all of their problems, a long time ago now, which was great. I mean they had, still have their moments but generally they get on fine. They can be quite affectionate, more so now I think then when we were kids.'(Peter)

This type of account is common. Although tension and disharmony were noted, their standing out as clear memories give them the quality of being an aberration. They do not appear to be the norm. So, whereas discord obviously occurred between parents, it was one form of interaction and not the most common. The following extracts illustrates this:

> 'The only memory I have...(pause)...Very odd (laughs). It was very odd. I remember when I got older, I think I must have been ten, eleven, I remember moving. I just remember him (father) not liking the same things as mum. He used to like opera, like it or not I don't knock it. You know my mum used to like Andy Williams, that sort of thing. He used to go out on his own, he used to go to

bridge evenings and she used to go out and get pissed in restaurants. That's how different they were. But yeah, I remember going out for days, they were civil enough, they were nice enough, they used to hold hands, you know.' (Matthew)

Asked to clarify how his parents operated at home, Matthew contextualized their behaviour more concretely:

'When they weren't shouting?'

*Is that your overriding memory of them together?*

'No. Not really. There was a, a, oh tenderness. Peck on the cheek that type of thing. My mother knew what my dad liked. How he liked things done. Sometimes it pissed her off, but normally she did things for him.' (Matthew)

Maintaining an intimate relationship requires an emotional input and emotional care has fallen disproportionately to women (Woods, 1996). The men had a knowledge of this emotional maintenance that came through observing the interaction between parents, and the types of interaction parents had with their children. With a child's and later adult's experience, expectations have been questioned. Through this questioning a narrative of transition can be discerned.

*Do you remember how your father and stepmother interacted with each other?*

'They were openly affectionate, as opposed to my mother and father who were...(pause)...well I was too young to tell, but I know they used to row a lot. I used to hear them rowing and I think my dad used to drink a lot, but he was very, very affectionate with

my stepmother. I think there's two reasons for that mind you. When my mother left him that was the ultimate snub. Then finding a woman who would fulfil the role my mother refused to fulfil, servile... I'm not saying that he was consciously chauvinistic, but he was. Back to that upbringing.' (Martin)

'They got on ok. They had their moments, but nothing over the top. I think it was all a bit different then. You know marriage. Now we talk about who's going to do what, when. As I said dad worked and mum stayed at home so the arguments we (partner) have over who's doing what just didn't seem to happen. Guess they were happy with that they seemed to be. I've never asked them.'(Simon)

The most unusual response to questions of parental interaction came from Paul. Tensions between his parents were not noted. However, the knowledge that his parents loved each other is associated with his ability to express emotions:

'Well they did and still do love each other a great deal.'(Paul)

*And that was obvious to you?*
'Yes. Yes. They never showed any inappropriate behaviour when we were around, but we grew up knowing how to give cuddles, express how we felt. Rather than keep it bottled inside. My brother's very much emotions on the surface. We learnt how to give and take affection, which is good. I wouldn't have naturally learnt that, I don't think.'(Paul)

Legitimating expressive behaviour as learnt behaviour is problematic when considering masculinity and fathering. If women, as can be inferred from these replies, are the purveyors of the expressive, then how did the respondents' fathers express their emotions to their children?

It can be suggested that, for the respondents in this section, family life was fairly stable. The men offered fairly simple and straightforward accounts of a childhood lived with biological or stepparents, in an atmosphere free from overt abuse, with male and female roles in the home following the 'traditional' instrumental and expressive model. However, when questions were asked about positive and negative memories of being fathered, the men offered more complex accounts. The memories and experiences of childhood are shown to have been adapted with subsequent knowledge of not only family life, but a growing awareness of structural constraints. These constraints are not viewed as monolithic, this is apparent when questions of opportunities and choice to parent were considered but that is for the next chapter.

**Memories of Family Life: Organisation.**

> 'My mum was the stereotypical mum and my dad was the stereotypical dad.' (Peter)

Peter's statement at face value implies a common shared knowledge and meaning of parental roles, referring to an explicit structural division of spheres. Also he refers to an implicit gendering of activity, bounded by economic provision. The fathers of the respondents were the main economic providers in the household, although most of the mothers did take part-time paid employment. It is from this standpoint that parents' other roles within the family are assessed by the respondents. The economic role of parents was taken as a given; it was only when other activities were tied to mother and father that connections can start to be formed between memory, experience and the gendering of activity.

> 'My father was definitely the breadwinner. My mum did work, um, part time, but they (parents) had their definite defined roles. My dad was the one who came and instilled the discipline. Strange enough ...(pause)...I would do what my father said, from an early age, which is one of the problems we have with Joanne and Simon

(children). Funny, um, I think I was more scared of my mother, but I think that's because she blew up so, so, rarely. You know, she was the one that usually made things better. Mediated.' (Peter)

This could illustrate the complementarity of partnership roles. Equally it can be suggested that the gendered nature/nurture divisions were being recognised and understood by the child. But Matthew is also a good general example of how memory is flawed and further experience is necessary to extend understanding and create a more coherent knowledge:

'I was a kid at the time that dads worked and mums stayed at home. Although saying that my mum did work. She worked it so that all the family stuff could be taken care of.'(Matthew)

Snarey's (1993:6) work shows that the accounts of the men in the sample are typical, in many ways, of family life in the 1950s and 1960s. Although Snarey's respondents had more diverse economic backgrounds than the men in this sample, they nevertheless tell similar stories. Snarey charts the manner in which men's participation in childcare and domesticity, in general, were tied to the expectations and assumptions the wider society held. He notes that 'men's participation in childcare was circumscribed by the expectations of the larger society' (1993: 6) An example of societal expectations are those of employers. Here the expectation was that men would not take time off for childcare until and unless it was convenient for the employer. This type of expectation highlights the separatedness of the public and private spheres at that time, and the expectations attached to gender behaviour. The respondents in this study, as children, clearly understood these expectations and assumptions as the previous reply highlights. When asked what was meant by 'family stuff', Matthew continued:

'Well, you know, we were always clean and fed. You know it's odd. I don't remember her (mother) not being there. Not being at

> home. I know she wasn't, you know when she was working. I just don't remember it that way. My dad was the stranger. Not mum. But I think that's because he never really took time to get involved. Stayed on the sidelines. He'd do stuff for us (two younger sisters), you know fix our bikes and things, but it, it always came over more as a duty then because he loved us. Odd. Thinking back I can understand all that better now.' (Matthew)

This extract clearly highlights the normative model of 'family' that was operating at the time these respondents were young. Male and female roles were differentiated and a father's lack of emotional expression was felt. Further, a connection between an understanding of their parents' roles with reference to their parents' upbringing and social constraints suggests an ambivalent relationship between fathers and sons.

Martin outlined how his father had been brought up in a fairly strict Victorian/Edwardian household. This not only impacted on the way Martin was fathered it also affected the spousal roles played out in the home:

> 'Defined roles? Yes, yes very much. My stepmother stayed at home and became a homemaker, although she was never allowed to spend any money (laughter). My father was in complete control. Silent unless and until he found something, oh small, to shout at. So, very traditional. You know, - don't answer back - because I say so – know your place. You must get the picture? We were not encouraged to question. My stepmother mothered my father, but that's what he sought. That's what my mother could not tolerate. (Martin)

Although for many of the men there was a clear division between the physical and the emotional labour in their families, for some these divisions were not so apparent. When asked whether his parents had particular roles and responsibilities towards him

and his brother Paul replied:

> 'Well...(pause)...To a large extent they share things a great deal. I mean my mother worked. I don't remember a time when she didn't. I think partly she enjoyed the experience and I think partly we needed the money...She tended to do work that required different timings. My father (worked) standard hours, but she did things like telephony, reception, which isn't standard. So my father would make the evening meals. He could look after himself...When you're a child you don't actually see very much. You know as a parent how much your parents must have been doing, but you never noticed it. Were never grateful.'(Paul)

This connection and reinterpretation of experience is elaborated in the following extract. Simon was asked whether his parents undertook clear roles and responsibilities for him:

> 'Well yes, but nothing out of the ordinary. My father worked, worked what seemed very long hours. I didn't get to see him much. Well, that's not strictly true. You know it just seemed that way. Sundays were special. You forget, being a child you're just not round at the times that the adults are. You realise all that when you have your own (children).' (Simon)
>
> *What about your mum?*
>
> 'Ah well, I was the apple of her eye. (only child). She did everything really. You know, all the day-to-day things, but she was there. Discipline..(pause)...Major discipline was left to my father. He had the final say. That's the way I remember it. But I don't think, no, I know it's not strictly true. Well it is and isn't. You

know, you get to know differently. Things change, if you like, each time you find out more about things you just don't see when you're a kid.' (Simon)

This illustrates how memory is reconstructed and reinvented. New knowledge is formed and constructed via a narrative or a storytelling capacity. Concentrating on the narrative histories of these particular fathers, which reflect the sentiments of the majority of fathers in this project, one begins to gain a clearer picture of childhood experience and how that experience was and continues to be constructed. A child's memory is necessarily partial. Parental interaction, at times, took place away from the children, but with the retelling and expanding of family and upbringing stories conjoined to the experience of fathering itself, new knowledge and intergenerational histories were being constructed.

Through these responses we can see how the gendered roles of parents had an impact on the men's childhoods. The male children understood the internal organisation of the family, who carried out certain tasks, and thus who to go to for assistance with particular problems. More is evident from these testimonies; the men make a wider connection: the connection between employment and home life. 'Father' appears excluded from their childhoods because of his location in the public sphere. This exclusion was not liked by the men when they were children, and as adults they link it to what they clearly perceive as a deficit model of the detached and unemotional nature of 'traditional' or 'instrumental' fatherhood. As adults, the men want to 'give more' to their children than their fathers were able to give to them. However, the men did not generally apportion blame for the deficiencies of their upbringing, and as fathers themselves were keenly aware of the constraints that limited parenting – both that of their fathers and their own. This awareness sets up the ambivalent relationship that appeared to exist between these sons and their fathers.

**Different From Dad**

Through the meanings and definitions the men placed on their fathering, differences can be established between the way they describe how they father and the way they were fathered. Most men in the project maintained that they are more expressively open than their fathers and more approachable. Other differences are concerned with notions of maleness and appropriate masculine behaviour.

Martin's narrative of being fathered contains within it a clear account of the type of interaction he would have liked with his father. The lack of expressive interaction that he felt has led him to conclude that his father had neglected a part of fathering that would have brought benefits to them both. However this is mediated with an acknowledgement that appropriate masculine behaviour at the time when he was fathered tended towards the 'dispassionate'. He notes how expressive contact with his children is an important aspect of his fathering, and that it is this area which differs from the way he was fathered. He states:

> 'If my father had spent a little of his time getting to know me, letting me close to him I think things would be different. We had little...um fairly formal contact. He did do things with us, as I say holidays, would drive through Europe but I got the feeling that was more to do with his organisational abilities than giving us a good time. It didn't bring a closeness. I take that time with the children. We talk things through. I know they feel close to me, they come to me. I could never imagine my father being open enough to speak to me about emotional matters. It was not the thing to do. He was a man and that meant his mind was concerned with higher matters. He remains emotionally inept, dispassionate.' (Martin)

This is an extreme example of what being different entails. The majority of the respondents take a less vitriolic view of their father's interaction with them but, as

stated earlier, close interaction with children seems to be a defining element of 'difference'.

> 'I'm more open than my dad was with me. I think that's a lot to do with time. I think I know my children better than my dad knows me, um, even now. I know what they need but that's because I'm here more to pick up on those things. We do more together. (Clive)

Gordon noted differences when asked whether his relationship had changed with his parents when he became a father:

> 'I think my father respects the way we do things. I don't think he could do the things I do with the kids. When they were very young and we used to go over if one of them hurt themselves he would steer them to my mum. If I took control he would just look, really unsure about it all. Maybe that's because I always went to my mum but that's because I knew my dad wouldn't have dealt with it.' (Gordon)

Equally Paul, who has very positive memories of being fathered, still notes differences between himself and his father:

> 'He's still...I think he's a little embarrassed by displays of affection. He loves being hugged by the kids and that sort of thing. But as we grew older...I mean I still hug my mum, but I wouldn't do it to him. I don't think he'd feel comfortable...I'm naturally not an expressive person. I've learnt to be. I've found it necessary. It was a learnt response rather than a natural one.' (Paul)

This narrative of difference in the demonstrative behaviour displayed by Paul and his father is interesting. Paul's narrative of being fathered is not built on conflict or tension; nevertheless, his need to 'learn' to be expressive has bought rewards shown

by his sons' open display of affection and it is here that difference is found. Peter, on the other hand, has recently discovered that his memories of being fathered were flawed and that his father was not as physically present as he once thought. He recalls his distant relationship with his grandfather and sets his father's behaviour as a grandfather in parallel with it:

> 'my grandfather never used to talk to me, and I used to think my father is becoming like my grandfather. The communication between my father and David is such that when David is fourteen or fifteen I reckon the communication will be so...granddad and grandson...I think that's interesting because the father role has been mirrored. I'd like to think...I hope to think that I will be there to sort of muck in and help as much as I can.' (Peter)

Through these accounts 'difference' can be gauged at a number of levels. The majority of the men in the sample see themselves as being expressively more open than their fathers. They see themselves as being more accessible to their children and actively taking on less traditional male responsibilities. The amount of time spent with their children and the various activities undertaken with them are also seen as 'being different' and in some ways fundamental to operating a form of fathering that matches their aspirations of a 'good' father.

**Being Fathered**

The memory and experience of being fathered is important to these men. From the extracts that follow it can be gauged that fathering is intrinsically distinct from mothering. There is a qualitative difference in subjective meaning. Mothers were seen as the primary expressively emotional parent, but that is not to say that the men saw their fathers as wholly unemotional and detached parents. Peter's account of his interaction with his father illustrates this:

'Horsy trick on the knee, but he wasn't one to show great emotion. I can't actually remember him...I can't actually remember him giving us cuddles, anything like that. Although saying that in the last six or seven years he's become more open with his feelings.'(Peter)

*Why's that do you think?*

'Well I would never have thought it but he's a real family man. He loves his family. All of us. Which as I say, ten years ago I would have said hides his feelings, that type of thing. I know he thinks I'm doing something worthwhile. This family. Loves them to bits.'(Peter)

*Yeah but why more open now?*

'I think it's having the time although I do believe I'm at fault in some of that. Really I'm not sure whether he's was always like that, I don't remember, you know and it was me not seeing it or whether um...(pause)...Perhaps because I'm older, no idea, or could be having the time. More time to get involved. I've really no idea.'(Peter)

Peter, like others, has drawn a connection between seeing his father differently now that he is a father and has made the point that a father might not always be as involved as they might wish. Here the perceptions and beliefs constructed around upbringing stories have been altered with experience. There is a greater understanding as to the reasons why a father's involvement might be constrained. This idea of involvement, having the time to undertake physical and emotional activities with a child is succinctly put by Paul and contributes to the positive memories that he had of his childhood:

'It was the doing things together, side of things. He introduced us to a social grouping which was male (football). Yes it was shared experience. We still talk a lot about sport.' (Paul)

When asked whether he had any negative memories of being fathered he replied:

'Nothing I can think of. No he never pushed us away and he never um...there was never anything inappropriate that I can think of...Difficult to say. The fact that my parents loved each other helped me express my love for Sue (wife) with them, with my kids around. I was given the example that it wasn't inappropriate to show affection.' (Paul)

Martin, on the other hand, had clear but much more negative memories of his father's involvement with him. Although Martin's father could be described as distant, the reasons for this distance were set out in terms of employment and emotionality:

'Well I suppose I always think that he did, did try. Um, so that if...he used to try and help me with my models (Airfix), get very impatient, shout at me (laughs) take over and tell me I couldn't do them properly. Give me all those horrible messages parents give their children. But I suppose what it was, was that he worked very hard, long hours, well not long hours by today's standards maybe, but it seemed at the time...He wasn't much fun at all and didn't really interact. But he always came to life on holidays and once the summer, he'd try to step into this new persona.'(Martin)

*Became animated?*

'Well yes, but unfortunately he'd bring himself with him (laughter). It's so hard to disentangle the feelings of then and now

> and everything that's gone between. I can't really get a clear handle on how I was exactly. I have thought about it, mulled it over and talked about it. I'm not sure what sort of figure he was because it's all been overlaid now. If I have any anger it's towards my dad. It's just so difficult living with people who don't have any personal insight.'(Martin)

Matthew tied all these disparate areas together, involvement through activities, emotion, work, and the child's own place in how his father interacted with him are outlined:

> 'Positive and negative memories? Well I've said that my mum and dad were like chalk and cheese. They were, still are I guess an odd pair. My father was just there. We did do things at the weekends sometimes but not - how are you feeling son – stuff. But that could be that he just wasn't around much when I was. I think he, well I know he gets on better with adults and that's why I think we get on better now than ever before. Although I was an irritating sod when I was young, guess that had something to do with it. But no, we didn't do much together (Matthew)

From these narratives certain themes are apparent. 'Mother' and 'father' as gendered persons acting out the appropriate roles for their time, in connection to children and within an intimate couple relationship, this has been articulated well. Equally, the father son relationship has highlighted an initial ambivalence. With subsequent knowledge and experience this relationship has become more understandable. These men had constructed a more sophisticated explanation with the adaptation and reinterpretation of memory that further experience had produced, due partly in relation to on-going parenting by the father and their own experience of parenting. Whereas these men had made a sense of their childhoods it is now appropriate to extend and discuss this further.

## Narratives of Transition

It has been recorded that often during an interview situation the respondent has an agenda. That agenda is to present oneself in a particular way. Hollway (1989:41) has suggested that 'there is no context, however private and searching, which could provide the account which tells the whole truth. The number of possible accounts is infinite.' In this sense it is the selection of a particular discourse that conveys the meanings the respondents wish others to know and these are of interest. Yet the final selection of that discourse is in the interviewer's hands. The men all conveyed their stories in a particular way and from each a picture of their lives has been forthcoming. However, within these narratives there was an intergenerational transmission of assumptions going on. This is not to say that beliefs had remained constant, rather that the men in this study were aware of the dominant assumptions that constructed their own father's parenting. Thompson (1993:13) maintains that life stories need this transmission for them to be coherent, to make sense. This can be seen to have occurred in some of the responses. So what stories have been presented that are common to the men?

Of the stories told, thus far, a sense of a common childhood is evident. A childhood that coincides with the general assumptions of what childhood in the 1960s was like. As children these men knew their place and were disciplined if inappropriate behaviour occurred. This was mainly meted out by their fathers and involved a degree of physical punishment. Mothers tended to mediate in these disputes which in itself caused some friction between the partners. Both mothers and fathers had their distinct roles although at times these were blurred. All the fathers and the majority of mothers had paid employment. Fathers, on the whole, tended to have a more active rather than emotional involvement with their children and the children interacted with their parents accordingly. Parents were, in the main, affectionate with each other although disputes did occur. Overall the experience of being fathered, during those early years, was not completely satisfactory, although for most of the men this has improved now they are adult.

From these narratives it can also be deduced that family life did not operate in a space free of intrusion from outside forces. Indeed these forces were recognised by the men as children. However this knowledge was not used to condone parental (particularly father's) behaviour. Often behaviour was put up with, tolerated, even understood, but was not essentially liked. Only later with subsequent knowledge of the structural realities of life did a conciliatory tone come through. We see the adult recognition that fathers might wish to be more emotionally involved with their children but are prevented by structural considerations, as well as the understanding that, as children, we do not always recognise the extent of the involvement of our parents in our lives. These adult reconstructions of childhood raise the possibility of a mismatch between how fathers and children interpret the fathering that goes on in a family. It is possible, for example, that the grandfathers in this study would not recognise the men's narrative of their fathering as emotionally deficient. It is also possible that the men's children might question the emotional engagement of their fathers. Equally internal forces were operating. Mothers appear to have held the reins over the emotional sphere. This would need a full consideration when assessing a father's emotional involvement with their child. Unfortunately, interviewing the parents, in particular, the fathers of the male respondents, was not a realistic possibility. However, what is not in dispute is the fact that the men in the sample all strongly perceived that their own fathering was different from the fathering they had received. Their narratives were of a transition to a more emotionally engaged form of fathering, which – regardless of the actual nature of shifts in parenting – clearly shaped how they viewed their own practice.

**Themes**

Four overriding themes that cover the early years can be extrapolated from the men's accounts. These themes were: the idea of father as absent or detached yet, contradictorily, at the same time active; the perception of the gendered division of labour with its associated splitting of practical and emotional tasks; the perception of employment as a constraint on a father's time, and the idea that the men were

adopting new meanings of fatherhood and rejecting an older, deficit model. These themes, taken together, suggest that a narrative of transition is being expressed.

Most men maintained their fathers were detached and remote yet at the same time they had clear memories of days out, helping with making and mending toys and machinery and involvement in sport were articulated. The absent father debate has usually been associated with single motherhood and a degeneration of society (Lach, 1977; Murray, 1994). This debate, however, has focused mainly around the financial provision for children. Thus little acknowledgement has been given to a child's emotional provision via fathering. Equally many authors have denounced the restructuring of the labour market for causing instability in male employment. For some this is a site of a 'crisis in masculinity' as the traditional breadwinner role for men is eroded (Cambell, 1993). These commentators have argued that these changes tend to remove male involvement from families. The majority of respondents here had fathers living at home and providing economic support for their families, but still these sons perceived their fathers as detached and absent. How can these two positions be reconciled?

There is an overwhelming sense that the men wanted a more expressive relationship with their fathers. However these children understood the gendered divisions of family life. It was recognised that the emotional work in the home was primarily a mother's, however, the implicit suggestion that comes from these men is that an 'emotional father' would have operated in a different manner than mothers. This is an unsurprising notion, particularly if all things male and female were differentiated along gendered lines. It is not, therefore, unreasonable to suggest that an emotional father would show affection in a way different to the mother. Although the respondents were well versed in the appropriate roles for their parents at the time when they were young, the 'nature' of male emotionality, how they would have liked it presented was never coherently articulated.

For these men as children, equating the expressively emotional with practical tasks

would have required an understanding of the complexities of not only gender power relations within the home but also power relations outside the home. This understanding did not occur until much later in the men's lives. The sense gained from the accounts of the respondents is that they would have liked their fathers to have been more expressively, physically emotional with them.

Gaining knowledge of their father's own upbringing had, in retrospect, eased this particular tension for some of these men, and as stated earlier most men had a more expressive relationship with their fathers now they themselves were adults. Yet by viewing their fathers as distant when they were children, the values that they have placed on fathering today have been, in part, generated by their recollections of childhood and the resultant value judgements concerning 'good fathering'. Vangelisti et al (1999:362) suggests that the stories people tell of their family lives are measured by notions of the ideal relationship. How behaviour and involvement with family members ought to be. In this sense it is not appropriate to simply state that the role of breadwinner removes men from expressive emotional involvement with their children. The issue is more complex. A father's own background and upbringing needs to be assessed with reference to the assumptions and aspirations placed on roles at any given time. These will necessarily be tangential to the assumptions placed on roles at a future time. It cannot be taken as a given that the fathers of the 1960s were themselves either happy or unhappy with the way they parented. There is no way of gauging here whether they too 'wanted more'.

Although it has been acknowledged by the respondents that employment impeded the amount of time available for interaction with their fathers, it was the type of interaction that took place that was interesting. Fathers appear happy to have helped their children with practical, functional tasks. These were generally a source of pleasure for the respondents and the time spent was appreciated. Yet the apparent inability of their fathers to talk or act on an overtly emotional level with them is what the men take as being distant. Therefore, concentration on the economic provision aspects of fatherhood is not the only defining characteristic of the distant father. For

these men, the lack of overt emotionality had the effect of distancing. It also shows that emotionality as a lived experience was important for these men. Clearly the respondents have considered the emotional deficit inherent in an instrumental model of fatherhood. Memory of early childhood has been reinterpreted, modified in the light of new experience. These reconstructed experiences of childhood have produced aspirations for how the respondents wish to father themselves, constructed in part by the connections these men had made with their own positions as employees and partners.

Notwithstanding cultural shifts in the meaning of fatherhood (Giddens, 1992; Beck and Beck Gernsheim, 1995) most accounts of practical tasks and activities suggest that there has been little change in fatherhood, as tasks remain gender divided. We have seen that the men have remained attached to the instrumental role and that their accounts of emotional involvement remains gender divided in that emotional fathering is taken as different from emotional mothering. Thus from this study it is difficult to state that an *actual* transition in fatherhood has taken place. However the men have clearly expressed 'narratives of transition'. This can be argued from the fact that the men 'want more' from fathering as they perceive the limitations of older models. The men have remained committed to instrumentality and gender divided parenting yet new meanings are attached. These meanings are not essentially to do with egalitarianism or a gender neutral emotional connection or expression, in other words it is suggested that 'new fathering' is a narrative of transition that may reconcile the contradictions within the meanings of fatherhood, the meanings of instrumental and involved. In this sense it may be that 'new fatherhood' is less to do with concrete shifts in practice and more to do with narratives of transitions that come through the accounts of 'wanting more' and 'being different'.

**Connections**

The men's tacit understanding of their own childhood was that their father's employment restricted the amount of interaction that took place. Yet it was only when

they considered their relationships to be more emotionally fulfilling that connections between their father's employment and time were made more concrete. The respondents were impeded in the amount of involvement that they themselves had with their own children, in terms of time, yet actively tried to be emotionally more involved. Conversely their own father's involvement with them had only become, what the respondents would term, emotional, with their removal from the family home. This however caused a degree of confusion for some of the men. Some were unsure whether their fathers had always had the capacity to be emotional, but never found the appropriate outlet for its expression, others believed that with the freeing up of their father's time a 'new father' was able to emerge. This is an interesting notion, grandparents as 'new fathers' as it highlights a possibility that there may be more similarities between the two generations than is explicitly acknowledged.

Many of the respondents reported that their fathers now took the time to talk on an emotional level. Physical emotional expressivity remained difficult and Paul as stated he would not wish to embarrass his father with such behaviour. This sentiment was common to many men. So certain boundaries remained. These were not tested by the respondents as there was a recognition that their fathers were raised at a time when roles in the family were not essentially negotiated by partners and gender differences were taken as natural and right.

This highlights the connection the men had made with 'masculinity'. Interestingly it was taken as a shifting characteristic. Masculinity in the time that these men were fathered was generally denoted by the ability of a man to economically provide for his family in a well-disciplined environment, in which women carried out the main nurturing and caring role for all family members. The fathers in this study have come to understand masculinity in a more 'emotional' and expressive fashion, as we shall see in Chapter Six.

It could be suggested that with these new understandings, of how and why family life was the way it was, initial childhood memory had been reinvented. The experience of

locating a new knowledge into an area that was vague and filled with a child's understanding together with the knowledge of what life was like as a father working within certain structural constraints had assisted this reinvention. So, memory had been modified by experiential events and intergenerational knowledge, this suggests that new memories are being applied to each retelling of these life stories.

There is a need now, to assess how the respondents view their own fathering capabilities. This shall be done via the data from the 'couple' interviews. Attention will be paid to present day fathering in the context of operating differently than their fathers, in 'being different', placed within the context of partnerships.

# CHAPTER FIVE

# BEING DIFFERENT

## Introduction

In chapter four, it was argued that many of the respondents saw their fathering practice as being very different from that of their own fathers. This was explained under the rubric of 'narratives of transition'. 'Narratives of transition' are used to make sense of the men's expanded notions of fathering. It is a means by which men gauge their own fathering style in relation and reference to the fathering they received: therefore the belief is held that they have moved or, at the very least, are moving towards a different sense of fathering that privileges the emotional aspects of parenting. This chapter looks at the ways in which the men view their fathering practice as 'being different'. Previously difference was gauged through the men's experience of being sons, their own aspirations and practice of fathering and also from what they saw as stereotypical models of fatherhood. The men stressed their difference, both from their own experiences of being fathered but also from what they termed 'traditional' fathering. The men discussed their own practice of fathering as a new and expanded model of fatherhood. This chapter sets out to explore the issues that surround difference further and to ask what exactly does the 'difference' that the men talk of actually consist of?

In previous chapters, certain key themes have emerged. These themes: the emotionally deficit model of 'instrumentality', the 'wanting more' model of fatherhood and 'narratives of transition', are here outlined in relation to the men's current practice. In particular, this chapter looks at how the men view their fathering in relation to their employment, the domestic and emotional division of labour and, importantly, the mothering of their partners. In this chapter the key themes are highlighted in the men's accounts of 'being different'. Tensions and contradictions that the men felt over their fathering will be reconsidered in diverse ways. The

working towards an integrated sense of 'father' requires a resolution of these tensions, which in themselves encompass the men's public and private lives and overlap.

This chapter engages with public and private, with notions of the 'absent father' and issues of 'employment' and investigates further the 'instrumental' roles, which these men view as a necessary and emotional aspect to their fathering. Chapter Three illustrated how the men in the sample retained a strong commitment to certain 'instrumental' elements of fathering, namely a dominant view of a father as a material provider. In the men's accounts, material provision for their children was taken as an essential element of fathering, and underlined the men's commitment to employment. For these men it was impossible to be fathers without also being workers. The centrality of employment to fathering will be further explored in this chapter, which looks at how the men in the sample squared their view that their fathering practice was about 'being different' with their continuing commitment to a gender-divided view of domestic and employment responsibilities. It will be argued that the men were able to regard their fathering as 'being different' whilst still adopting a continued commitment to a gender divided view of domestic and employment responsibilities because of the way in which they constructed 'being different' in *emotional* terms. The tensions surrounding a 'non-active' or 'absent' father with an employed father will be discussed and lead to an understanding of how the men made fathering choices which were perceived as being different from their fathers.

The emotional and structural aspects of fathering need to be assessed in relation to fathering styles. The men often stated the view that their 'early' employment – when their children were very young - placed restrictions and constraints on their fathering abilities. In these early stages of their fatherhood, many of the men felt like strangers in their households, isolated and detached from their children. The men's need to 'be different' was thus expressed as a difference not only from their childhood experiences of being fathered, but also as a difference from their own early parenting. The 'narrative of transition' that the men expressed in relation to their fatherhood – a

narrative of change and of expanding meanings and responsibilities – was thus not only in relation to a perception of intergenerational shifts but also of their own life course transitions.

This sense of change between early and later fathering was most clearly expressed by those men who had adapted their employment practice to accommodate their fathering. As their careers developed, some of the men had seized the opportunity of more flexible employment regimes to adopt an 'expanded' style of fathering. Here fathering can be seen to be operational in the home at unconventional times during the working day. Men were able to undertake practical commitments for their children, e.g. doing the school runs and attending clinics. The men felt that such practical tasks engendered an emotional closeness with their children, closeness that further supports their contention of difference and their striving for 'more'. Thus flexible employment regimes that allowed a degree of choice over timetabling the working week and the location of carrying out the work had an enabling effect for these men as fathers.

27 of the 43 men had adapted their working lives to satisfy their commitment to and perceptions of a more involved emotional form of fathering. By adopting a flexible approach to employment and instrumental fathering the men sustained their belief that they were 'being different' in their fathering practice. However it should be stressed that the combination of flexible employment with an expanded fathering style does not necessarily equate with egalitarian parenting. The men's practical contributions to their households and their children had changed and expanded, but they still practiced an unequal and gender divided division of labour. The major shift for such men was less about the role of fatherhood than about the meaning of fathering. As we shall see, the contribution of employment flexibility to involved fathering had more to do with sustaining and deepening the men's *emotional* contact with their children and was not primarily about the domestic division of labour. 'Being different' for this generally liberal group of men was less to do with shifts in

practical activities and far more to do with a sense of an expanded emotional involvement with their children.

This emphasis on the emotional nature of 'being different' can also be seen in that group of men (some 15 men) who were unable, or chose not, to adapt their employment commitments. These men had not adapted their employment regime and were generally working a traditional nine hour, five to six day working week. Yet these men still gave accounts of how they had adopted an expanded approach to fatherhood, stressing their sense of difference both from their own fathers and from 'normative' or stereotypical models of fatherhood. Once again it was the *emotional* contact and involvement with their children that was taken as different. For this group of men, a sense of 'being different' in their fathering was not about *doing* more rather it was about *feeling* more. Even amongst the 8 men in the sample who posited a 'traditional' model of fathering, a fatherhood that, particularly through the early years of parenting, encompassed essentialist notions of gender, sustained a view of operating fathering differently, more expansively and emotionally than in the past. Thus even the most traditional of the men in the sample 'wanted more' from fatherhood, and saw their own practice as being in some sense different from 'instrumental' or 'narrow' models.

Fathering cannot be disassociated from mothering. The men in this project all live with the mothers of their children. These women held their own aspirations concerning parenting and relationships with their partners. A mother's views of parenting in general and fathering in particular are significant when the practicalities and expectations of childcare are considered. Therefore 'partnerships' will be explored in relation to the amount of emotional and practical space the men take up in the familial arena. The ability to take up this space is not solely dependent on flexible employment regimes. Some of the men in the sample were either not afforded this option or chose not to take it, yet still saw themselves engaged in an expanded form of fathering. Utilising the 'couple interviews' enables the consequent issues of aspirations, mutuality, balance and unease to be considered. It will be argued that in

the women's accounts contradictions in motherhood are evident. For many of the women, liberal attitudes towards fathering were combined with traditional attitudes towards mothering. Ribbens (1994:73) assesses the contradictions in women's lives, the contradiction between 'individuality' and 'family'. She states that 'individuality' and 'family' 'are constructs that are in an inter-dependent but contradictory relationship'. Here we see a need to balance the tensions that this positioning inflicts on the individual. Ribbens' research found that a father's input in the early years of parenting was marginal (or minimal) and that women tended to limit a man's involvement as this aided and maintained 'maternal authority'. Women wanted a more involved fathering for their children but found this tested their own involvement with motherhood as motherhood is generally taken as the basis from which women gain their experience of authority.

It will be seen that the contradictions that Ribbens highlights are more relevant to partnerships than parenting in this thesis. Women wanted their partners to do more and be more as fathers, in other words they too rejected traditional, normative gender role allocation. Yet at the same time, for some of these women, the impact of more involved fathering on their own mothering led many to feel 'de-roled'. The construction of 'expanded' fatherhood was clearly a process of negotiation and constraint, in which 'different' fathering was set up in terms of an emotional involvement which complemented but did not impinge on a still clearly gender-divided view of the meanings and practices of mothering.

The men's accounts, taken into consideration with that of their partners' accounts illustrates how a sense of 'being different' in fathering is constructed. The men *felt* different: different from their own fathers, from stereotypical or normative models of fathering, and from their previous fathering practice. There is also a sense in which expanded fathering was also constructed as being different from 'mothering'. The nature of this difference will be more closely explored in what follows, but it is the emotional nature of this sense of difference which will be emphasised.

## Employment

Employment as a constraint to fathering was a common theme among the respondents. It was felt to be an issue both in their childhoods but also in their own parenting. In Chapter Four it was argued that many of the men saw their fathers as distant, and that this was related to an instrumental, deficit model of fathering in which employment dominated. Many of the respondents recounted that in their early years of parenting they operated in a way not dissimilar from their own fathers. With early fatherhood the majority of men in this project held employment positions with little authority and little power to exercise any control over their working lives. With career progression and promotions, greater opportunities became available to some, whereby they could utilise opportunities to develop their fathering in new directions if they so wished.

The emotional deficits of instrumentality have been noted and underpins the 'wanting more' model of fatherhood. Earlier, we saw that Gordon had recognised the deficits inherent in the instrumental model by suggesting that he did not feel that being the material provider for his family was necessarily the only role he wanted as a father. He also recognised that he was reproducing the fathering he received during the early stages of his parenting. Through his further accounts we can see that a different approach to fathering is engendered by the choices he made and how and why he took the decisions he did.

> 'When Emma was a baby I was just starting out in the insurance business. You know, it wasn't a nine to five, five days a week job. I was out there getting the business. It worked on commission, so if I didn't get the customers it showed. There were incentives for us to get the customers (laughs) I think a child was the biggest incentive I could have. It worked.' (Gordon)

Continuing to describe his early working life, Gordon characterised it as involving long working hours and having little contact with his new child. Here we can clearly see the reproduction of the emotional deficits of the instrumental model of fatherhood. Gordon saw this situation as unacceptable. Separation from the home signified an emotional separation from his children and created a tension with his inner sense and meanings of fatherhood. The lack of contact was something that he felt he had no control over:

> 'I had to work the hours that were needed. There was nothing I could do...well go on the dole...what would that achieve? It worked out in the long run...It was hard not being here you know feeling like a stranger, you know?' (Gordon)

Peter's account of the constraints that his early working life placed on his fathering echoes Gordon:

> 'My biggest constraint was my work...I think my expectations were to try to...I mean my experience, my philosophy was to try and make sure they (children) enjoyed life...That's how I always felt my role would be. In this particular case bringing in the money...In fact I felt the position I was working then was actually suffocating my ability to spend very much time at home.' (Peter)

Working long hours, with its associated separation from the family, caused Martin to rethink his role as a father:

> 'I couldn't sustain that level of separation. Something needed to be done. I would travel over seventy miles a day to and from work. That's a big chunk of time. Time away... Alex was only a tot yet I wanted him to see me doing those dirty, mundane day to day tasks. I wanted to undertake a more nurturing role. You know having the

> experience of living with an emotionally dysfunctional father I knew I certainly didn't want that for my son. I didn't want it for me.' (Martin)

Martin presents his aspirations for fathering in terms of his need to be more engaged with his son than his father was with him. His childhood experience of being fathered is reflected in this account. Not all of the respondents had such overtly negative feelings about their fathers. A number (some 17) reported a more ambivalent relationship with their fathers that produced positive as well as negative aspects to the father/son relationship.

Paul is one such respondent. He did not tie the need to be engaged with his children directly to his childhood experience, however he did note the tensions he experienced between his early working life as a father and his ability to be engaged as a parent and partner:

> 'In some ways I'd wished I could have taken paternity leave. Particularly in the early days after the birth. Just to help. Because it was a bit of a strain holding down a full time job and yet taking most of the strain in the house off Lorna. I wish I could have had...Obviously there are limits to these things but in a way if things could have been more flexible...I wish there could have been a more structured way that I could have said – can I work different hours or ah...I think I would. Even half time half pay. This sort of thing. But the option really wasn't there.' (Paul)

Clive also reported experiencing a sense of isolation from his family. Although he and his wife took the decision to operate on fairly traditional lines, Linda staying at home until the children were at primary school and taking on the domestic responsibilities of the home, Clive taking on the material provision of the family,

there remained, however, an understanding that he required more of an input into family life than the provider role alone could give.

> 'I guess having that degree of stability in my job was a good thing. You know, we could give that stability to the kids. But I have to say that it in many ways...I don't want to sound ungrateful but I was locked in to it. I wanted to do more but it's time isn't it? I just didn't have it. Sometimes even I felt what was it all about? I was, if you like, apart from what was going on here.' (Clive)

This feeling of being a stranger was apparent in many of the interviews. For some of the men these feelings were not resolved until they had more control over their working conditions:

> 'I felt the position I was working then was actually suffocating my ability to spend very much time at home...I felt this was not what it was all about. Eventually I was able to step back and reduce my working hours...I sort of cut back on that as I felt that in the long term it wouldn't be good for the family.' (Peter)

Many of the respondents (28 out of 43) had actively used promotions and changes in their employment positions to advance changes in their family lives. Unlike their own fathers the men in the sample had used this control to take up additional emotional and practical space in their homes, to fulfil other aspects of fathering that they felt were important to them. Material security had enabled many fathers to make active choices about the level and type of interaction they had with their children. Here the types of interaction are extended from the interaction they had with their fathers. Some men took on a variety of domestic tasks, more importantly, for them the interaction with their children was taken as an extended interaction that encompassed an emotional closeness not found or experienced with their fathers. This closeness was engendered by not only everyday activities but also by a less gendered emotional

contact with children. Men would talk expressively to their children about issues that their children raised, issues that women, as mothers, would normally encounter, such as bullying and illness.

Gordon illustrates how flexible employment operates in his case:

> 'I'm earning good money. Janet has a good job. We're OK...My dad used to say you could only sleep in one bed and eat from one plate (laughs) he never took his own advice. When it comes down to it there's just more important things. Having enough money to do stuff is nice I'm not saying it's not...at the end of the day there has to be more...In my position now I can be fairly flexible in the way I work my hours. Basically I have to keep an eye on my area, make sure the managers are doing their job, deal with any situations they can't or don't have the authority to deal with. This means I can do a fair bit from home. Mondays and Fridays I'm either in the office or visiting our branches in my area. I try to be here when the kids get home...spend time with them.' (Gordon)

Many of the men spoke of how this flexibility in their employment regimes had resulted in benefits at home. Peter describes how taking up the opportunity for greater employment flexibility seemed to resolve some of the tensions he felt when he first became a father:

> 'You can do special deals...the company is a lot more flexible. I can work from home some days. I don't need to. I could go in and do it. But being here is where I feel I'm making a difference...At the end of the day there's only so much you want. Holidays, cars, making sure the kids are looking smart and have the stuff they need. When that's ok...um...then yes you...you can start to think about the things you want...want from being a dad. I need to give

them that stuff. Sometimes I think I'm just the banker...No...they do get more than that from me.' (Peter)

The weighing up of material gains with paternal gains is a tension that was apparent for many respondents. Thus some men found balancing work and family life difficult. These difficulties were not grounded in the practicalities of domestic life or determined by marital conflict, rather they were generated through the men's notions of what it meant for them and their children to be a 'good father' and to sustain a healthy family. This tension is portrayed as an issue of balance for Martin:

'It's a balancing act. It's important for me to know that I'm providing for my children in every way. That's where my father was incompetent. No, no - that suggests he had no control. He chose not to father in the way I do. In his position he could have.' (Martin)

Clive, although defining his fathering style as generally traditional but emotional, also notes the issue of balance. Like Martin, Clive made a clear comparison between his style of parenting and his father's. However he notes that his fathering occurs in a period which enables a more active engagement with children than his own father could experience, and he also highlights how his own employment has altered through the years, contributing to this activity:

'As soon as the time was right for me to set up my own business well to go into partnership, we had the contacts and jobs on, I did. You know it wasn't only about working for myself. You know I said I felt locked in. So this was a way to rectify that...My mum and dad had set ways but then I guess it was difficult for them to do anything different. I don't think it would have crossed their minds. Not my dad's anyway. I'm not saying it's all different, you know I'm quite traditional too.' (Clive)

Paul had a chequered employment history and was unemployed for a while when his second son was born. This was a time when Paul reassessed the place of employment in his fathering. With the recommencement of employment he determined that he would not be placed in a position that detracted from his family life, yet at the same time we can see some ambivalence in the way he talks about the importance of his employment.

> 'Most things take precedence over worker to be honest. It's a means of funding living. And only that. If I get a bit of pleasure out, then so be it. It's not what it's there for. It's not part of my identity. Never has been...The job I do...It's fairly important in certain ways, it's not high profile but it um...I do get a lot of pleasure feeling that people depend on me and get something through what I do. Not all the time but sometimes I can feel that I've made a contribution.' (Paul)

Warin et al (1999) found that many fathers felt conflicting pressures between being a provider and being more involved. In other words 'provision' and 'involvement' were set up as competitive forces (Christiansen & Palkovitz, 2001:86). Material provision was an essential component of fathering for the men in the sample, but we can also see the same issues of balance between provision and emotional connection emerging. However, it is clear that 'involvement' for the men in this study was primarily about those activities which could generate emotional connection with their children. The men spoke of the importance of being around when children got home from school, being available when a child was injured or upset, of taking part in physical activities and games. Yet even those men who had adopted more flexible work routines in the sample still regarded themselves as primary economic providers for their families. Their wives, although many worked part-time (18), were still the main care-providers within the households. So although these men had re-worked the instrumental model of fathering, they had not re-negotiated the domestic division of emotional or practical labour in any fundamental way. None of the men in the sample

had developed anything approaching an egalitarian or symmetrical allocation of tasks. Although the new activities they had engaged should not be underestimated, nonetheless their major importance was not in renegotiating gender asymmetries in the household, but in enabling the men to feel an emotional closeness and involvement with their children. Warin et al's (1999) research covered a wide range of pertinent topics, including a father's role within the family and their relationships with older children. However, in Warren et al's research the role of fatherhood and the practical division of labour appears to take precedents over the meaning and emotional resonance of such activities.

The fathers' accounts highlight one area where they felt they had the capacity and control to resolve issues of balance, through using particular activities to engender emotional involvement with their children. Adjusting their working conditions to satisfy their ability to father emotionally was one way in which this was achieved. In other words through flexible working regimes a more expanded sense of fathering was engendered. Equally these extracts show that the men in the sample believed that the changes they had undertaken meant that they operated 'fatherhood' differently from their fathers. As stated earlier, most men saw the instrumental model of fatherhood as deficient and when given the opportunity to alter their working arrangements they took the opportunities that were presented to put these wants into practice. However, it is important not to see such changes as a full-going renegotiation of the practical domestic division of labour, and even the men who lacked the opportunities for flexible employment still believed they were practising an expanded style of fathering characterised by an emotional closeness with their children that they took as a different fathering from that which they received.

When the men talked about 'being different' or being more 'involved' in their fathering, it was the emotional difference rather than practical differences in childrearing per se that the men emphasised. The shifts in the men's practical activities were important because of the greater closeness that the men felt such

activities allowed. Most men in this project maintain that they are more expressively open than their fathers and more approachable because of such practical contact.

> 'You know, mum was mum and dad was dad and they both had their own types of responsibilities. That's a big difference you know the kids can come to either of us for whatever.' (Gordon)

> 'Today, because I took the day off work, I was able to pick the kids up from school, they normally walk home. The first thing Andy did was to come and put his arms round me and sit on my lap. Out in the playground. We talked a bit and that's the time I think that I feel it most. There's this spontaneous expression of closeness.' (Paul)

However, this extension of the practical activities of fatherhood is still compatible with gender asymmetry in roles and meanings. Whilst the emotional meanings of fathering have been expanded, it is still a male notion of emotionality. Notions of maleness and appropriate masculine behaviour still prevail.

> 'I don't think the children see any barriers to what I can do for them. I would have never gone to my dad with half the stuff I went to my mum with. That's different. Yes there are some things the kids go to Linda about first but um if she's not here then they'll come to me.' (Clive)

Through these accounts 'difference' can be gauged at a number of levels. The men overall see themselves as being expressively more open than their fathers. They see themselves as being accessible to their children and actively taking on less traditional male responsibilities. The amount of time spent with their children and the various activities undertaken with them are also seen as 'being different' and in some ways fundamental to operating fathering that matches their aspirations of what it means to

be a father. Yet these activities are particular so an emotional closeness with children is engendered in a specific way and in consequence are in turn gendered. The men's accounts note how they spend time doing things for their children that are generally seen under the rubric of liberal parenting. However there is a sense that mothering is different from fathering and as such, liberal attitudes to fathering need not be extended to the domestic division of labour. So the notion of difference that the men speak of is an emotional difference as there remains continuity in the roles men and women undertake.

However, it is not enough to presume that the fathers here put these changes in to place without consultation with their partners. In other words it is suggested that other areas in the men's lives needed to work in conjunction with one another so that a more satisfying sense of fatherhood could prevail.

**Partnerships**

Exploring the father's notions of being different necessitates a consideration of their partners. This section considers the men and women's aspirations concerning parenting. A mutuality of these aspirations has led to a renegotiation of, in particular, the emotional division of labour and, as noted, to a lesser extent the gendered division of domestic labour. This private negotiation has engendered a sense of balance between the public world of work and the private world of family. Whereas opportunities in the world of employment have encouraged some men to make changes in their private lives it would be remiss to suggest this is all that is needed to promote an expanded, emotional form of fathering. Indeed, as we have seen other men from this sample adopt an expanded fathering style (emotional) without recourse to flexible employment. Therefore the question that arises is what is this expanded fathering style and how is it accommodated in the partnerships?

Some 7 couples held traditional views of parenting; they had a clear cultural script of parenting that generally reflected a stereotypical division of responsibilities. Of this

group, 2 mothers were in full-time employment, 4 had part-time employment and 1 was self-employed. Only 1 father from this group, Keith, had a flexible working regime. All partners from this group, generally subscribed to normative, stereotypical domestic roles. Others however regarded themselves as not following any clear-cut model of parenting. Rather, whilst they acknowledged a 'normative' parenting style they rejected this script. Motherhood and mothering are important considerations when exploring fatherhood. If women were rejecting normative role allocation then this might be an area that assisted men towards emotional fathering. In other words emotional fathering might be assisted by a woman's/mothers own agenda of 'wanting more'.

Dally (1982) suggests that through a powerful maternal mythology and 'idealisation', it is unsurprising that women had conformed to an image of motherhood that was in essence defined by men. She describes 'idealisation' as 'a feeling of love towards something or somebody towards whom one actually has feelings of both love and hate' (1982: 93). By highlighting the conscious and unconscious elements, which combine to produce normative behaviour in women, Dally has argued that this in part has empowered women to begin to set an individual agenda for motherhood themselves. The importance of women's views on motherhood for setting out the limits of their partner's fathering can be seen in the sample. The women in the sample had fewer complaints about the mothering they had received than the men had about their fathers. But whilst they had no complaints the women stressed that they did not want to become their mothers. In other words the experience of being mothered was good but the constraints placed on their mothers, via the instrumental and expressive division in family organisation, were aspects that most of the women did not wish to replicate. Ribbens (1994:81) advances the notion that involved fathering is a consequence of women's experience of being fathered, but I would also suggest that women's experience both of being mothered and of their parents' interactions is also of consequence here. In this study women's expectations of their husbands as fathers had more to do with aspirations and beliefs about the appropriate arena of mothering than fathering.

During the 'couple' interviews mothers were asked about their aspirations and expectations of coupledom and parenting. These interviews tended to set the respondents' personal histories, they debated dates and thoughts, negotiations and 'wants' until an understanding of events, acceptable to both were stated. When considering the 'father only' interviews there was little deviation from the agreed stories set at the time of the 'couple' interviews. When mothers were asked whether they had fixed ideas about a mother's and fathers' role, respondents once again held similar views. Four couples held fairly rigid, traditional beliefs, while the remainder typically responded thus:

> 'No rigid formula. No. No definite formula.' (Jane)
>
> *You didn't have any roles you wanted to follow?*
>
> 'No I never thought of myself as a sort of conventional mother figure, ever...I wasn't sure where I'd fit in. I didn't think I fitted in to the mould.' (Jane)

When Jane's partner Peter was asked the same question his initial expectation of his father role was to work hard but continued:

> 'If there's something to be done I would just quite happily...' (Peter)
>
> 'You'd do anything.' (Jane)
>
> 'I don't think I have any specific things that I must do, mustn't do. I don't think a specific role but a general family role.' (Peter)

Later in the interview Jane states the image she had of the partner of her choice:

'He (Peter) is quite capable...some men get married straight from home and it's like marrying their mother's. I don't think I would have ever married anyone like that.' (Jane)

This rejection of a clearly identified stereotypical model of partner and father is an interesting one and is echoed by other respondents:

'We married fairly late so I was quite an old mum and knew that I really didn't want my freedom to be restricted in ways that I didn't want. Had Neil (partner) been different it wouldn't have worked. You know, stay at home yes when kids are small. I wanted that, but later I knew it wouldn't...I knew it would not be forever. I would have felt suffocated.' (Lesley)

Equally Jackie states:

'I didn't want anyone moving straight from their mother's expecting me to do it all.' She later stated that, 'we never had a row about it. It was never questioned.' (Jackie)

Jennifer and her husband Frank and Louise and Bob also appear to operate with this tacit agreement in place:

' Men who marry just to replace one woman with another, you know mum for wife, is a turn off. That's not a marriage.' (Jennifer)

'We all want and need things. It's not just a question of that's what you should do um you're the mum...No. I do stuff for the family... it's not that Jenny refuses. I want to and can.' (Frank)

'My mum waited on my dad hand and foot she did to all of us. You know it's not right. I wasn't going to do that. Why? I was supposed to be marrying an adult, someone capable.' (Louise)

'You've never waited on me. That's not it. But you're right I know mates who really married their mothers. Louise has never, you've never been my mother. That's a really peculiar thought although I see it with my mates.' (Bob)

The couples had clear expectations and a strong sense of what they did and did not want. The women in the sample not only had expectations about their role as mother, but also more specific expectations about their place in the family and their relationships with their partners. They expected their partners not to act to type within stereotypical normative behaviour that firmly locates men and women's place within binary categories. Ideas about parenting, partnering and family life had partially been formed before the creation of their individual families. Being a part of a family, being children, has had an impact on the types of decisions men and women make concerning fathering. For the men in the sample, 'being different' as fathers was clearly something that was partly formed in negotiation with their partners' expectations.

Here it is suggested that 'upbringing stories' have had an impact on gender strategies (Hoschschild, 1990) and connects with Ricoeur's (1984) notions of self-narratives and story building. In these accounts we can gauge a reciprocal tacit understanding between the partners of their personal expectations as parents and partners. In other words, pragmatically by utilising and rewriting upbringing stories and by adapting gender strategies a resolution of contradictions and tensions between personhood and parenthood is attained (for a fuller discussion see Lawler, 2000). If it can be assumed that women have loosened the reins of control in the domestic sphere it can then be argued that men are able to be more active and take up more space and time within the

family and with their children thus going some way to satisfy their expectations of expanded fathering. Mothers have had an impact on a father's enlarged fathering style.

Having mutual aspirations concerning how to parent has led many respondents to renegotiate their roles within the family. The majority of fathers wanted more from fathering than the instrumental role alone could provide. Through their working lives, it has been shown, they had taken the opportunities to operate a measure of flexibility which had resulted in them taking more time and space in the family. Following the initial recognition that having children was something most respondents wanted, they spoke of how they wanted to operate as parents. It is these conversations that tended to set the pattern, although it shall be seen that some of the aspirations of the respondents were difficult to attain. The women in this study overwhelmingly had strong views concerning the role of their partners in parenting. Janet articulates the sentiments of many women:

> 'He knew I didn't want the 'come- home- from -work –and- be-silent' dad. He knew I wanted to continue with my things as much as I could. I wanted to still be seen as me...I wanted him to do his share, he does...more than most.' (Janet)

Gordon extends the conversation to consider his needs as a father and their mutual aspirations are considered further:

> 'I wanted to do my bit. I said earlier it wasn't just about working, bringing in the money. Having kids is something you both do. It was hard at first but we worked it out how to make the best of things. It's taken some time to get there.' (Gordon)

> 'Gordon has always wanted to have that contact with the children. It's important to you isn't it? I couldn't see how he could be a real father without it. I'm not talking just about playing and doing all

those, the nice things. It's about everything even the boring things that have to be done.' (Janet)

'Yes...ah that's right. It was hard. I didn't have much experience with kids. It was hard but I wanted it. You did too. We both wanted to be a major part of the kids' lives but still be us ah...have our own things going on.' (Gordon)

Negotiating how men could be more active as fathers and women less constrained by mothering is where mutuality is located. 'Difference' is also extended here. Not only are the men in this study explicitly vocalising difference between the ways they father from how they were fathered, but also the women are tacitly noting differences in mothering. This is apparent even from one of the most 'traditional' couples:

'Yes first off it was about working. I said I felt locked in. There should be more. It's ok providing that stability and um we were...we were convinced that was how it should be. But not forever. I guess our roles were pretty much set for that time.' (Clive)

'Yes. Yes they were. But that was ok for then. I couldn't do what my mum did. I needed to know I would be back working...having that independence again. It's how to organise things. Do that right and most things work out. Actually I think we get the best of both worlds. Things even out.' (Linda)

These accounts are interesting as there is both an understanding of what constitutes 'good parenting' and recognition that parents are individuals who have individual needs. Ribbens McCarthy et al (2000) located an overriding parental moral imperative from their empirical study of parental moral identities with reference to changing family compositions, the imperative being:

> 'adults must take responsibility for children in their care and therefore must seek to put the needs of children first.' (2000:789)

Thus because of the moral positioning of the parent, the parent is the person able to make moral choices. This imperative shares commonalities with Morgan's (2001) 'moral economy' in as much as the ways responsibilities and duty of care are negotiated and allocated and the types of choices made. However Ribbens McCarthy et al noted an alternative, second discourse – the discourse of individualism. This discourse is set up as an alternative morality as the idea of 'duty to oneself' and care of the self, although appearing as an individualistic discourse, was not taken as immoral and as such did not hamper the construction of moral identities. Through the above accounts the moral imperative and the discourse of individualism can be discerned.

Jane and Peter had little idea about what roles they should take on. They knew they didn't want to perpetuate the form of parenting that they had experienced.

> 'I never thought of myself as a conventional mother figure, ever. I could never see myself attending coffee mornings and things like that cause it's not my sort of thing. So I wasn't sure where I'd fit in. In fact I didn't think I would...I was a bit concerned because I didn't think I fitted into that mould...I did have first hand experience of what I thought fatherhood should not be...I'm now coming home, I'm going to put my feet up and not lift a finger and that's it. Keep the kids away. Where does fatherhood come into it?' (Jane)

> 'If there's something to be done I would just quite happily...I don't feel I have any specific things I must do, mustn't do. I don't think a specific role but a general family role...it's just a question of mucking in really...I think it's always the classic father and

mother role, isn't it? You look at fathers and think what did your father do...as the years go by you almost begin to question your father's role in the family. It's an older style role...very inflexible. You begin to realise that maybe your mother did all the work. So whereby you had this picture of your mother and father being super-duper, superman in the father role, it didn't actually quite happen...This huge role within the family was actually much, much smaller than I thought.' (Peter)

The domestic division of labour was operated along traditional lines in Paul and Lorna's case. This was in part due to Paul and Lorna's belief that early parenting was biologically predetermined. However, the assumption that each partner would be happy for this to continue throughout the child-rearing years was quickly dispelled.

'I remember this quite clearly. I hated writing housewife whenever I had to fill in an application form. I felt very demeaned by it. I used to write mother instead. Well. It was a very good feeling. And I did feel...' (Lorna)

'Did you feel shut in?' (Paul)

'It wasn't a shut in thing at all. It was much more...I wasn't a person anymore. I wasn't Lorna, drama teacher; I was Lorna mother...I think that must be a feeling a lot of professional women have.' (Lorna)

'When it comes down to it the mother is just not the birthing object. As I say when the mother is breast feeding...it will force you into that role. Force the mother into that role. Father into a support role. There was no way I could feed him. I was desperate... I wished I could.' (Paul)

Lorna's narrative suggests a lack or loss of autonomy or in Ricoeur's (1991) terms the building of a coherent self-narrative of personhood had been disrupted. The recognition by Paul and Lorna that their roles were set while their children were very young is interesting as it highlights the tensions each partner felt. Equally, it also highlights the complimentary and mutual aspects of these roles in their own relationship. Notions of fairness were noted by Lorna:

> 'If you're at home all day I don't think it's right to expect someone to come in and take on the house. Unless there's a problem.'(Lorna)

Here we see continuity in the gender-divided nature of roles despite the expansion of emotional fathering. This adds weight to the contention that an expanded fathering style does not need to equate with domestic egalitarianism.

Martin stated earlier that he wanted to undertake a nurturing role with his children. Although Martin needed little encouragement to do this, and Sue facilitated this to a degree, it did nevertheless create some tension:

> 'We were quite determined to resist those stereotypical roles. It's important to recognise, well not to assume you know what the other wants. Sue, she, you were aware that I needed that input.' (Martin)

> 'Yes. I think it's very important. If we're to make any sort of progress...um...if men want to have contact with their children in a more nurturing form then I think it's up to us to encourage that...I didn't think I'd mind. I encouraged it but I also felt de-roled. That surprised me. Early on we weren't traditional now...over the last three years our roles have become more polarised. I took the decision to take on the main responsibility of running the home...I'm relaxed with that.' (Sue)

Sue's tensions were not unusual for the respondents in general. Even though she encouraged Martin's input, emotional and domestic, this required her to overcome the feeling of being 'de-roled'.

Feminist literature on motherhood helps to disentangle the complexities surrounding the positioning of woman as mother and some of the contradictions and ambivalences that ensue. Gordon (1990) maintains that men and women have different reference points where childrearing is concerned. Men refer to and compare themselves to other men whereas women refer to their role and responsibilities. She asserts that women:

> 'are ideologically and politically outside the mainstream and search for alternative ways to construct their lives.' (1990:97).

Further she maintains that women counteract societal expectations, in other words normative cultural scripts, by enacting alternative strategies. Ribbens' (1994) research notes how when men take up space in the family:

> 'there is potential for disagreements about childcare which may threaten the woman's authority with her children' (Ribbens, 1994:65).

It is suggested here that a sense of being de-roled can be taken as an example of the threat to woman's authority and that, as Sue has illustrated, she reasserted her authority albeit to take up a 'polarised' position within the home.

The narratives here demonstrate the contradiction women felt between wanting their partners to be emotional fathers, yet a reluctance by some (and by others no clear model of how) to let go of certain aspects of mothering. The men too experienced, to varying degrees, tension when they negotiated taking up more time in their homes with their children. This unease had led many to work towards a balance at home and work.

As stated the tensions noted above are typical of the sample as a whole, however through the resolution of these tensions and the attainment of mutual aspirations, 'difference' is illuminated.

> 'I found it really difficult you know, I felt that I was taking her space. We did have some arguments.' (Gordon)

> 'Yes that's true. I wanted him to be here wanted all that. I just found it hard to let go of things. (Laughing) I was the inspector always checking up on things. When Emma was first born I really wanted Gordon to be around more, didn't I?' (Janet)

> 'Yeah - but that's how things were. I wanted to be although I'm not sure what help I'd have been. Just couldn't. Work that's all I seemed to do. Later, well...I wasn't quite sure of the things I should be doing. So I'd turn my hand to very nearly everything. Ah...In some ways it was like asking permission. You know this was her territory. It's easy now.' (Gordon)

> 'It was...well...I guess I wasn't really confident that he'd do things as I did them. He doesn't. But that's OK. It's OK.' (Janet)

Previously, Clive recounted how he felt a degree of isolation from his family due to his job. Once he had gained security and flexibility in his working life this sense of being isolated was resolved. However he too experienced tensions when initially taking up more time and space in his home. Linda also remembers that time well:

> 'Then it was hard. I knew Clive wanted to be here more. You did. I did. But it was the time thing. Nothing got done. I felt that I had to entertain, keep you company. Ridiculous.' (Linda)

'We didn't...I didn't know what to do. I could see you doing everything as usual but it was how to make my way in to that. It's treading on toes. It was difficult. But you, clever, remember how you started giving me little things to do?' (Clive)

'I had to. My day was getting longer and longer I resented that. I had to...I got to dread the days when you were home. But at the end of the day it's to do with compromise. I think first off we just didn't know how to, how it would work.' (Linda)

Many of the preceding quotes emphasise the way in which the women retained their authority by allocating greater practical responsibilities to the men. Men increased their involvement with their children by negotiation with the women. Practical involvement remained gender-divided as women, through their authority, controlled the types of extra responsibilities and duties that the men took on. Therefore egalitarian parenting practice was not developing, indeed this was not the issue. Men wanted a more emotional experience with their children and women wanted to retain a degree of agency and authority over how an expanded fathering developed.

Compromise is a useful concept. Recognising the needs of partners, particularly the needs to work, remain independent and parent in a manner acceptable to both, has helped towards engendering a balance in work and family life. This balance was not necessarily achieved easily it required work and commitment. Also these accounts demonstrate how flexibility needed to be in place in both working and home life. Whereas the fathers utilised the opportunities of flexible employment to be in the home at different times during the working week, their partners needed to adapt their home life to assist with attaining their mutual aspirations as parents and partners. The fathers were aware that by taking on more parenting and domestic responsibilities within the home required renegotiating, to a degree, roles. Equally the mothers were aware that they needed to resolve the tensions they felt when the men first took up

more time and space in the home. Operating family life in this way is seen as different from the way the respondents here were parented. Gordon stated that he:

> 'wanted to be home more. Wanted to be here when normal things were happening. Ah...I wanted, if you like, knew that there was more to it. I didn't want to be like my dad, you know, kept at arms length...It wasn't until I had a say in work that I could make that happen.' (Gordon)

It can be suggested that this highlights the need of Gordon to operate differently than his father. It also shows why and how choices were made thus in a sense encapsulates the areas covered here.

The need to create a balance between their working and home life was uppermost for many. Wanting to be different from their fathers, to resolve the tensions that occurred through the ambivalent father/son relationship which they had experienced was key. Martin and Sue give examples of how their parents see them as parenting differently:

> 'My father thought that we were too child-centred. I didn't want to get into conversation with him about that. He saw me doing whatever I could. He could see how enthusiastic I was...I was, am happy with the way we care for our children. I knew...I wondered if he thought about how I was doing it as opposed to the way he had. But it's only fairly recently that I...well I'm surprised he actually respects the way we operate.' (Martin)

Sue recalls her mother's reaction to Martin being at home when to her he should have been working:

> 'My mother is always ready to give advice. I remember when she used to phone, Martin would sometimes answer and I would have

> to explain that he was taking the day off, working in the afternoon, whatever. She expected us to conform. She expected Martin to do a days work and for me to be a stay at home mum. I always found that strange...her attitude to how we should look after our children. She was never there.' (Sue)

These accounts lead towards a coherent understanding of how and why the men in this project see their fathering as 'being different'. The men perceive their fathering style as a more expanded and more emotionally involved fatherhood than the fathering they received. Changes in the instrumental role, employment, choice, aspirations, mutuality, unease and balance have their part to play. Their partner's views of parenting are important. Although having ideas of how to operate as parents might be one thing, it has been illustrated how difficult it is to put these ideas in to practice. To do so requires a resolution of fundamental contradictions in personhood and motherhood.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has set out to explore why and how the men in this project perceive themselves as operating differently than their father. Difference has been shown to involve subjective notions of fathering thus difference has little to do with egalitarianism in domestic labour but rather more to do with a man's emotional involvement with his children and the belief in feeling more as fathers. In other words, the men in this sample posit an emotionally expanded fathering style. The stated contention is that a number of diverse areas need to be in unison for this to occur. These areas are employment, partnerships, and meanings. It has been shown through the accounts of the respondents that all these areas impact on and inform each other. Highlighted in chapter four was the suggestion that being a part of a family, being children, has had an impact on the types of decisions men make concerning their fathering. Whereas in part this concurs with Snarey's (1993) hypothesis of 'improvement' it nevertheless recognises that men do not unilaterally make changes

for themselves. Improving on the perceived deficits of fathering requires a connection and negotiation between the public and private spheres.

Utilising employment opportunities had enabled some men to renegotiate the amount of time and space they took up in their homes. This renegotiation has not been undertaken lightly and indeed some men and women reported tensions concerning their roles and changes in those roles. Taking the opportunities that a restructured more flexible employment system brings was the starting point of locating difference concretely. It has been seen that taking these opportunities was an active choice and a necessary step in creating a sense of balance between working and home life. It has been suggested that this could be a consequence of the ambivalent father/son relationship that existed when these men were young. The notion of ambivalence is further sustained, as most of the respondents did not reject the traditional instrumental role of fathering completely as seen in chapter three, rather it was the major component of early fatherhood that held a high emotional value. However, it can be suggested that many of the respondents in this investigation have readjusted their level of commitment to the public sphere. It has become clear through their accounts that many, initially, felt the world of paid employment would provide the material security that would validate their definition of fathering. However, this validation did not satisfy the personal inner world of fathering. It can be suggested that some men, as a consequence, have lessened although not completely rejected their commitment to this public realm. This however has been shown to produce certain tensions. 'Tension' suggests a degree of strain even resistance to overt representations of what it means to be a 'good father.' The provider role appears not to have fully satisfied many of the men's own understanding of what it means to be a father. Men wanted more. They wanted more emotionally. The difference that they talk of contain perceptions of equality but when the accounts are viewed as a whole there is more continuity than change in the way domestic and emotional division of labour is undertaken.

Mothers were seen to be important in the types of decisions that were made concerning the tasks the men undertook. Through a mutuality of aspirations (wanting

more) a more coherent sense of fathering and parenting in general seems to have occurred. This is taken as being different from the past and is extended here to include the women. Compromise has been highlighted as a requirement to aid balance not only between work and home but balance within the home itself.

Utilising extra time and space in the familial arena has brought benefits for the men. They report a greater degree of interaction with their children than they experienced with their fathers (narratives of transition). Interaction is also taken as diverse as it can be both active and passive. The men maintain that through this diversity of interaction definitions and meanings of fatherhood are extended. Being around their children more has enabled the men to be more demonstrative and approachable than their fathers. This more than any other area is taken by the men as demonstrating that they are indeed operating and feeling different from their fathers. Thus the nature of 'difference' is emotional. It has been suggested that an exchange of benefits between father and child might be occurring with this diverse interaction. One benefit being that the men here gain meanings of fathering which encompass structural, emotional and expressive components.

The men in this study are in an enviable position. That position enables them to take advantage of the choices they have on offer. Indeed they might enjoy choices and opportunities that are unavailable to some. Needless to say the extension of choice and opportunity might provide a way forward whereby more men can gain the satisfactions and benefits that the respondents here have outlined. A number of men in this study have the capacity to offer the types of employment opportunities that they enjoy. Unfortunately questions on the availability of opportunities for those they manage were not asked. However, it is suggested here that if socially and politically there is an interest and a will to engender involved, emotional and committed fathering, then the men in this project can in some respect contribute to that debate and might even be at the forefront of change.

This chapter has been characterised by 'difference' a difference that is grounded in subjective notions of what and how fathering should be and feel like. The subjective consideration needs to be extended to include an exploration of the masculine parent. Has fatherhood impacted on notions of masculinity? If so how, and in what way?

# CHAPTER SIX

# THE MASCULINE PARENT

## Introduction

An expanded model of fatherhood has been advanced in this thesis. The model shows that both instrumental components and emotional intimacy are defining elements of contemporary fatherhood. It has also been shown that this model precludes a move to egalitarian parenting and that the practice of contemporary fatherhood is not inconsistent with an emotionally expanded fatherhood model. This has been shown through the men's accounts of the domestic division of labour. Although there has been a slight change in the men's organisation of their working lives and in the domestic tasks they undertake, the household division of labour remains gendered and asymmetrical. Nonetheless, the men perceive their fathering as emotionally expanded. However, their account of emotional fathering also remains a gendered account, as the instrumental sphere of activity remains emotionally important to these men and the men describe the emotional connection with their children as specifically masculine. Thus the men have presented gendered accounts of both fathering and emotional involvement. To date this thesis has highlighted transitions. Transitions in masculine identity conjoined with transitions in fathering are the focus of this chapter. This chapter argues two central points. Firstly the experience and meanings of fathering are vitally important for how the men (re)construct their understandings of their masculine identity; in particular allowing them to access or acknowledge a level of emotionality they had not experienced before the birth of their children. However, secondly, the experience and meanings of fathering were in turn strongly influenced by issues of appropriate masculine identity, and the 'emotional' fathering that the men espouse sits firmly within a gender divided and male-specific model of parenting.

'Father' and 'fatherhood' are gendered categories, thus gender identity, masculine identity, will be the main focus here. Concentrating on these subjective aspects of fathering enables the shift from the 'role of the father' to the 'meaning of fathering' to be sustained. Masculine identity will be considered. The respondents' past ideas and understandings of masculine identity are highlighted through the types of activities they undertook before becoming parents. The data suggests that many respondents have shifted their perceptions of their gendered identities with becoming fathers, in other words, fathering has expanded their masculine identities, therefore disentangling the object (father) from the subject (masculine parent) is necessary. There is a need to assess how these men have embodied fatherhood. Here emotionality is key. The emotional meanings men attach to their fathering, as noted through the 'wanting more' model, articulated as a 'narrative of transition' and perceived as 'being different' have pertinence to the men's accounts of masculinity. Whereas the previous chapter explored the emotional differences in childrearing practices intergenerationally, here is an account of how it is defined with reference to the masculine. Within these accounts a narrative of transition is discerned, as shifts in the meanings of masculinity are located.

The impact of fatherhood will be explored with reference to its embodiment. What does it mean to be a masculine parent? How is this practice incorporated into a cohesive self-identity? By investigating these concerns, through the ways the men construct and maintain their identities, an understanding emerges of the degree of autonomy the respondents have in the construction of their masculinity. Assessing how the men respond to and treat their children according to gender gives useful insights into how they view their masculine identities as parents.

This chapter looks at the men's reassessment of their gender identity in relation to the decisions they take to satisfy their identities as masculine parents. Whether identities have been reinforced, strengthened or extended with fatherhood is a consideration. Thus, fathering as it is subjectively experienced is the focus of this chapter. How the respondents experience masculinity in relation to their fathering is the key

consideration. It will be seen through the respondents accounts that purposive, individual action, via the manipulation of opportunities and choices, has enabled many of the respondents to reconsider and redefine their masculine selves.

I propose to examine in some detail the accounts of 5 fathers. Of the 43 fathers, 29 fathers had children of both sexes. 3 will be used in this chapter and for comparison 2 of the remaining 14 fathers will also be used. Looking at the way the men view the gender of their children assists with understanding how they view themselves as masculine parents. While I intend to concentrate primarily on these 5 fathers, I shall also refer to the accounts of fathers used previously and utilise others from the sample.

**Uncovering Masculinity**

Masculine identity, the individually personal, needs to be seen in conjunction with ideas of fathering. Masculinity and fatherhood have rarely been discussed as a unified project rather they have been explained separately as discrete areas of academic interest. When conjoined however clear distinctions can then be argued between structural definitions of fatherhood (that include notions of a gendered division of domestic and emotional labour, and the cultural realm that produces ideals of parenting) and personal definitions of fathering that explores a man's own understanding, definitions and meanings of fathering. Is there a convergence at times between the two, or can they always be viewed as separate? In respect to the participants in this research, alternative definitions are pertinent when articulating personal, historical information about childhood, partnerships and fathering. The fathers in this thesis were not born at the time of the birth of their child rather fatherhood is a long gradual process. Structural, cultural, familial, experiential and interpersonal dimensions collude to make fathers what they are today and what they want to be in the future. Birth therefore is but a mid-point of a fatherhood that is constantly being reworked according to the interplay of the spheres noted. The contradictions felt and experienced throughout these spheres and that concern the

inner and outer worlds of fathering have much to do with redefining masculinity. Masculinity and fatherhood has brought personal challenges for some men whereby they attempt to reconcile the two within a coherent project of the self. Only by engaging with and discussing masculinity and fatherhood in relation to each other can we start to explore what it means to be a masculine parent.

Empirically, masculinity has generally been investigated with reference to class, (Tolson, 1977; Cannan, 1996) physicality and hardness and male violence (Tifft, 1993; Robbins, 1984) have also been analysed. There are problems with much of this literature as it sets up a dichotomist emotional model of the masculine in reference to the feminine. Hardness, instrumental provision and toughness are seen as defining characteristics of heterosexual men as opposed to the emotionality of women. Male emotionality is left implicit in accounts of homosocial friendship groups and male sporting and leisure activities, whilst divergent 'masculinities' to the hegemonic model are generally considered in relation to sexuality (Weeks, 1991; Gibson, 1995). The 1980s and 1990s saw a rise in personal journalistic attempts to understand masculinity and fatherhood (Rutherford, 1988; Parsons, 1999) and women engaged with the need to raise 'feminist' sons (Arcana, 1983; Leach, 1994; Silverstein & Rashbaum, 1994). With all this interesting work going on very little of it explicitly ties masculinity and fatherhood together (Lupton & Barclay, 1997).

Theories of masculinity can be helpful in constructing theories on fatherhood. If fatherhood is being redefined under the same conditions as masculinity (in other words as an ongoing project) and if fatherhood is an intrinsic component of men's masculine identity then such theories can assist in the investigation as to what constitutes fatherhood and fathering today. It has been suggested that with the recognition that diversity existed in the realms of ideas, politics and gender relations in the 1960s and 1970s alternative family formations and roles became evident. Yet still one set of ideals seems to dominate and set the framework by which a normative fatherhood can be discerned and taken as appropriate practice for the majority.

Theoretical frameworks on masculinity focus on the diversity between masculinities, (Carrigan, Connell and Lee, 1985; Morgan, 1992: Hearn and Collinson, 1994). Connell for example notes four broad types of masculinities. Two are of interest to this thesis the first being *hegemonic,* this is the normative ideal that is institutionally sustained yet culturally mediated. Hegemonic masculinity as defined by Connell (1995:76) is not a fixed category:

> 'It is, rather, the masculinity that occupies the hegemonic position in a given pattern of gender relations, a position always contestable.'

However as hegemony denotes dominance, most masculinities are subordinated, *subordination* being the second type of masculinity. Issues of diversity in masculinities have often been discussed in relation to sexuality, but we can also usefully place ideas of fathering in such a framework. In particular, the implication of the emotionality of fatherhood (and its relation to more hegemonic 'instrumental' models) for understandings of masculinities is important, but rarely discussed. Diversity in fathering practice could be subordinated to normative ideals. Politically, culturally and ideologically, fathering practice is advocated by the few and acculturated by the many, in other words normative fathering practice is overwhelmingly aspirational. However we know this not to be the whole case, men challenge this power led view by adapting their fathering styles in negotiation with both their public and private lives. Not only are different forms of masculinity open to change but also different styles of fathering are mediated through cultural and historical considerations. Carrigan et al (1985) cite as one of their analytical aims a need to utilise a theory that alters stagnant debates concerning structure and the individual, society and the person. They advocate the need to view structures as 'both the objects and effects of collective practice' (1985:552). This parallels the suggestion earlier that the relationship between an individual and the structural realm is symbiotic. It is argued in this chapter that fatherhood and masculinity are strongly interrelated, and that both demonstrate elements of structural constraint and purposive

choice and agency. The men in the sample *chose* a particular style of fathering, in accordance with their aspirations for themselves as both men and fathers. As we have seen in previous chapters, the men aspired to be emotional fathers, and argued that their fathering opened up new areas of emotionality for them. However, this was a very specific view of male emotionality. Emotional fathering for the men in the sample was strongly constrained by both their notions of appropriate masculinity and the other, more instrumental elements of fathering, as well as by structural constraints set by wider institutions (such as work) and the negotiated expectations of partners. Neither fatherhood nor masculinity are purely theoretical concepts. They are lived aspects of the individual and have consequences for those who father and those fathered. It is also apparent that fatherhood and masculinity are not fixed categories, they are fluid and shift with the life course. It is this aspect that is considered next.

**The Activities and Identities of Youth**

During the 'father only' interviews, questions were asked concerning the types of activities the men undertook at various times in their lives. Throughout these conversations a common thread emerged: notions of masculinity were being expressed. These highlight possible shifts in the men's understanding and practice of masculinity from youth to fatherhood. When asked about life prior to marriage and having children, when at home with their parents, and the types of leisure activities undertaken, it was common for the men to place these activities in friendship networks. Activities at this stage of life can be placed in a traditional/contemporary continuum of masculinity. These two areas shall be broken down. Firstly types of activities will be explored before linking these to the men's ideas of masculinity when young and when forming committed, romantic attachments.

As we have seen, the men in the sample espoused 'emotional' accounts of their fathering which can be seen to fall within the 'liberal' or 'new man' accounts of masculinity. We can see echoes of this in their accounts of their early lives, which address the enactment of a particular version of masculinity as boys and young adults.

The majority of respondents were young teenagers in the early 1970s. The activities they undertook and the affiliations they made are played out in this context. Keith, the father of 2 sons and 1 daughter, spent much of his leisure time with a group of school friends:

> 'I didn't do much with the family. We all did our own thing. I wasn't into clubs and things like that...ah my brother was not my sisters. I guess...14 or 15 years old it was all gangs. Skinheads, bikers or kids just interested in speedway. Not interested. Buying into that scene wasn't for us. We were more of...well seen as the 'hippies', 'wimps'...We were happy mucking about on the beach or in 'the gardens'. Great place for the girls. That's how we saw it.' (Keith)

Keith continued to explain how leisure activities were tied mainly to group activities and how these and friendships changed with late teenage years:

> 'So, yeah...there was a group of us. We were laid back more interested in doing our own thing than in girls really. Then. The group...we were important. At that age we fumbled. Long relationships were a month or two. I'd always put my mates first. That's the way it was. Nothing heavy. When we started to drive...I guess that's when things started to change. Then girls were high on the list and well...we all went out in one big group and from there we saw each other less and less.' (Keith)

Likewise Andy, a father of 2 sons, had similar experiences. His spare time was generally spent with a group of school friends with an interest in the beach and water:

> 'We were into sea, sand and surf. You know...Beach Boys, yeah and we'd listen to them. We just weren't into that football,

> motorbike thing. We were bloody gentle. Those were the best times...I did do things with the family as well, dinners, holidays formal stuff.' (Andy)

Andy also eludes to how his friends not only shared similar interests but had similar personalities and held similar views:

> 'As I said I couldn't have been friends with anyone aggressive. At school there were different sort of groups going on. The hard nuts and us. Some of those guys got into real trouble. Ah we...we were into fun and didn't need to behave like thugs to get it.' (Andy)

These extracts highlight how these particular teenage friendships were formed and defined through a common interest, location and similarity of personality. Equally they appeared to be defined in relation and opposition to other social friendship groups and around a particular 'style' of masculinity. This concurs with Allan's (1996) analysis of adult middle class friendship formations and Canaan's (1996) association of leisure activities with class and gender groupings.

24 respondents all had friendships whose primary contact was through school. These respondents also spent the majority of their leisure time with their friends rather than with family or engaged in formally organised social and sporting activities.

James, however, divided his leisure time, as a young teenager, between school friends and family. This was common to the remaining 17 respondents including Paul. For James however there was no contact with formally organised groups and in this extract he, like Keith, notes the changes that occurred in his friendships when he started to form intimate, romantic relations in his late teens:

> 'I did lots of things...interested in lots of things. We (family) used to do quite a bit um camping, boats, sailing with my dad. Footie

> with my mates or spending time up at 'the head' and we used to go out to the 'coffee shop' in the evenings. That's where...well that's where we started um beginning to get interested in girls. I remember the ones we liked then came from the girl's school next to ours.' (James)

As the conversation continued James notes the changes in his school friendships. He also points towards how he displayed his masculinity which, at that time, was directed by other expectations:

> 'We all started the girl, boy thing at about the same time. Sometimes we'd all go out together and sometimes not. We'd pair off and do our own thing. Even then I was well...I was quite conscious of not wanting to be seen as well as a lout really. Maybe...well yes I was always trying to consider...It was hard to know exactly what was expected from me... I didn't know how I was supposed to really act so I just tried to be considerate not push anything really. Sex was to mean something you know. Getting drunk and screwing around...no.' (James)

This demonstrates a fluidity in self-identity as different ideas of maleness were being explored: Some were rejected while others incorporated thus aiding in the construction of a self-identity. What is clear from the responses so far is that none of these men wanted to emulate the stereotypical 'macho' male. Studies have shown that the construction of working class male identities follows a similar path to these men (Wallace, 1987; Canann, 1996).

Mike and Derek represent the most traditional fathers in this project. Looking at their leisure activities and friendships gives clues to how they will eventually view their role as fathers and their understanding of what it is to be a masculine parent.

Mike, a father of 2 daughters, went to a local boys grammar school. During his young teenage years his leisure time was mostly spent in formal organised activities and a high proportion of his time was spent with his family. He states:

> 'Well...lets see... School was very important there was a certain pressure there...but fun...well sea cadets every Wednesday evening. I made a lot of good friends there. Actually I guess I made better friends there than school. Still have one or two. Most of my time I spent either with the cadets or at home, listening to music, looking after my sister, doing stuff with my dad. He loved his woodwork and actually I'm grateful now for the things he taught me.' (Mike)

Once again, as with the other respondents, Mike demonstrates and connects changing friendships with his late teenage years. This transition also coincided with a consideration of how he would like to be perceived by others and how he projected himself. He maintained that:

> 'it was after 'A's' it was going to university. That really opened everything up to me. I guess you could say up until then I was really a square. A swat. Girls weren't attracted to that...no...but I didn't see why I had to put that serious side on hold. I learnt to just hold back...um realised they liked the jokers and the boys that would talk and listen. That I could do and yes I was quite popular.' (Mike)

Likewise Derek had little unsupervised leisure time. He too spent a great deal of his spare time with his family although he notes that at that time he did have a couple of good friends, but was reluctant to join larger groups:

> 'We (family) were members of the West Hants (tennis club). I also played cricket and once in a while would spend the odd weekend with a friend at my cousin's farm. We rode and had fun. I was never into that big group thing. It wasn't me. I had my friends and that was fine. Actually later they helped me a lot when it came to girls. They introduced me...got me started...I would look to see how they handled them, how they acted.' (Derek)

Characteristic of all these extracts is the realisation that a masculine identity, as an aspect of a coherent self-identity, was something that was worked at. Styles of masculinity were either accepted or rejected throughout the teenage years. Equally, masculinity as performed (Butler,1990a;1990b; Cameron, 1997) as seen through male sporting activities and activities played out at home, is obvious in some of these statements. Whereas masculinity can be seen to have been played out in this social context, there is little here to suggest that a masculine identify was fixed at this stage in the men's lives. We will see that when the men formed long term committed relationships, not only did friendships change, so too did leisure activities and notions of maleness. Butler's (1990a) ideas on gender performativity are useful here. Butler uses Foucault's idea of the subjection of bodies to formulate a gender analysis. She demonstrates how through the performative and the discursive construction of gender individuals construct meaning for themselves in relation with others. She suggests that we:

> 'Consider gender, for instance, as a corporeal style, an 'act,' as it were, which is both intentional and performative, where 'performative' suggests a dramatic and contingent construction of meaning' (1990a:139).

This illustrates how categories are not fixed but are constructed through performance and interaction. It also highlights how, through the enactment of gender, subjective identities are formed and re-formed. There is no fixed nature. This outlook is useful to

a point as it does help shift the focus to meaning but at the expense of making gender roles inconsequential. By privileging performance, the expression behind an act is relegated. I suggest it is the very expression behind an act that can be taken as emotional. In other words the space between the expression and performance of an act is where fatherhood can be viewed as intimate and emotional. This is the space where meaning is tied to identity and role and expressed through action. These are important aspects of masculinity, the emotional and expressive nature of fathering is an integral aspect of masculinity identity and can be ascertained by the activities that sustain, maintain and extend the meanings men attach to fatherhood.

**The Activities and Identities of Coupledom**

Once long term, committed relationships had formed, group friendships changed and leisure activities altered. When speaking of their leisure activities with their long-term partners, a shift in the respondents views of masculinity can also be discerned. A verson of masculinity emerges which stresses issues of intimacy but also responsibility and dependability.

Whereas Keith's attachment to his friends was strong, as a young man, and this continued through various romantic relationships. Once he met Ros these attachments lessened. He illuminates the changes that took place:

> 'I began to put Ros first. Simple. She became important. Things had changed by then anyway. Most of us had sort of settled down by then so we just didn't get together much. Ros didn't like some of the stuff we did. I guess it's a compromise thing...a different sort of commitment. It was easy with my mates yeah lots of stuff we just took for granted. I couldn't...didn't want to do that with Ros. I wanted her to know that she came first. I wasn't going to be one of those guys that just went off and did their own thing. So we did lots of stuff together. . Weekends in Devon, pictures, pubs,

> concerts. We still do and yeah team up with mates but not very often.' (Keith)

The exclusion of friendship groups from the activities of partners in committed long-term intimate relationships is not unusual for the respondents as a whole and concurs with Banks et al's (1992) consideration of transition in friendships from same sex to partnered. Keith demonstrates how he wanted his wife to know that there was a different side to him, that he did have a serious side and could be supportive:

> 'At first she saw me as this good time guy. No worries. Easy. I needed to show this other side. Actually it surprised me. I could take stuff seriously. I could be relied on.' (Keith)

Andy and James have similar accounts, as do Gordan and Clive and 11 further respondents. Andy stated that when he first started to go out with Shuna they:

> 'did the usual. Still did a lot of surfing, all of us...then things get serious you know. Um...where I wouldn't have done, said some things with my friends I needed to with Shuna. She well, you do, you know...act differently. I could be more tender and at the same time all that reliable, solid stuff. ' (Andy)

James relates that:

> 'We spent evenings at the cinema or at each other's houses. Sometimes we'd all meet up and go out and I still played football on Sundays. It changed. We spent more of our time, just us. You know I didn't really miss the going out and looking. We didn't really see it like that but that's what we were doing. Crude but we were on the hunt. I could relax with Joanne. All the uncertainty of about how to behave, know what's expected had gone. Although

> yeah I had a lot of friends I was never the life and soul...you know the one that dominates the conversation or always has a joke. I was, still am quiet. She liked that...it attracted her.' (James)

These accounts illustrate how the instrumental characteristic of reliance became an integral aspect of their masculinity when in a loving relationship. The solidness of reliance is tempered with an emerging tenderness.

Mike and Derek, on the other hand, tell a slightly different story. Mike continued close contacts with a couple of friends when he went to university, as he has already stated there he learnt to display a personality that he felt was attractive to women. After meeting his future wife Dianna in his first job he was able to revert in some ways back to displaying a personality and identity that he felt was more 'honest':

> 'When I came home from university there was only a couple of people that I looked up. John had gone into the navy and Chris worked in his father's company. We'd go out for a drink, the odd club. That's about it. When Dianna and me first went out we tended to do things with her girlfriends and their boyfriends...I didn't have to do that big act thing. I knew that I wanted to be close to Dianna always and if she liked me it had to be for me and ...well...um she thinks there are certain things a man should do and that suited me, my personality.' (Mike)

Later in the interview Mike explained this further:

> 'As a husband I want to be the one that can provide. That's important, that's part of being the type of man I am. I don't go around setting agendas saying I'll do this and you do that...no...It's working together.' (Mike)

Derek talks about the leisure activities he and his future wife Vicky engaged in and once again there is a clear division between friendship groups and intimate relationships and with the types of masculinity displayed. He states:

> 'Hobbies, things like that...well we did the usual things. Pictures, pubs and dinners out. Vicky liked going out to the clubs once in a while but I really like more quiet pursuits. We used to go out with our friends especially at weekends...days out. Vicky always said I behaved differently when there was a group of us. She complained that I didn't give her much attention and that I was different when we were alone or with our families. It's just that they knew me one way and she knows me another way. I've never had ...um...boisterous personality as such but could put it on be one of the lads if you like. Not with Vicky she can see right through me. She knows I'm yes she would say fun but have this other as she says 'sweet' side.' (Derek)

These accounts illustrate the changing nature of leisure activities with a change in the privileging of friendships from group friendships to romantic, intimate and long term committed relationships. During the teenage years the men here generally perceived there friendships as being of importance and appropriate teenage masculinities were displayed for the leisure environments chosen. With their partners, however, other aspects of their masculinity could be displayed. From these accounts it is interesting to note the types of adjectives these men use about themselves at these different times in their lives. Keith for instance uses 'laid back' to describe his teenage years to 'serious', likewise Andy from 'gentle' to 'reliable and solid'. It is suggested that these highlight shifts in their notions of what it is to be masculine at different times during the life course and depending on the social context in which these are played out.

## The Activities and Identities of Fatherhood

This chapter has, up until now, been concerned with the respondents displays of masculine behaviour through the activities they undertook as teenagers and when forming long term relationships. It has been suggested that these displays alter according to the social context in which they are located. It is therefore necessary to consider the impact of fatherhood on the respondents understandings of the masculine role of parent before going on in the next section to a consideration of how all the different aspects of masculinity are embodied.

This section also highlights how some of these men take a more contemporary, broad view of fatherhood while others a more traditional one yet, paradoxically, as noted in chapter five, the majority of respondents consider themselves as being and operating differently from their own fathers.

When Keith and Ros had their first child, Mat, they had known each other for a total of seven years and had been married four years. Keith was surprised to find that having a baby made him feel as he says:

> 'like probably the same as every new father. I was walking around on cloud nine. I was scared. What was I supposed to do? I just knew I had to protect this new baby. There...when he was born I just made this promise to myself...well to him...I would always be there. So yeah it was weird. I felt I should be all those things you know, strong, make sure things were secure. Do the best I could.' (Keith)

He went on to explain that these feelings were strange to him and conflicted with the views of masculine and feminine that he held up until that point.

> 'I always thought that mum, dad thing was strange. I really thought it didn't matter there was no particular roles as such. But this feeling of wanting to be the one that took care of everything. I've never had it like that...I think I was right it doesn't matter. Ros was feeling just like me, so what does that say. Yeah so we both wanted to do whatever we could and the way I did it then was to work and spend as much time with them that I could.' (Keith)

This conflict is more an expression of unease with the operation of masculinity and the gendered division of emotion than in the previous chapter where conflict was centred round issues of balancing work and home life to make them equally satisfying. Here is a more subjective unease and it is suggested this is to do with changes in the identification of the masculine self with the birth of a child. However stereotypical instrumental characteristics are evident, the need to protect, be strong and provide a secure environment are explicitly articulated as an aspect of masculine parenting. Thus a masculine form of emotionality is expressed.

Andy elucidates this point when he recounts the birth of his first child, Simon:

> 'Bloody marvellous. I felt bloody marvellous...When he was cleaned up..um...when all that stuff had been sorted and I really got a chance to give him a good once over and hold him...well...this...so vulnerable. That's what I thought. He was vulnerable and I wanted to see that things were ok. Always, you know. He was part of me. Needed protecting. I needed to do this. It was the same with Duncan (second child).' (Andy)

When asked how and in what ways he was able to actively satisfy his subjective need to protect, Andy gave an answer common to the majority of respondents. He stated:

> 'Work. Work bloody hard. That's what I did. You know the onus was on me and I liked that. I never thought about something, someone being really dependent on me. Shuna, she's capable, she can look after herself so never thought about protecting her in that way. She wouldn't have any of that. But the kids...well it was like doing stuff for them and me at the same time.' (Andy)

Employment is an activity that ties together the instrumental needs of these fathers with a masculine identity. That identity, with the birth of children, encompasses the need to protect. It has been shown that for Keith and Andy as with 6 of the respondents these feelings to protect were new to them. The remaining 35 men had, in various degrees, taken for granted that this role to protect was a part of who they were as men before having children.

James, father of a daughter and son, stated:

> 'I went through every emotion...well I was...scared, daunting having something that small but well...knowing it was my job if you like to look after her the best way. Nothing over the top. Not like...well my dad came over as well chauvinistic. Didn't mean it I'm sure but he did. It was well I knew it was expected of me. I excepted or if you like expected that as a dad that's what I would be doing.' (James)

Mike remembered and tied these initial memories of fatherhood to activities that he views as appropriate for fathers:

> 'When you hold that baby for the first time, know that you are responsible for it being there, that's one huge responsibility. It's there, in your face. I guess I was proud but I don't think there's anything strange in that. I wanted people to see what sort of dad I

was and that meant showing them that I could look after Dianna and Sarah.' (Mike)

Derek never had any doubts about his role as father and he illustrates how 'father' satisfied a side of him as masculine that was latent until then:

> 'It was always in me. I was...I am the type of man that needs to take the responsibility for certain things. I saw the best way to look after and protect them then was to provide for them. I don't mind being seen as that. Old fashioned. That's what fatherhood is, was then, but they grow up and although yes I still would protect them all, yes physically as well I'm not surprised by any of that.' (Derek)

These extracts illuminate another way that masculinity is displayed. Through employment a sense of protecting and providing for the family is engendered. Throughout this first section the respondents have demonstrated that masculinity is operationalised in various ways during the life course and varies from one type of relationship to another. Whether through leisure activities, romantic activities or parenting activities different aspects of masculinity come to the fore. With that being said there is a need to extend this analysis further. How does the social role of 'father' pervade the men's identity? How is this practice incorporated into a cohesive self-identity? What does this mean for an emotionally expanded form of fathering?

**Role and Identity**

It has been argued in this thesis that fatherhood is a gendered activity: There is something 'masculine' about the way men parent. It has also been suggested that fatherhood is not solely determined institutionally; there is no template that fits or suits all men. Thus men have some say in the way fatherhood is operated, adapting the institutional and structural realms to suit their identities as fathers. At the same

time, however, these realms also aid these men where the identity of 'father' is concerned. Fatherhood is far more than a role, it is a fundamental aspect of masculinity. Fatherhood becomes embodied and entwined with the masculine. This section seeks to explore the issues surrounding how 'father' is taken on as part of a cohesive masculine identity, how this aspect is maintained and how those identities are displayed through interactions with their children that engenders intimacy and emotional closeness.

First there is a need to define the key terms used in this section. Embodiment is taken here as a corporeal and subjective fusion. The modernist project that included the disjunction between mind and body (Descartes, 1968) is rejected here (Shildrick & Price 1998). Viewing the practice and beliefs of these fathers as inextricably bound together highlights the interplay between the father and the structural constraints placed on him. Gould (1988) talking of human agency, argues that both choice and action are needed in self development, these are seen as a process to self development:

> 'of concretely becoming the person one chooses to be through carrying out those actions that express one's purposes and needs.' (1988:47)

Identity, on the other hand, generally 'refers to meanings an individual and others apply to the self in a social role' (Stryker 1980).

The fathers in this project were asked specifically whether being a father had altered their sense of self. The majority of respondents had difficulty answering this. A possible reason for this could be the imprecise or incoherent way the question was phrased. Nevertheless, the majority of respondents took this as a question to do with personality and answered accordingly. This difficulty in being reflective about their self identity was in complete contrast to when the men talked of their relationships with their mothers and fathers and how they saw themselves as 'being different' from

their fathers in chapter four. There are exceptions to this however; Martin, Paul, Peter, Keith, Andy and 9 of the remaining respondents did provide reflective accounts to this question. Keith, for instance maintained that having a wife and children had altered him. He says:

> 'I've changed a hell of a lot. But that's growing up I guess. I used to be so easy going, nothing really got to me that much. Yeah...I'm still laid back with certain things but when it comes to Ros and the kids then no. So yeah I guess I'm not so easy going...It's just that you take on different things it has its effect. But I don't think the changes have been all bad. I guess...yeah cliché...I've grown.' (Keith)

Keith clearly locates changes in his identity and suggests these are displayed through his personality. These changes appear to have been precipitated by becoming a husband and father. Likewise Andy has little difficulty locating change in his sense of self.

> 'Do I think I'm different? Well yes in some ways. I don't think I've dropped anything though. But I have a different outlook. Still easy come and easy go. I'm the one that always sees the silver lining. You know. But I'm prepared to fight my corner now...well...if it's for the others. That's changed and I see that as ok. So sure I guess you can say yes that having the boys has brought that side out.' (Andy)

Further on in the conversation Andy diverted back to this question and added:

> 'Maybe it was a lack of confidence. Maybe the kids have given me that. I'd not thought about it like that before. But you know...you

have to put on this 'I know it all front', 'you can count on me front' for them some times.' (Andy)

What is common to all the accounts here and to come is that all the respondents talked of their children when talking about change in themselves. It is suggested that no other relationship apart from intimate relationships with the mothers of the children have had this type of impact on the men.

The social context of fatherhood is important when considering how as a practice it comes to pervade identity. James shares a similarity to most of the respondents when he speaks of change in himself as a response to other's actions:

'Yes well I...well in some ways I've changed. I'm definitely not as patient. It's all arguments these days. Jill (daughter) winds Richard (son) up all the time. I used to be the one that could calm situations not just with the children...but now...well it's as if some ones got to make a decision to bring things...well...to put a stop to things say that isn't on. Yes so that's something that is different. The thing is...well its hard to say I'm like that because of the children. I might not have been in the situations um I might not have had to be well...hard before.' (James)

There were a small proportion of respondents who felt that there had been no discernible change in their self-identities on becoming fathers and with fathering. Mike is representative of this group. He points to the fact that he might not be the best person to answer the question, but nevertheless his reply is illuminating:

'I suppose I must be different in some ways. I don't know how. That's a hard one because I always knew there were certain things I should be doing. Yeah as a dad. I really find that hard to answer. Should ask Di. I guess I'm the same as I've always been. I always

> knew, I always thought I would take to being a father without too much trouble. (Mike)

Derek on the other hand has no doubts about tieing fathering to his identity:

> 'I'm not sure. I do feel differently about myself. I feel as though I've accomplished quite a lot. The kids are good kids. I take some credit for that so in that sort of sense I think I've altered. And yes I suppose I do feel that things are complete...I've had a hand in bringing up the children in a way that keeps them safe but that's a lot to do with the way me and Vicky are so it's to do with all that...yes so...complete.'

These extracts show how the social context of fathering, the practices and activities of being a father, fundamentally altered the respondents' sense of themselves. Instrumental fathering together with emotional fathering (the liberal model of fatherhood) have opened up masculinity to encompass 'feeling more' as men. Thus the roles and tasks of fathering had an impact on the men's sense of identity and became embodied in such a way that being a 'father' became a core component of what it means to be a 'man'.

The sample represents a section of men that are in many ways privileged. That privilege can be gauged from the degree of autonomy they have in their working lives and thus how they operate as fathers. To continue the shift from analysing structural concerns to subjective concerns the manner by which identities are maintained will be investigated.

When the men were asked to explain how and what gave them a sense of being a father, the explanations vary from those definitions of 'father' noted earlier in chapter four which were largely confined to activities undertaken with children. Thus Keith states:

> 'I guess yeah there's the resemblance thing, looks yeah and temperament. But how do they know they're my kids? They do. I don't think I'd get that even if I looked after some one else's kids. So yeah it's got to do with recognition I guess. They let me know...that's what I'm saying. I get really upset when they're ill. Guess that's because I can't do anything about it. So that's another way I know. And other people, they ask after them, know I'm a dad, so it must be all those things.' (Keith)

As the conversation progressed Keith was asked hypothetically to predict whether there were any circumstances that he could envisage when this feeling of being a father might subside. He suggested:

> 'Yeah if I ever lost contact. As long as I'm here doing the things for them that they need. Working and helping them. As long as I'm doing that and have some say in how that's done then I'm going to feel like a dad. Yeah even when they've left home I can't see that that feeling goes. I am a dad. Everything I do is because of that really. I don't really see how you can stop being something like that. That's sort of impossible when it's you.' (Keith)

Keith's contention is that to feel a 'father' is tied up with receiving affirmation from his children and through providing practical fathering. This again suggests that 'father' has been embodied to become an intrinsic part of his identity and that 'father' has consequences for his sense of himself as a man. Thus fathering has expanded Keith's masculine identity and whereas the instrumental provides a certain fathering satisfaction, it is the emotional connection to his children which he stresses.

Andy outlines those things that give him the feeling of being a father and provides an example of how he maintains those feelings:

'God I don't know how I know...um...they're mine. I can't imagine them doing some of the things they do with anyone else. For a start I let them get away with a lot. I always thought they needed to do there own thing really. Give them as much room as possible. Let them make decisions when they felt they could...They give me a lot of affection...um...love. Ah but not all one-way you know. I don't take that for granted. How many kids turn their backs on their parents? There must be some bloody good reasons for that. It's not worth it. It's a two-way thing...I'll work as hard as I can for them...however...but no...not to the point where it ...well..um ...it does with some...when that's all there is. No what's the use of that? I don't see how they can honestly say they're dads. It's the space thing, you have to work it so you have the space to be with them.' (Andy)

Here time with children is seen as a means for Andy to maintain the feelings of being a father. He suggests that if time isn't given to children then there is a dishonesty being operated. Although judgemental (and he is one of the few to explicitly raise notions of good vs. bad fathering where his contemporaries are concerned) his rationale is similar to the majority of respondents. But once again Andy's response conjoins instrumental with emotional aspects of fathering.

James, however, has little hesitation in answering the question. His reply suggests that he receives affirmation for his identity as father from his children and he realises that this is not a tacit affirmation but constructed through the type of interactions that take place.

'Well you're there from day one. You sort of know them really well and they know you. They have their own personalities and I try to work to that. They know how I feel about stuff and yeah they go over the top at times but they don't want to hurt my feelings. They don't take things too far. You know what it's like. It's the

response you get. Well that's how I see it. You know...nobody else is going to give me the things they do. If you put the effort in then it just comes back...That's what I try to do.' (James)

Mike on the other hand is less emotive and more practical than the others when he states:

'It's to do with being the one that they rely on...in many ways. There are certain things that I do for them that they come to me for. There are other things that they go to Di for. So maybe it's that. They do look up to me... because they usually listen to me I mean they do what I suggest eventually. It's getting harder they're into the poster on the walls stage so boys will be the next thing. I've thought about that.' (Mike)

Derek meanwhile maintains that he gains his feelings of being a father in a manner similar to the others:

'It comes from the things I'm prepared to do for them...not for anyone else... they know that I'll do things for them...but the bottom line is that if I weren't here I couldn't do things, not just the nice stuff I can be the hard nosed dad too. I...well...that's the important thing...they know I will help them. They know they can count on me for certain things, from me because they know I'm their dad.' (Derek)

The common thread in these accounts is that fathers gain a sense of being a father from, primarily, the recognition of their children. Whereas institutionally, through work and family these men are recognised as being fathers it is in the practice of fathering that a subjective understanding of being a father is incorporated into the men's identities and maintained. It is suggested here that through activity, by having a

degree of autonomy in the choices they make over the type of contact they have with their children these men are able to maintain this aspect of their identities. This highlights the interplay between structural constraints and the individual father. The men have adapted their lives at a structural level and applied the benefits of that to the subjective level. Accordingly it is suggested that masculinities are constructed and sustained in social settings by the affirmation of the particular social group in which action is undertaken.

Whereas a consideration has been undertaken to ascertain the impact of outside influences on the fathers here, now attention is turned to highlighting how men operate their understanding of masculine. Analysing the way the fathers treat their children according to gender provides useful insights into how they operate their masculine identities.

**Masculinity in Action**

The respondents were asked whether they encouraged certain models of masculinity and femininity in their children and whether they treated their children differently because of their gender. These questions have pertinence when viewing the fathers own masculine identities as it can illuminate those aspects of gender behaviour that the men see as appropriate.

Keith has three children, Mat 13 years old, David 11 years old and Helen 9 years old. He states:

> 'No I don't think I encourage anything like that. They're free to do anything. I don't...I guess it doesn't matter how they are...I was really tame at Mats age. No harm in that. David's the more aggressive one...I guess I come down harder on him because of that and Helen well she just gets on with her own thing...I guess I help Helen out when the others gang up, tease her, but that's

> because she's the youngest. Don't think its because she's a girl really...she needs someone to fight for her. She can do that herself most of the time. They take it too far. That's all...I don't tell them no you shouldn't do this or that because boys, girls don't do that sort of thing. We've moved on, I couldn't buy into that. Its more to do with the sort of people they are...you know...good kids not into acting like yobs. That's the thing. Yeah so I guess I'd rather have boys who had...weren't loud, aggressive, loutish.' (Keith)

This mirrors Keith's own accounts of how he was as a teenager. He described himself as a 'hippy' a 'wimp', rejected those who behaved loud and aggressively. What is interesting is the way he omits to include Helen in his last remark. Of the 43 respondents 4 from the sample as a whole suggested that boy and girl children should behave in stereotypical gendered ways. Of the respondents used in this section Derek alone had clear ideas about appropriate behaviour.

When Andy was asked to think about the ways he treated his sons, Simon and Duncan, he had this to say:

> 'Well not having a daughter it's difficult to say. I don't think I make them act...well...I don't think, look at them and say you're boys and should do this or that. I think they get that from their friends more than from us...I don't really object to much...they can sit and sew if they want...they can...well they've got to work all that out for themselves really. I guess they see me do things, yes domestic stuff so if that's showing them something then well that's ok...It's...they'll have to look after themselves one day...that's what I need to teach them.' (Andy)

Here it is contended that children would eventually have to care for themselves and to do this sufficiently well requires a degree of self-reliance rather than dependency on

another person. In other words it appears that Andy's concern is to raise children who will be independent and capable rather than perpetuating gender divisions.

James, like Keith has children of both sexes. Whereas Keith states he does not treat his children differently because of their sex, James is aware that at times it is difficult not to. He maintains:

> 'Well yes sometimes I think I probably do...well yes...more to do with their age I think. I mean Jill's ten now and it's not long...well...they say they're maturing young. So that's on my mind I'm aware of it. And yes I don't...wouldn't like her to be seen well as easy so I guess we both try to instil well self-respect I suppose. That's not to say she shouldn't do whatever...she's capable she'll do the things she wants. And Richard, well yes I don't have those concerns that's for sure.' (James)

In this extract it could be suggested that James is not overly concerned with instilling gendered behaviour. His concern appears to be centred on how others might view his daughter as she grows to sexual maturity. Tacitly however a certain image of woman is being encouraged. This also highlights how as a masculine parent he feels the need to have some control over the way his daughter behaves.

Mike is fairly traditional in the way he views his role as father as can been seen in the previous extracts, this is also reflected to some degree in the way he treats his daughters. He states:

> 'I don't know that I'd be that much different if we'd had a son. I've got girls and as a dad that means certain things. You know there are some lads out there that they should stay clear of...I'll make sure they do. Otherwise no...I don't expect them to parade

round in pink dresses or anything as pretentious as that. And I don't see why anything should be closed off to them.' (Mike)

Through his comparison with other types of masculinity Mike hints at his self-identity and the behaviour that he sees as appropriate for men. On the one hand he illustrates how this identity has informed his parenting by suggesting different types of masculine behaviour do occur and, where his daughters are concerned, should be avoided. While on the other hand he instils notion of appropriate masculine behaviour by his own actions.

Earlier it was stated that very few of the respondents held clear views about how male and female children should be brought up. Derek is one such respondent and suggests:

'Yes, having a girl and boy, yes I suppose I do treat them differently. But why not? I'm more hands on with Adam. Play fights, things like that, with Amy I suppose...she's small compared to Adam so tickles, quieter. I think it's important that they look good. I wouldn't like to see Amy wear anything too flouncey and then not a tom boy either. And I think they should be respectful. Yes I do come down harder on Adam but then he's older and should be showing Amy.' (Derek)

Derek illustrates how he differentiates between his children along gender lines. Implicit is a particular model of masculinity which contains the characteristics of guidance and, to some degree, control.

The ways in which the fathers have embodied 'father', and the degree of autonomy they have in their choice of parenting styles is illuminating. They have adopted particular masculine styles throughout the range from traditional and 'new man'. Even as teenagers and young adults we have seen that the respondents selected from

different styles of masculinity and this has carried through to parenting. The respondents' sense of themselves as men is consolidated by fathering in very particular ways. Fathering has expanded the men's understandings of masculinity and but it is important to recognise that this understanding contains both traditional and liberal aspects. As we have seen, the sense of 'traditional' masculinity, incorporating reliability and dependability, is heightened with fathering, as the men spoke with great emotion about the sense of responsibility they felt as male parents. Here we can see a clearly gender-divided set of assumptions. However, the men also spoke of the emotions of parenting in other ways, as they stressed their aspirations for what we might see as a more 'liberal' or counter-hegemonic form of emotional masculinity in which closeness, intimacy and tenderness were stressed. Many of the men spoke of fathering as a set of practices and experiences which had opened up new areas of intimacy and emotionality for them in ways they had not previously experienced. They had become different men as fathers. The men felt that this 'emotional' form of fathering was different to that of their fathers and they clearly felt they were 'choosing' an emotionally expanded form of masculinity appropriate to the structural, familial and traditional constraints placed on their fathering style.

**Reassessments: The case of Maintenance and Extension**

MacInnes (1998) suggests it is fruitless to try and define masculinity. He maintains it exists in ideology and 'fantasy' (1998:2). In other words masculinity is purely an abstract notion. However, 'masculinity' has been shown to have a reality for these respondents. Indeed they have spoken in great depth about their masculine selves. Masculinity was an area that was shown to be of interest to them from the initial conversations undertaken at an early stage in this project. Equally, not only do the men see masculinity as an important aspect to their identity, it has resonance for the interplay between the institutions of employment and family, as it is argued these are gendered spheres of operation.

The respondents were asked to reconsider their experience as masculine parents and to say if and in what ways fathering might have altered their masculine identities. The responses can be divided into two clear sections. First, how fathering had maintained certain aspects of identity and second, how it has extended notions of masculinity and subsequent masculine behaviour. Here we see links between emotionality, instrumentality and manhood.

All the respondents articulated that, when their children were first born, their fathering had not disrupted their masculine identities. Particularly when children were very young, not much had outwardly changed. Childcare and the domestic labour remained heavily gendered divided and the men's fathering was primarily directed towards instrumental provision. The men spoke of themselves as new fathers in terms of having to be 'solid', reliable and dependable; the same terms in which they spoke of becoming partners and husbands. Thereafter, however, other aspects of fathering and masculinity came into play. The men reported an extension of the emotional side of their masculine identity in ways which were at times surprising to them. Keith for instance reported that:

> 'I'm not scared of that commitment stuff so yeah to begin with I could show I was committed to the kids by the practical stuff I could do. That's always been really high up there for me. You commit and do your best...The kids and Ros come first...before anything. Yeah their welfare. But that's not buying into that hard man role, it was doing my bit and yeah it felt good.' (Keith)

As the children grew and reliance on Ros lessened, Keith found he was:

> 'instinctively doing some of that stuff. It didn't feel strange or weird for me to try and soothe them. No. It gave me the opportunity to do that. I have a very tender side and these kids have let me show that...Now well they can come and bawl and

know I'm ok. Yeah I talk about loving and caring to them. Even the pets, that's a good way into talking about that stuff. Yeah so I am I guess a different sort of man than I was before I was a dad. But I was before Ros too.' (Keith)

Keith illustrates the fluid and interactive nature of masculinity. There is a sense from this extract that Keith believes masculinity will continue to be reshaped depending on the circumstance. Of importance is the implicit understanding that not only has fathering expanded masculine identity but specifically fathering has opened up a broader emotionality that is fundamental to that expansion These types of accounts are mirrored by many respondents and Andy is no exception:

'I said I worked hard then. But what else could I bloody do? You know when there's people reliant on you. Yeah, it's not PC to say it, but it did feel good. Well up to a point. I...um...I can see how some men might get off on that. That dominate trip. But that's not me, yeah, sure it's all right for a while. I guess that was the start of being a dad really. Yes I felt a dad.' (Andy)

Here Andy ties the traditional male practice of provider to his identity as a father. He also suggests that he did not take this role as the only way that he could father. Rather, it was the primary practical role taken at that specific time. He does not at anytime suggest it is the defining role of fatherhood or that he defines himself as a father in these terms alone. Rather he suggests that his children help to define his identity:

'They do a lot for me, I do things for them but they let me...well feel stuff that's really deep. If you said or acted on those sorts of feelings somewhere else...well people would look twice. But they've really added to me. They've let things come out that

haven't before. Yes my ideas about being a man have changed, there's so many sides.' (Andy)

James, as with 9 other respondents, including Gordon, highlights this apparent contradiction that Andy speaks of:

'It's safe in a way...you know where you are when there's just the two of you. Well things work. Have a child and well to begin with well everything's up in the air. It's really difficult when you want to do, behave in a way but don't really know how to. So you do what all dads do I guess. Nothing much with them first off. Then well how.. you want to stop them hurting or you really enjoy seeing them having a good time. There's different things. I have changed. I have well a capacity to be there but I mean really there. I guess I knew that but the kids bring it all out...I'm different than before.' (James)

Of all the respondents referred to in this chapter Mike has in many ways been the most traditional. However, when it came to talking about the impact of fathering on his masculine identity, he had this to say:

'I'm so much more of a person, yes if you like, a man. The girls have bought out a side of me that well put it this way it was in a pretty heavy sleep. In some ways I feel I was a kind of robot, following, doing what needed to be done not really thinking why much about anything. I suppose I'm saying that I had a strong opinion about fathers. That's all well and good if you're out of the house, don't see the kids much. But no I didn't see why some things should be closed off to me as a dad. I wanted to do it. I wanted to show this other side. Not all the time. But it's there. That

was a bit of a surprise, it was there and I need to show it, be a dad in every way.' (Mike)

Similarly Derek's account is unusual, in the respect that once again he is one of the most traditional men in this study:

'It's all well and good working your butt off. If that's the way, the only way a man can feel he's a real man, if you like, all I can say is that's sad. They're missing out. Sure you can work and yes I suppose it's satisfying but to do that and not allow yourself to experience something real, all those...well honest feelings that don't depend on anything outside. I'd never had that before. Yes I could look at kids and think yeah, but your own, they bring things out of you that you wouldn't think possible. Yes I've spent time worrying for them over things. Really feeling for them. Yes they've helped me be more feeling, compassionate even.' (Derek)

These extracts highlight how, through structural as well as familial realms masculine identity is maintained. Equally, it has been stated clearly by the respondents that for them masculine identity has been extended with fatherhood. These accounts illustrate how the men view their parenting. They are men who want an emotional attachment with their children, an attachment that the instrumental aspects of care does not solely satisfy, a 'wanting more'. Through the activities that they undertake with their children, although gendered, an emotional closeness is established that expands their understandings of masculinity and fatherhood. This once again points towards the general argument of this chapter, that being, masculinity and masculine identity need to be framed in a social context, and through these diverse contexts changes and shifts can be located.

## Conclusion

Reflecting the stress in this thesis on the meanings of fatherhood, this chapter has investigated fathering in relation to masculine identity, thereby aiding a shift in focus from structural to subjective concerns. How the respondents relate issues of maleness and fatherhood has been the focus. Masculinity has been assessed by investigating the social groupings and relationships the men have engaged in from youth to fatherhood. The impact of fathering has been assessed through its embodiment. Utilising a life course framework has shown the importance of change in the respondent's understanding and operation of masculinity.

The friendship networks of youth were seen to be an important arena where initial understandings of masculinity were played out. Thus masculinity and friendships themselves can be seen to be defined in relation to and in opposition to other types of social groupings. At this stage however it is suggested that a coherent identity was lacking: the men describe their early relationships in terms of a degree of experimentation concerning appropriate styles of masculine behaviour. They were aware of different styles of masculinity and, whilst rejecting some versions, were still trying others out. This lack of coherence can be gauged through change in ideas of what masculinity encompassed with the transition from same-sex friendships groups to intimate opposite sex relationships. These intimate relationships enabled the respondents to disengage from the expectations of adolescent maleness and the behaviours that the friendship groups established to move towards a more 'relaxed' masculine existence with their partners. The men spoke of being able to 'be themselves' with their partners, and of being able to express dependability and tenderness as men. The impact of fatherhood, once again, appears to have altered the respondent's self-identification and understandings of masculinity.

By viewing practice and beliefs as inextricably linked the embodiment of fatherhood can be explored. This has also highlighted the need to consider the interplay between structural constraints and the father. Through the responses it has been seen that the

social context of activity is important. It is suggested that the social action and relationships undertaken as fathers pervades the men's identities and is embodied. The respondents noted changes in themselves as men on becoming fathers and clearly attached these changes to the relationships they had with their children. The respondents identified themselves as being fathers, and this was central to their understandings of themselves as men. Fathering was a key component of their masculinity. This identification appears to be sustained and maintained through the affirmation and reaffirmation of their children and others. Institutionally they are recognised as fathers and through their practice of fathering they gain the subjective understanding of being a father.

However, throughout this chapter certain particularities of masculine parenting have emerged. Earlier, it has been argued that the men in the sample can be regarded as a relatively 'liberal' group, who stress the need for emotional fathering and reject the more traditional models of an earlier generation. Similarly, in their accounts of their younger selves, the men appear to be espousing 'new man' versions of masculinity, rejecting the 'hardness' or 'toughness' of some of their peers. This is carried through as fathers, when the men speak of their need to reject the emotionally dispassionate forms of masculinity of their own fathers. Indeed, the men stress how fathering has enabled them *to feel* more as men than in any of their other relationships. Fathering, then, is perceived as something which generates greater emotionality within masculine identity and thus extends masculinity. However, the 'emotional' fathering that the men aspire to and practice very clearly remains a masculine form of parenting. So whilst fathering has affected the masculine identity of the men, masculinity is still a key component of fathering.

Importantly the instrumental and emotional components of parenting remain strongly gendered divided. The men set out their emotional involvement with their children and how this has engendered a different sense of masculinity for them. The perception they have of an emotionally expanded fathering style is set up as being different from the fathering they received; readdressing the emotional deficiencies of

*instrumentality*. However, as noted throughout, aspects of the instrumental have emotional importance not only for a fathering style but also for the respondents as men. The men spoke, in strongly emotional terms, of the need to 'protect and serve', to provide for their children and act as mediators and protectors. This remained a core aspect of their fathering, and was clearly gender-divided. Moreover, when the men spoke of the need to 'feel more' as fathers, and of the greater emotional intimacy they experienced with their children, we can still see this as being strongly gender-divided. As we have seen, 'emotional' fathering did not require a radical readjustment of the domestic division of labour, and the emotional space that the fathers took up in their families was carefully demarcated from mothering. Therefore being a father, through the activities that are undertaken with their children, engenders an emotional closeness that is defined in masculine terms. A masculine form of emotionality emerges. The men wanted to feel more and be more as fathers yet this is defined in relation to the interplay between the structural, familial and subjective realms.

The men's actions were investigated in relation to the gender of their children. Assessing how the men treated their children according to gender generates useful insights into how they operated and identified as fathers. Although the majority of respondents did not overtly instil gender models (and in many cases explicitly rejected them) nevertheless particular models of masculinity were evident in the different ways they spoke of male children as opposed to female children.

The respondents had reassessed their masculine identities in the light of being fathers. They reported that their identities and the way they behaved as men had changed, characterising this change as an extension of their masculinity. When seen as a whole, in relation to friendships and intimate associations, it can be argued that all their relational experiences have in some ways altered their sense, understanding and practises as men. However, fathering in particular was seen to have allowed the men access to emotions and intimacy which had been lacking before. But rather than seeing this as the overcoming of 'traditional', emotionally deficient, models of fathering, it is important to recognise that traditional aspects of fathering (and of

masculinity) were still retained, and that the new forms of emotionality remained 'masculine' and gender-divided. Overall this chapter has illustrated how fathering has opened up a broader emotionality that has extended the men's understandings of masculinity and what it means to be a masculine parent. However, it is a form of emotionality which is embued with masculine difference.

# CHAPTER SEVEN

## CONCLUSION

This thesis has three objectives: to explore what constitutes contemporary fatherhood and male emotional expressivity for men, to investigate the sociological puzzle of the missing 'new man', and to maintain a shift in focus from the role of father to the meanings of fathering. The aim of this chapter is to draw conclusions from the empirical evidence presented with these objectives in mind.

Chapter one shows how two polarised models of fathering have dominated academic debates about fatherhood. The first model, an older model, is that of instrumental fatherhood, in which the family is governed by a gendered division of practical and emotional labour. The second model, a newer model is predicated on notions of liberalism and egalitarianism. In the older model, fathers are presented as being physically absent from the private sphere of the household, instead being located in the public arena of employment. Mothers are economically dependent in this model, located in the private sphere. Fathers thus have an *instrumental* relationship to the family and their children, as they are financial providers, disciplinarians, worldly guides and mediators between the public and private spheres. However, because of their location in the public sphere, fathers are also emotionally distant and detached from their children, with mothers providing the emotionally nurturant and expressive role. This model informs much of the literature.

Conversely, the newer model of fatherhood is generally viewed as a more liberal form. The liberal father fulfils his responsibilities of fathering by having a closer and more emotionally expressive role in the household. In consequence the father- child interaction is emotionally close. There is symmetry in the domestic division of labour that coincides with a mother's increased engagement with the public sphere. Thus the

'new father' is characterised by his greater involvement in the private sphere that is situated in notions of egalitarianism.

Although classical sociological accounts of the family give little attention to fatherhood per se, nonetheless the instrumental model of fatherhood is central to them. In particular, Parsonian accounts of family change and Sex Role Theory are characterised by an emphasis on the separation of the public and private spheres that divide emotional from instrumental parenting. In these accounts men's instrumental contribution is set in opposition to women's emotional contribution. Whilst such accounts are not explicitly critical of this division (and in fact present it as either functionally superior or biologically driven) it is also clear that fathering emerges in such accounts as emotionally deficient when compared to the much richer and more expressive emotional nature of mothering.

Feminist (Millet, 1977) and feminist psychoanalytical accounts (Chodorow, 1972; Mitchell, 1974) critique the essentialist and biologically deterministic stance of Parsonian and Sex Role Theory, yet nonetheless they still engage with a deficit model of fatherhood. 'Fatherhood' is an insignificant or deficient aspect in much of this work, and men's own accounts are largely absent. 'Fatherhood' is generally assessed through the practical and material care that is undertaken by men, without reference to the emotional support or meanings of fathering, which are assumed to be absent. Consequently a deficit model of fatherhood emerges forcibly through feminist and psychoanalytical critiques. The literature on masculinity follows this path as the father becomes marginalized in discussions of masculine identity.

A similar picture emerges when we move from economic accounts of change in families and parenting to historical and cultural considerations of fatherhood (Pleck, 1984; Gillis,1997). Pleck sets out a four phase model of historical change in the meanings of fatherhood, arguing that fathers have shifted from being 'moral overseers' to 'distant breadwinners' to 'sex role model' and - in the final phase to 'nurturer' as exemplified in the second 'liberal' model of fatherhood. Gillis (1997)

takes the investigation further by considering the symbolic and ritualistic aspects of fatherhood and motherhood. He argues that the historical emergence of 'motherhood' as a clearly defined cultural role also helped to define and delimit the role of 'father'. 'Motherhood' emerged as the site of nurturing and emotionality within the family, and motherhood and fatherhood became defined as opposites. This sets the course for the separated accounts of parenting that marginalized the emotional aspects of fathering and deemed fatherhood as emotionally deficient.

Looking towards more recent accounts of change, chapter one draws on the work of LaRossa (1981) and Hoschschild (1989). Both accounts are economically driven and dependent on women's economic position. Interestingly Hoschschild looks for reasons behind what she terms 'the stalled revolution'. She asks: why are men slow to take up the space at home (including the emotional) when women are not reluctant to engage with the public world of employment? LaRossa, in a similar vein, questions why the culture and conduct of fatherhood are asynchratic.

The argument of chapter one is that much of this work engages with the emotional deficits of instrumentality uncritically. By viewing the instrumental purely in unemotional terms any change in fatherhood towards an emotionally expanded form would require (through these models) a social and cultural leap. However, rather than taking this position, this chapter argues that instrumental fathering must also be explored in terms of its emotional meanings and activities. Instead of looking for the 'new man' that is characterised by liberal attitudes and reflected through egalitarian behaviour, liberal attitudes to fathering and apparently illiberal practice can sit alongside each other, without contradiction, when aspects of the instrumental model of fatherhood (e.g. material provision and discipline) are investigated with reference to how fathers themselves perceive such activities in emotional terms. This chapter sets out the focus and direction of the thesis by engaging with the 'deficit model', questioning the assumptions about men's emotional involvement as fathers that underlies it, and asks how the 'deficit model', which is so widespread in the academic and popular imagination, impacts on fathers' self-identity and self understanding.

Thus the direction away from the 'behaviour' and the practicalities of fatherhood, towards men's own 'meanings' of fathering is set. This chapter maintains that the problem of 'new man' versus 'old man' will not be resolved by advocating egalitarianism, rather we need to investigate how contemporary and traditional models of fatherhood are held by men and recognise that the instrumental may not be as deficient as past accounts maintain.

As this study in centred on meanings of fatherhood, a methodological approach capable of revealing the complexities and issues that inform fathering needed to be established. An analytical framework emerged through an exploratory approach to men's narratives. These narratives are grounded in a life cycle approach. This methodological approach allowed for an exploration of the diverse meanings of fatherhood that men attach to fathering and engaged with men's beliefs and views of fathering.

Chapter three, 'Meanings of Fatherhood', explores how men view the meanings of fathering in general and their own fathering in particular. The chapter addresses two questions. Firstly, how do the men place their own fathering in relation to the dominant script (the instrumental model) of fathering? Secondly, how do the men view the instrumental model of fatherhood? In chapter one of this thesis it has been argued that the 'instrumental' model of fatherhood has been viewed, with little critique by theorists, as an emotionally lacking, distant and uninvolved model of fatherhood. This taken-for-granted notion is explored further in this chapter, which looks at how fathers view their own position as financial providers and disciplinarians. The chapter asks whether fathers themselves share the view of instrumental fatherhood as being emotionally deficient, and explores the emotional meanings of the activities of instrumental fatherhood for them.

The accounts of the fathers in the sample suggest that instrumental fathering held a high emotional value for them. The ability to father instrumentally – that is, fulfilling the role of financial provider and disciplinarian and protector to children – was an

important component to what it meant to be a 'father' for these men. The men spoke of a sense of pride and satisfaction in fulfilling the perceived obligations of instrumental fatherhood, and of the precious responsibility and burden they had undertaken. This sense of pride and responsibility – directly drawn from instrumental provision – was expressed in strongly emotive terms and clearly coloured their view of themselves as both men and fathers. However, whilst the men felt that instrumental fathering gave a strong sense of protecting and providing for their children, they also expressed the view that such aspects of fathering did not engender an emotional closeness with children. This sense of emotional closeness was something that was also clearly necessary to the men's sense of themselves as 'fathers'. The instrumental model, then, did not enable the men to father in a way that was completely satisfying for them. Echoing the standard assumptions of the popular and academic literatures on fathering, the men felt that instrumental fathering was an incomplete or inadequate model of fathering – they felt that there was more to being a father than being a disciplinarian or financial provider. The 'wanting more' that the men spoke of entailed greater emotional involvement with their children than instrumental provision alone could provide. The men in the sample, then, also saw instrumental fathering as in some sense a deficit model.

Existing research on fatherhood has tended to focus on the extent to which contemporary men have been able to 'move beyond' the deficit model of instrumental fathering and to adopt an expanded, more emotionally engaged and practically involved form of fathering. This research, as we have seen, has produced some pessimistic and puzzling conclusions. As we have seen in chapter one, work on the gendered division of labour within households has indicated that, whilst men have increasingly taken on a greater share of domestic responsibilities, women have maintained their domestic responsibilities whilst at the same time increasing their paid work commitments. Thus although there has been some shift in men's responsibilities there is still a far from egalitarian or symmetrical allocation of responsibilities, with a strongly gendered division of labour remaining. In particular, despite the increasing labour force participation of women, childcare remains the

main responsibility of women, with men seen as primary earners within households. It has also been argued that those domestic tasks that men do undertake in the household remain strongly gendered.

Attempts to theorise such relative consistency in the practical allocation of tasks within households have focussed on the apparent contradiction between the continuing gendered division of labour and the increasing stress on the involved father or 'new man' in popular understandings of fatherhood. The work of Hochschild (1990) and LaRossa (1988), for example, examines this gap between avowed beliefs and measured practice. They both present cultural scripts of fathering as a continuum ranging from 'instrumental' or 'traditional' fathering at one end (a model of fathers as economic providers and disciplinarians but emotionally distant) to 'liberal' or 'egalitarian' fathering at the other end (a model of fathers as symmetrical in task responsibility and emotionally involved). However, Hochschild and LaRossa also argue that there may be a 'lag' between beliefs and behaviour. Hochschild attempts to look at the degree of strain that can spring up in the gap between egalitarian views and inegalitarian practice, whilst LaRossa investigates the disjuncture between cultural models of fathering (liberal or egalitarian) and the current conduct or practice of fathering (inegalitarian or traditional).

The implication of LaRossa's 'continuum' of fathering is that beliefs and behaviour are at odds with each other, and that a fully 'liberal' or 'involved' model of fathering would entail a shift in men's conduct, so that an egalitarian division of emotional and practical labour between parents could develop. LaRossa's continuum model implies that 'liberal' approaches to fathering will entail the abandonment of 'traditional' models (if culture and conduct are synchronised).

Similarly, Cohen (1987) also posits a fathering continuum, with a clear transition from 'narrow', traditional notions of fathering to a 'broad', more involved fathering. If the structural opportunities are available then, in Cohen's account, men will take these opportunities to set in place a 'broad' fathering role. In other words fathers can

only have either a 'narrow' or 'broad' fathering style. Again, the assumption is that the expanded form of liberal, emotionally engaged fathering will eclipse more traditional, gender divided and emotionally distant forms. The difficulty with such models is explaining the lack of transition up the continuum to full 'broad' or 'liberal' fathering, given the apparently liberal views espoused by men. Thus LaRossa, for example, argues that there is currently an asynchratic relationship between the culture and conduct of fatherhood. Although men have changed their views about appropriate fathering and adopt a more liberal, egalitarian cultural attitude, LaRossa argues that their practice is at odds with this and remains gender-divided and traditional.

However, the evidence of this thesis is that there is no need to set up a contradiction between the beliefs or meanings of fatherhood on the one hand and the behaviour or practices of fathering on the other hand, if the meanings of fathering are examined in greater detail. What has become apparent from this study is that men's view of 'involved' or 'liberal' or 'expanded' fatherhood is considerably more complex and diverse than academic accounts have allowed. In particular, it is apparent that even men who expressed strongly liberal views and spoke of the need to 'move beyond' instrumental fathering still adhered to the instrumental model in important respects. The emotional importance of instrumental fathering - of the provision of economic support and discipline and guidance – to these men's views of themselves as fathers meant that they did not reject the instrumental model, indeed they saw certain aspects of it positively. They merely wanted to supplement it with greater emotional and practical involvement with their children. Thus, their 'expanded' view of fatherhood (what might be termed the 'wanting more' model) was necessarily shaped by their continuing commitment to key practical aspects of the instrumental model. So, for example, the continuing commitment to their obligation as material provider meant that many of the men remained committed to a gendered division of labour. This necessarily shaped how they constructed 'emotional' or 'involved' fathering.

In the men's own terms, 'emotional' or 'involved' fathering did not entail an egalitarian or gender symmetrical division of emotional and practical labour. Rather,

it meant a commitment to very particular tasks and activities that would enable greater closeness and engagement with their children. However, this did not mean adopting the same tasks or scale of activities that mothers engaged in. Similarly, the sense of emotional connection to their children that the men sought was very particularly a *male* form of emotionality. The 'emotionally close' father was constructed as being different, firstly from their own fathers (who were perceived as operating only the deficit instrumental model) but also from their wives. The emotional connection that fathers felt with their children was not seen as being identical to the emotional connection that *mothers* felt.

The men in the sample clearly endorsed *both* 'instrumental' *and* 'involved' scripts of fathering, so there could be no easy transition of increasing involvement up a continuum from narrow to broad fathering, or from 'traditional' to 'liberal' fathering. Instead, what we can see are various attempts to reconcile different models and meanings of fathering within their own understandings and practice. The men's continuing commitment to 'instrumental' fathering strongly coloured their construction of what they saw as 'emotional' or 'involved' forms of fatherhood.

By investigating the tensions around the meanings of fatherhood and an engagement with the instrumental model of fatherhood (the obligations of economic support and discipline as emotionally satisfying) we begin to see the emotional limitations of this model and how both traditional and liberal views, or in Cohen's usage, how narrow and broad views can be held concurrently by men. Thus this chapter asserts there is no simple fathering continuum. There was no separation between liberal and traditional views as a more engaged and expanded model of fatherhood was tied to a continuing commitment to instrumental fathering.

'Meanings of Fatherhood' makes explicit the emotional dimensions of instrumentality. The men's accounts highlight instrumentality as fundamentally important to their understandings and beliefs of what fathering means for them as men. Instrumentality was seen to be crucial even when the men discussed issues

around 'wanting' and 'being' more as fathers. Traditional fathering was not jettisoned in these accounts. Chapter three shows that the men in the sample saw fatherhood in diverse ways and apparently contradictory and ambiguous elements were reconciled in the men's accounts.

The men acknowledged that fathering could not be defined solely by economic activity. Activity with children (including quiet moments) was seen to both engender an emotional closeness with children and broaden the men's own understandings of what it means to father and to be a father. This consideration opened up the area of the subjective aspects of fathering. The personal *satisfactions and benefits* men gained through their parenting directly influenced their definitions of fathering. Emotional fathering was seen as something which benefited children, but also gave the men a sense of personal fulfilment and emotional self-realisation. Through such activity the men gained diverse satisfactions and these benefits aided an attachment with and commitment to fathering.

Chapter three established that the men in the sample aspired to good fathering in terms of 'wanting more' than the instrumental model of fathering alone could provide. This 'wanting more' is defined in terms of the emotional connection that men wish to have with their children. The importance of this emotional connection was partly constructed from the men's sense of emotional detachment from their own fathers and from dissatisfaction with their own childhood. Chapter four focuses on how the men in the sample had developed 'narratives of transition' in their accounts of fatherhood. These narratives of transition were apparent in the men's accounts of their childhood memories and experiences, in which they compared their own fathering to the fathering they had received as children. The men felt that their fathers had operated an emotionally deficient form of instrumental fathering, but spoke of 'being different' as fathers themselves, seeing their own practice as being more emotionally engaged with their children. The men thus presented their own fathering practice and aspirations as a development on from the earlier, more emotionally distant, and deficient form of fathering of the previous generation. These narratives,

comparing past and present, thus helped to locate their own fathering as an expanded and emotionally involved form.

The model of 'wanting more' thus ties the experience of being fathered to the experience of fathering and in part explains the problems generated through viewing fatherhood from within two discrete models The respondents were aware of the cultural scripts of parenting operating at the time they were children but also aware that the instrumental model was not fully satisfying for them as children, and as such was an inadequate model for them now as fathers. The men wanted to have a different relationship to their children than their fathers had had with them. So the men's accounts of being fathered denote difference in the meanings and practice of fathering. This difference is a move towards emotional fathering.

The men felt that their fathering practice illustrated a greater emotional and practical engagement with their children than they experienced with their fathers. The men define themselves as expressively more open, more accessible with their children and less traditional than their fathers. Thus it can be maintained that the recollections of being fathered, and the comparisons and aspirations this sets up, are important for the construction of contemporary fatherhood. Chapter four focuses on the *meanings* of fatherhood and the men's *perceptions* of change. By assessing their memories and experiences of parental interaction, familial organisation, and being fathered it is argued that the men in this project *perceive* themselves as fathering differently from their fathers. In other words by reflecting on the fathering they received, by revaluating their memories within a discursive context, a narrative of transition ensues which is important for how the men perceive their current practice.

However, the men were aware that their narratives held contradictions, and these very contradictions were used to reconstruct their childhood experiences and their own practice of fathering. One such consequence was the construction of an ambivalent relationship they had with their fathers. A number of the men recognised that their fathers were emotionally distant yet understood this to be economically driven. No

blame was attached, as there was a realisation that larger structural forces were at work. With adult hindsight, and as parents themselves, the men recognised the constraints their fathers had been subject to.

Overwhelmingly, the men in the sample presented their fathers' engagement with them as being active rather than emotionally involved. Indeed, the men would have liked a more emotionally close relationship with their fathers when they were young. Once more this reflects the 'wanting more' model as the men's accounts grapple with their understandings of the deficits inherent in the instrumental model. The men aspired to rectify these deficits in their own fathering, and believed that they had managed to develop a stronger emotional connection with their own children. This chapter does not assess actual shifts in fathering practice as the focus is on perceived changes and the narratives that the men had developed of their own lives.

To argue that actual changes in fatherhood have occurred in the areas noted by the men is difficult. What can be argued is that the men have expressed a clear 'narrative of transition' that when conjoined with the 'wanting more' model denotes difference in the meanings placed on fatherhood and a perception of change. Thus an actual move to egalitarian parenting is not upheld here; rather this thesis rejects that notion. The men remained attached to the instrumental role and their accounts of emotional involvement presents that involvement in ways that remain gender divided. However it was the way in which the men constructed 'emotionally involved' fathering that is important for these men. The crucial understanding that comes from this chapter is that men expressed a narrative of transition that helped to overcome the contradictory meanings contained within both the instrumental and involved models of fatherhood.

Continuing to draw on the notion of difference, as highlighted in chapter four, chapter five asks what constitutes difference for the men in this project? Continuity in themes is also evident in this chapter those themes being: the emotional deficits of instrumentality, wanting more and narratives of transition. The public and private lives of men become integrated by assessing the contradictions for fatherhood

between these spheres. The emotional and structural aspects of fathering were assessed in relation to fathering styles. These styles ran from traditional through to egalitarian. Of particular interest is the way that 'difference' is constructed interpersonally with the men's partners. In other words contemporary fatherhood for the men in this project is neither defined nor operated unilaterally. Mothers' views of fatherhood, mothering, and their own aspirations for coupledom and parenting are important.

'Being Different' engages with the issue of employment and further highlights how this is regarded as an essential element of fathering, particularly the aspect of material provision for children, which sustains the men's commitment to the labour market. Thus for these men it was impossible to be fathers without also being workers. However this position caused inner tensions for these men, which for some were resolved by choosing to take up a more flexible working regime. Taking a 'flexible' approach to employment did not mean adopting an egalitarian approach to parenting. Practicalities of parenting were not the issue, the emotional involvement with children was. For all the men, even those unable or unwilling to operate flexible employment, fatherhood was not so much about doing more, it was about *feeling* more. This is illustrated even in the accounts of those men who held traditional views on fathering and gender roles.

As a woman researching fathering and male emotional expressivity it is important to acknowledge the extent to which this research has been framed by women's perspectives. Women's emotionality has tended to dominate accounts of intimacy, in both popular and academic debate, and the men in the sample were clearly aware of such issues. The methodology of this thesis does, however, raise the question of the 'space' in which men feel able - or encouraged - to talk about male emotionality and intimacy. It should be noted that the access to one group in the sample was via letters taken home through schools and, as such, initial contact is likely to have been mediated by mothers. Similarly, the first interviews with the men were joint interviews with their partners. It may be, therefore, that women's perspectives -

including that of the researcher – were important in shaping the men's accounts of 'emotional' fathering. It is worth asking whether the men were grappling with ambiguities as to whether they are expected – and they themselves expect – to parent more like mothers? Certainly, the men perceived emotional deficiencies in 'instrumental' models of fathering, and at times appeared to be seeking a form of emotional contact with their children that comes closer to more established understandings of parenting as 'mothering'. Yet, at the same time, the men in the sample clearly saw their emotional parenting as distinct from 'mothering' and sought to claim a rather different understanding of parenting as expressed through their provider role. There were thus tensions and ambiguities in the men's accounts and practices, which were part and parcel of their on-going negotiation of 'fathering'.

Using information from the 'couple' interviews, the chapter shows how the women in the sample had very particular views both of the mothering, but also of the fathering, that they wanted for their children. This chapter explores partnerships further, and discusses the negotiations needed so men could attain the expanded model of fathering that they sought. The type of space needed so this expanded model of fathering could ensue is discussed through the accounts of the respondents and their partners. Women wanted their men to father differently, to father emotionally, however this created problems of de-roleing for many. Feminist literature was used to enable an engagement with these complex issues. Gordon (1990) highlights the different reference points men and women have concerning childrearing, and Ribbens (1994) discusses the threats to women's authority that an expanded, more involved, fathering brings. Thus mutuality and negotiations between partners are investigated.

This chapter also makes differences between fathering generations explicit. It was the emotional differences in childrearing that men spoke of. This emotional difference was characterised by an emotional closeness with children. Here the previous chapters come into play: memories of being fathered helped to establish the definitions and meanings the men attached to their fathering style, advancing the

perceived notion that their fathering was indeed different from the fathering they had experienced. Concurrent with this view is that the role of man as father is also different, in other words masculinity has shifted. This is taken up in chapter six. Narratives of transition are not confined to intergenerational shifts, they were also pertinent to the shifts men made throughout their life. Here early fatherhood and later fatherhood were also seen as being different. In considering difference, this chapter progresses through objective concerns towards subjective notions of fathering.

Chapter six explicitly focuses on subjective issues of fathering. A consideration of 'father' and 'fatherhood as gendered categories is explored through the men's accounts of what it means to their identities to be fathers. This chapter links the practice and beliefs of fatherhood and explores how the men embody these. By tracking the activities and identities of youth, coupledom and fatherhood we are able to ascertain how a coherent self-identity is defined, redefined and maintained through the interaction with others. Thus masculine parenting is assessed in relation to the social groupings the men encounter. We see that through all types of relational experiences the men alter their sense of identity. This altering is nevertheless specific as it ties emotionality and fathering concretely to masculinity.

A key feature that emerges through the accounts of the men is how they are able to adapt institutional and structural realms to satisfy their personal definitions of fathering. We see that there is a degree of choice therefore autonomy in the way some men construct and maintain their self-identity. Equally autonomy can highlight the interplay between the father and the structural constraints placed upon him. However the construction of 'father' as part of a coherent identity is not solely dependent on structural issues for the familial arena, memories and motherhood have an impact on the decisions men make and the types of satisfactions they gain through their interaction with children.

The masculine parent is just that – masculine, and fathering is noted by particularities fundamentally not striving to emulate mothering. From this standpoint particular

divisions can be ascertained: of interest is the gendering of emotion. The men note how fathering has extended their emotional lives and in consequence their masculine identities. Throughout this thesis men have been emotionally expressive. We have seen this in the way they talk about the emotional components of instrumentality. Aspects of the instrumental model of fatherhood have been shown to be emotionally important to the men here, but this level of importance is also of relevance to their masculine identities. There are facets of the instrumental that denote masculinity.

In chapter six this aspect is extended when the men reflect on fathering and the particular emotional satisfactions that emerge. Wanting to take care of, protect and be responsible for their families are consequences of fathering that are closely related to ideas of masculinity and male emotionality. The instrumental and emotional realms sit well together as, through instrumentality, the men's ideas of male emotion are expressed through activity. It is through the particular activities that men undertook (and as we have seen throughout this thesis activities remained highly gendered) that an emotional closeness occurred: this aided an emotional expansion to their fathering experience. Thus emotionally expanded fathering is bounded by normative masculine behaviour that does not parallel mothering nor, more specifically, is there the desire by men to replicate motherhood. Throughout this thesis, aspects of the instrumental model of fatherhood have been shown to be emotionally important to the men here, but this level of importance is also of relevance to their masculine selves. There are facets of the instrumental that denote masculinity, such as financial provider, educator, and disciplinarian and men attain a level of emotional satisfaction that relates to their understanding of masculinity by undertaking these responsibilities. Thus emotional expressivity *is* gendered. Fathering is gendered.

The men's narratives and self-understandings of emotional intimacy have to be placed within a wider context. A series of sociological accounts of 'late', 'high' or 'post-' modernity have all made suggestions of a *general* 'transformation of intimacy', not just in the emotional aspirations of men. These accounts argue a greater reflexivity for all individuals experiencing the conditions of 'reflexive

modernisation', with a resultant increasing emphasis on intimate and intense personal relationships (Giddens, 1992, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 1995). Such accounts would therefore place the sample's stress on 'emotional masculinity' within a wider societal shift in the emotionality of all individuals. However, it is important to sound a note of caution about general sociological accounts of a move towards 'disclosing intimacy' and egalitarian emotional arrangements. Jamieson, for example, has argued that a review of the empirical evidence on intimate relationships indicates that 'widespread stories about personal life have changed much more dramatically than private relationships' (1998: 158). She suggests that '"disclosing intimacy" is not becoming the crux of personal life as it is lived, despite a much greater emphasis on this type of intimacy in public stories about personal life' (1998: 158), and she argues that one reason for this is the continuing presence of 'alternative and competing public stories' (1998:159). In this thesis, it has been argued the men in the sample clearly felt the need to engage with notions of an extended (masculine) emotionality, and saw their intimate emotional connection with their children as a crucial aspect of their self-identity. However, the extent to which this translated into the practical rearrangement of their daily lives has been questioned, and it has been argued that other more instrumental discourses of fathering were a central component in how the men ordered their lives.

Throughout chapter six, and the thesis as a whole, the men in this investigation talk of 'wanting more' and 'feeling more'. As chapter six engages with their masculine lives, likewise their emotional lives are made explicit. The men maintain that, throughout their lives, the emotional realm has been opened up in various ways, not least by coupledom and fathering. These have engendered an emotional richness that the men maintain they might not otherwise have known. So, fathering for these men is 'particular' and as stated it is not to do with replicating mothering. To satisfy their emotional needs the men, in part, utilise aspects of instrumentality. Emotional meanings are tied to instrumentality and masculine identity yet, as is illustrated through this chapter, neither emotionality nor masculine identity are static.

Chapter six explores shifts in the men's understandings of masculinity throughout their life course. Fatherhood has engendered one of these shifts. Men experience and operate their masculinity differently than before they were fathers and differently depending on the interaction they are involved in. Their identification with being masculine parents is shown to be reaffirmed structurally, through the familial arena, and subjectively. Thus 'the masculine parent' highlights how 'fatherhood' and 'masculinity' are shifting yet interrelated identities that connect and have resonance with other spheres.

Overall this thesis has put forward certain explanations. An explanation of contemporary fatherhood and male emotional expressivity is offered that takes on board the emotionality of instrumentalism, instrumentality is not rejected. This thesis argues that, when instrumental fathering is explored in terms of its emotional meanings, the implied contrast with 'new man' emotive fathering is less apparent. When considered in these terms, an explanation also emerges of the missing 'new man'. The gap between instrumental and new man fathering is less straightforward and cannot be considered as polar opposites or as the opposite ends of a fathering continuum. This thesis stresses the emotional power of instrumentality and the particular nature of the men's view of expanded fathering. Thus the apparent contradiction between (liberal) beliefs and (traditional) practice is more apparent than real. The way men viewed 'new man' fathering remained consistent with 'instrumental' fathering, requiring only limited renegotiations of household tasks and the gendered division of labour. There was no contradiction between the beliefs and practices of the men in the sample once the complex and particular nature of their beliefs were taken into account.

This thesis has discussed the relatively little change in the domestic division of labour so now we can argue that this is not necessarily the place where we might gauge change. By taking on board issues of gender identity another piece in the puzzle of the missing new man becomes apparent. The majority of the men in this project have liberal attitudes to fathering, yet their practice remains highly gendered or illiberal

therefore not reflecting egalitarian behaviour. However, this must be linked to their understandings and self-definitions of fatherhood and masculine identity. Thus it is maintained that liberal attitudes need not manifest through egalitarian behaviour. It is fundamentally important to recognise the inadequacy of exploring fatherhood purely through the roles played out without reference to the meanings – gendered and emotional – that are implicit in those roles.

What are the consequences for change? The sociological puzzle that emerges through this work is that of the instrumental model of fatherhood as both emotionally deficient and unsatisfactory for men. This thesis however is marked more by continuity than change, particularly in the domestic division of labour. Taking on the implications of the puzzle of the missing new man one must ask, why is there so little change? How can a continued attachment to the instrumental be reconciled with the 'liberal' beliefs the men have spoken of?

This thesis has engaged with the 'meanings' of fatherhood for fathers. By engaging at this level an explanation of why there has been so little change and why it is unlikely that any major change in the domestic division of labour will ensue, becomes clearer. Although the men in this project recognise the limitations of instrumentality they still found certain aspects of the instrumental emotionally satisfying and fulfilling, the provider, educator and disciplinarian being among these. These in turn sustain their self-definitions as men. However the men spoke of 'wanting more'. This 'wanting more' was not to do with an equalising in partner relationships or an egalitarian relationship with the home. The 'wanting more' that the men spoke of was a closer emotional connection with their children. Thus they were not seeking any major domestic change.

Given this paradigm - a continued attachment to instrumentality, wanting a close emotional relationship with children and not wanting to profoundly alter domestic arrangements - then the prospects for change in the division of labour are highly unlikely. However peripheral change can be located. Through the 'wanting more'

model of fatherhood and perceptions of 'being different' a reworking within the instrumental division of labour can be ascertained. The men have made shifts in some practical tasks that they undertake, the activities they do as fathers, yet these shifts are heavily influenced by the type of emotional contact and the consequent emotional closeness that such activities engender. Contemporary fatherhood on the one hand remains masculine and gender divided, male emotional expressivity on the other hand provides an image of 'new father'.

## Appendix

### Letter of Introduction

Dear Parents

I am a research student at Southampton University looking into fatherhood. What are men doing, thinking and feeling as fathers today? Is contemporary fatherhood different from previous generations? Is the role of 'father' changing and if so what does this mean for men, our children, family and working life? These questions show the general area of interest. To find these things out successfully I need the support of mothers and fathers, lone fathers, employed or non-employed of children in the last two years of primary school. I'm asking for help.

My intention is to interview parents together and follow this up by interviewing fathers separately. I hope you would find me approachable and non-judgmental and the interviews as informal as possible thereby providing you with an opportunity to relate your own experiences of parenting. Frustrations, disappointment, joys, a sense of achievement and satisfaction can all come from the emotional and physical involvement surrounding child-care. We hear fathers are becoming more involved with all aspects of child care and much is said about the benefits of this for our children, but are there benefits for men and other family members? Should we assume that all men wish to participate in this 'new man' image, or even want to?

As you see I'm asking for a lot of help. If you choose to assist, and with your permission, the interviews would take place in your home and at your convenience. Each interview should average one and a half hours and will be confidential. If you feel you can help I would be very pleased to hear from you. Not only would your contribution be very much appreciated it will be invaluable. If you would like more information before making a decision then please contact me at the above number. I would however ask all recipients of this letter, if possible, to spend a few moments completing the small questionnaire attached.

Yours sincerely,

# Questionnaire

Fathers' Occupation FT/PT*

Mothers' Occupation FT/PT*

Number of Children Ages Sex

*Full Time or Part Time (Delete as applicable)

Do you wish to participate in this study Y/N

Reasons why:

_____

_____

_____

If Yes

Name:_____

Address:_____

_____

_____

Telephone:(_____) _____

Most convenient time to call_____

**Interviews**

**(Partners)**

Experience before parenting:

- employment
- domestic division of labour
- leisure
- desire to parent

Becoming parents:

- involvement during pregnancy/birth
- expectations/ concerns of what parenting would mean
- changes in roles

Being parents:

- division of tasks
- involvements; work/marital/parental
- changes in relationships; as a couple/friendships

Roles:

- ideas of mother/father role
- how these put into practice, i.e. areas of responsibility
- do these alter depending on the child's age

Parenting as satisfaction:

- for couple relationship
- personal

Parenting as frustrating/disappointing:

- for couple relationship
- personal

**Interviews**

**(Fathers)**

Prior experience:

- family life, siblings, place in family
- parents roles/responsibilities
- parents interaction with each other and children
- positive memories of being fathered
- negative memories of being fathered
- do these inform own way of parenting, i.e. ideas of male/female place in the home, ideas of appropriate masculine and feminine behaviour

Before fatherhood and becoming a father:

- desire for children
- role during pregnancy/birth – happy or discontented with this
- expectations
- opportunity and choice for involvement
- role of working mothers

Being a father. Changes in relationships and values:

- any change in relationships to work, partners, parents
- change in values placed on each
- occupational constraints to fathering

Roles/Status

- primary obligation to children; economic, teacher, protector etc.
- differentiation of responsibility by gender and age of child

- whether implicity or explicitly encourage models of masculinity and femininity
- does either role as father or worker take precedence where self-identity is concerned
- how the father role pervades their social identity

Self: Emotional and attitudinal:

- what gives the feeling of being a father
- benefits of being a father
- issues which cause anger/frustration
- activities that bring pleasure and are self-satisfying
- whether being a father has altered sense of self
- whether fathering has altered view of own masculinity

## Pen Portraits of Respondents

## In Alphabetical Order

### Alan & Paula

Alan and Paula met while attending university and married four years after leaving. Alan is a computer programmer and travels aboard for his company frequently. Paula runs her own business. They have three children: Thomas 12 years old, Dora 10 years old and Charlotte 6 years old. Their eldest child was born three years after marriage. Alan and Paula had traditional upbringings. Alan's describes his upbringing as 'very middle-class'. Alan attended boarding school from the age of seven, returning home for holidays and family occasions. His overriding childhood memory of his father was that of a man who had the last say in everything. He found his father emotionally remote and found it difficult to communicate with him. His mother would write to him at school and his father would add a message to the bottom of the letter usually telling him to behave and do well. Alan was determined that his relationship with his children would be built on affection and not fear. To do this meant having the children attend local schools and being involved in all aspects of their lives. He believes his fathering practice is completely opposite to the fathering he received.

### Andy and Shauna

Andy and Shauna have two sons, Simon and Duncan, 9 and 7 years old. Andy's parents divorced when he was 13. Andy lived with his mother and had good contact with his father. As a family they continued to do 'family things' such as holidays. Shauna and Andy met while at college both studying for their 'A' levels. Shauna continued her studies at university (modern languages) and now works part time as an interpreter, and Andy is a 'systems analyst'. He has a degree of flexibility in his employment this allows him to spend 'more' time with his children than is conventional. Shauna has no set views about a father's role.

**Bill and Amanda**

Bill and Amanda have been married for twelve years although they have lived together for fourteen years. They met while out with friends. They have two children, James 9 years old and Jenny 7 years old. Bill works for the Inland Revenue and Amanda is an accountant. They both work full time hours with little flexibility. Bill's childhood was 'nothing out of the ordinary'. He rarely undertook activities with his father yet understood that his father could be relied on if needed. Bill tended to go to his mother first with problems and she would mediate with his father. Because of this reticence Bill states he is more open than his father and tries to encourage his children to talk through their problems with him. However he recognises that they tend to go to Amanda first yet is reassured as they do talk to him when she is unavailable.

**Bob and Louise**

Bob owns and runs a building contractors firm. His wife works part time at an hotel. They have been married for twelve years and have three children, Ben 9, Sam 5 and Gemma 7. Although they operate their family life in a normative way Bob maintains he is very emotional when it comes to the children. He takes great pleasure in the activities he undertakes with them and tries to 'be there' for them both physically and emotionally. He notes this as a key difference to the way he was fathered. Bob and Louise met through mutual friends and have continued to have an active social life since having children. They state this helps maintain their own intimate relationship.

**Christopher and Kay**

Christopher and Kay met at Kay's eldest sister's wedding. Christopher is Kay's brother-in-laws cousin. They have been married for 12 years and have 3 children, Samantha 12 years old, David 10 years old and Mandy 7 years old. Although they were expecting their first child before they married both state that pregnancy was not the main reason for marrying. They always intended to marry; pregnancy had merely

brought the marriage forward. This did however initially create financial problems for them. They had been living together for a year and had little savings. At the time of their first child Christopher was a carpet fitter and Kay worked as a sales assistant in a high street chemist. Christopher is now overall manager of a local 'tool hire' firm which has four branches and Kay is a qualified nursery nurse and works for the local authority day child-care centre. Christopher maintains that he is more active with his children than his father was with him. He enjoys taking the children out, including activity weekends, without Kay, this enables him to feel very close to them and totally responsible for them at these times. Kay encourages this involvement. Both Christopher and Kay say there are benefits to this involvement one being that the children tend to go to either of them when they have problems or are upset. This, Christopher suggests, has engendered a 'close, trusting and loving relationship' one that he did not experience with his own father.

**Clive & Linda**

Clive and Linda met at secondary school and had an on, off relationship until they were in their early twenties. Clive is a partner in a small engineering firm and Linda is a school secretary. They have 2 daughters, Jenny who is 12 years old, and Lucy who is 9 years old. Jenny was born 2.5 years after marriage. Clive describes himself as being a fairly 'traditional' father although he maintains he has a more emotional relationship with his children than his father had with him. With the on-set of parenthood he felt isolated, and this was the motivation to be more engaged with his children. Linda wanted a traditional family life at the start of parenthood staying at home with the children until Lucy was 7. Both Clive and Linda maintain that choices were available whereby they could be traditional parents and could also follow their own careers when, for them, the time was right. Each believes they are different parents from their own although neither have over-riding negative memories of childhood.

**David and Annie**

David and Annie have been married 12 years and have two children, Ben 11 years old, and Julia 10 years old. David is an accountant and Annie works for a bank. They met through friends. David's father died when he was four years old and his mother did not remarry. He has an elder brother. Although David's father died when he was very young he says he always had an understanding of the types of responsibilities men had. These understandings he gained through his grandfather and his uncles. David found early parenting difficult. He disliked the long hours he worked and felt guilt. David and Annie restructured their home life when the opportunities were available. David was able to be in the home more, take on some of the domestic tasks and be more involved with the children. He sees this as being a clear choice between the material and the emotional and justifies the choices made by stating that he would not know his children as well as he does had they not taken the decision for him to be more actively involved in home life. The major benefits, through taking this choice, has been to extend his own ideas of identity, engendered a close emotional link with his children and sustained his relationship with his wife.

**Derek and Vicky**

Derek and Vicky have two children, Adam 10 years old and Amy 8 years old. Derek and Vicky have been married for 11 years. They met three years before their marriage at a 'jazz night'. Derek is a mortgage advisor for a leading building society and Vicky works at a government department in London. This requires her to commute from her home, on the South coast, to the office four days a week. There is little flexibility in Derek's employment. Derek remembers his childhood with fondness and describes his father as being active but at the same time remote. Derek states he is more emotional than his father but also as traditional as he. Derek takes his responsibility as provider seriously and gains much satisfaction from it. Vicky on the other hand has no overall bias to how fathering should be enacted, believing that it is dependent on the couple to sort out for themselves. In this she asserts that the parents personalities

are key and that, for her, she did not want to 'change' the man she married.

**Duncan and Petra**

Duncan and Petra have been married for fourteen years. They have two children, Harriet 10 years old and a son Charlie 6 years old. Duncan and Petra have tried hard to balance home and work life. Duncan is a technician at a local radio station and Petra is a counsellor working part time hours. Duncan has fond memories of his childhood. In particular, his relationship with his father he describes as close. He wanted his children to have a similar experience although he states that he is more emotionally open than his father. Both Duncan and Petra have liberal attitudes towards parenting, as they each believe that the care of children can be successfully undertaken by either women or men.

**Eddie and Dora**

Eddies parents divorced when he was fifteen. His father remarried and had a further two children. Eddie remained with his mother and elder brother. Eddie describes his father as remote. This remoteness was apparent when his father still lived at home with the family. When his parents divorced his contact with his father became 'hard' and Eddie decided not to see him. Eddie and Dora have been married for thirteen years and have two sons, David 11 years old and Mark 9 years old. Eddie is a financial advisor and Dora works part time at an independent chemists. Eddie takes time to be involved with his children by undertaking activities with them, such as going to football matches, taking them to the different clubs they attend and helping them with their school work.

**Frank & Jennifer**

Frank and Jennifer both had what they term 'normal' childhoods. They met through a work colleague of Jennifer. Jennifer is a full time paediatric nurse and Frank is an

import/export advisor with an international bank at their headquarters in his hometown. They have two children, Helen 9 years old and Darren 7 years old. Jennifer returned to part time working when Darren was three and to full time when he started primary school. Frank is able to operate flexible working hours. This he says is useful with the shifts Jennifer undertakes. However on occasions Jennifer's sister will look after the children. Frank maintains that he is more involved with his children than his father was with him.

**Gary and Sharon**

Gary and Sharon have been married for thirteen years and have three children, Adam 11 years old, Vicky 9 years old and Steven 7 years old. Gary is a computer programmer and Sharon is a part time sales assistant. Gary had an ambivalent relationship with his father when he was young, however they have become much closer in recent years. According to Gary this is because his father takes time to be involved with the children. Gary also takes more time with the children. It is important to him to be there when they need him and not to shut them out. Having children has given Gary great emotional satisfaction and added an emotional dimension that he believes he might not have experienced without children.

**Gordon & Janet**

Gordon is an area manager of an insurance company and Janet is a public relations officer at a large department store. They met through friends and were married for two years before the birth of their first child Emma. Emma is 10 years old and her brother Jake is 7 years old. Janet chose to stay at home until Jake had started primary school. They remember this time as difficult: Gordon was working long hours to financially provide for his family. Gordon is the third of four children. He has two elder brothers and a younger sister. Janet has a younger sister. Gordon remembers his childhood with affection although notes how his parent's roles were heavily gendered. He sees this as different to the way he and Janet operate. Janet believes she

was 'privileged' to have the choice to stay at home but, unlike her mother, never saw this as being permanent. Gordon maintains that fatherhood has not altered him as such but rather enabled him to be 'openly more complete.'

**Graham and Claire**

Graham's father died when he was four years old. His mother remained single although Graham does remember her having male friends. He and his older brother tended to take care of one another and also tried not to 'bother' their mother with their problems. Graham has a large extended family and would go to his grad mother for support. Graham and Claire have been married for thirteen years and have three children. Thomas 11 years old, Jane 9 years old and Joe 7 years old. Graham is self-employed owning a removal firm and Claire is part time phlebotomist at a local general hospital. Claire and Graham initially found parenting difficult; not being sure of the types of responsibilities each should take on. This has been resolved each doing what ever is needed at any particular time ranging form physical, domestic to emotion work.

**Harry and Gill**

Harry's father died when he was two. His mother remarried when he was seventeen and he lived with his mother and stepfather for two years before leaving home and going to university at nineteen. He and Gill met there. After university Gill moved back to her hometown and Harry followed. Harry is a college lecturer and Gill is a 'supply' teacher. They have been married for sixteen years and have three children, Jody 12 years old, Flora 9 years old and John (named after Harry's father) who is 7 years old. They state that they have a fairly traditional family life with although the roles that each has undertaken are changing as the children grow. Harry open to his children's needs, physical and emotional, and maintains that because of this he has gained a level of emotional satisfaction that he cannot get from any other type of relationship.

**Jack and Elaine**

Jack and Elaine have been married for thirteen years and have two daughters, Natasha 11 years old and Caroline 8 years old. Jack is an administrator and works flexible hours, Elaine works as a civilian with the police as a part time radio operator. Jack's childhood memories of being fathered are characterised by remoteness. He maintains that although his father was there and cared for him, he never really felt that his father loved him and was reluctant to go to him with problems. He maintains that the relationship with his father made him aware of the type of relationship he wanted with his children, that is to be there and to be involved in all aspects of their lives.

**James & Joanne**

James and Joanne have two children, Jill 10 years old and Richard 8 years old. James owns and runs an advertising agency and Joanne has no paid employment. Before children Jennifer was a graphic designer. The decision for her to take on the primary responsibility of childcare was something they both wanted. Jennifer plans to return to work once Richard is at secondary school. James describes his childhood as 'good' and his father as active. He enjoys taking his children away for weekends on his own. James works flexible hours. He trusts his team and tends to delegate all but presentations and meeting new customers. This allows him to take time with the children 'as and when needed' or because he 'just wants to'.

**John and Marie**

John and Marie were both only children. John's father died when he was 7 years old. He has no clear memory of the roles his father undertook. He has 'flashbacks' concerning his father but this does not encompass a memory of the type of interactions his father had with him and his mother. His mother remained single after her husband's death. Marie and John were both well established in their respective

careers by the time they met. They were together for six years before they married. John worked, and still works, for the Royal Mail. Marie worked for a local radio station and now runs her own secretarial business from home. They have two children, Alice 11 years old and Tom who is 9 years old. At the time of the first pregnancy John was given a promotion that necessitated a move away from the home during weekdays. They bought a property in this new location after the birth of Alice. These they describe as 'hard times'. John felt isolated from the family and Marie began to resent the disruption to her weekends when John returned home. Once they were together as a family these tension settled. John and Marie see themselves as traditional parents, in the way that domestic work is organised, but not traditional in the way they respond and interact with their children. In this area they see the emotional work as being distributed more evenly, although recognise that the children are the ones who take the decision to go to a particular parent.

**Keith and Ros**

Keith and Ros have two sons, Mat 13 years old, David 11 years old and a daughter Helen 9 years old. They were married for four years before their first child. Both Keith and Ros work full time. Keith is a manager of a local 'light' engineering firm and Ros is a community nurse. Keith is the youngest of four brothers yet preferred to make his own amusement when young. He has no overriding negative memories of the fathering he received. Keith and Ros have a mixture of traditional and liberal views of parenting. They each wanted to follow a gender specific format with their children when they were babies however they stress this was 'easier' than 'going' against the grain'. Both maintain that parenting need not operate this way. Keith sees himself as open emotionally to his children.

**Ken and Fay**

Ken and Fay have been married for fifteen years and have two sons, Daniel 11 years old and Ross 9 years old. Ken is a shop manager and Fay is a part time public

relations officer. Fay wanted children on marriage even though Ken was unsure, wanting to have more time as a couple first. However, after trying for a child for two years and failing to conceive, Ken initiated discussions about 'going to the doctor'. He says there were two reasons behind this, one being to try and push things forward thereby easing his wife's tensions and two, because by then he had realised that children were something that he really wanted. Ken has fond memories of his childhood. He came from a large family, three brothers and two sisters and they would entertain and keep each other company. The memory he has of his father is that of a quiet man who preferred to read rather than play with the children. Ken states he has more day to day involvement with his children but does not phrase this as a criticism of his father.

**Lee and Carol**

Lee and Carol have been married for fourteen years and have two children, Peter 12 years old and Kim, 9 years old. On marriage Lee worked in a television rental shop and Carol worked in a building society. After the birth of their first child Lee felt that his working life was hindering his input into the family. Consequently he and Carol decided to run their own business. They are now joint owners of a photographic company. When looking back they see this as an unsettled time requiring longer working hours than when employed but now think it was a good decision. Lee's memories of his childhood interaction with his father are that of conflict. His overriding memory is that of his father's fierce temper. Lee felt continually on edge and unsure of how to behave when a child so decided to stay 'on the side lines' and be as least disruptive as possible. He maintains that he is far softer than his father although does recognise that his children can continually test his patience. However he states that he wants and he believes that his children have a connection with him that he did not have with his father.

**Lenny and Maureen**

Lenny and Maureen have been married for twelve years and have two sons, Richard 10 years old and Paul 7 years old. Lenny is a librarian and Maureen a music teacher. Lenny's childhood is characterised by what he terms insecurity. His father was in the forces and this meant moving from school to school until eventually his parents decided to place him in a forces boarding school. Lenny preferred this although it took him away from day to day contact with his parents. Because of this disconnection Lenny remembers a remoteness not only with his father but with his mother too. Maureen's attitude to fathering has changed with the aging of her children. When they were babies she held fairly traditional notions of what roles a mother and father should undertake. Lenny followed Maureen's agenda setting but states he always had a close connection with his children even when, practically, he could do little to help with their care. To provide and support his wife was paramount to him at this early stage of parenthood.

**Mark and Sue**

Mark and Sue have three daughters, Rebecca 10, Ellie 8 and Bethany 3 years old. Mark is a social worker and Sue is a section manager of a telecommunications company. Mark's parents divorced when he was ten. He had little contact with his father after that although when they did meet they got on well. When Bethany was born Mark and Sue decided to rearrange their working patterns, Mark working part time and Sue full time. This was decision was heavily influenced by financial need with the children's welfare in mind. Mark thinks the decision they made was a good one. He enjoys being with the children at 'unconventional' times. Sue enjoys her work and states that it does not take away from the way she feels as a mother.

**Martin & Sue**

Martin and Sue met and married within a year. They had their first child, Alex, after two years of marriage and their second child, Megan, three years after that. The children are 11 years old and 7 years old. Sue and Martin moved to France when

Alex was a year old. They stayed for two years then returned home. Martin now teaches psychology and Sue is an art therapist. Both have parents who are divorced. Martin is the second of two children; he has a sister 4 years older. He also has 3 half-sisters and 2 half-brothers. Sue is the youngest of three children having two elder brothers. Martin remembers his childhood well. His mother left his father when he was 5 years old and Martin stayed with his father. He maintains his father is 'emotionally unavailable, self-centred and psychologically unfinished.' Martin does not hold the same values as his father although states that he now understands how important it is to be a provider. Up until fathering he believed that child-care need not be gendered divided. Martin encouraged talk of parenting as Sue had some reservations due to her age. Martin suggests that his upbringing has had an effect on his own fathering, characterising his fathering as being overtly emotional. This caused some tension between Martin and Sue, as at times she felt 'de-roled'.

**Marvin and Vera**

Marvin and Vera met through a local 'cine club'. They were married for 6 years before the birth of their first child Sarah, this birth being a positive result of fertility treatment. Sarah is 14 years old and her sister Rebecca is 11 years old. Marvin has always worked in the travel industry and Vera in local government jobs. They moved from London to their present location when Sarah was 3 years old and just before the birth of Rebecca. Marvin describes his childhood as 'idyllic but strange'. His mother had contracted meningitis when he was 8 years old resulting in a left sided paralysis. Although Marvin had an older brother Marvin shared the day-to-day care of his mother with his father. Martin states that his father was only rarely openly affectionate towards him but they were nonetheless very close. Vera is the disciplinarian as both she and Marvin agree that she is better in this area than he. Marvin gains a great sense of satisfaction from his home life and maintains that actively caring has always been a main part of his fathering.

**Matthew & Laura**

Matthew and Laura have two sons Adam 11 years old and David 7 years old. Matthew is a computer programmer and Laura a geography teacher. They have been married for 14 years and met at a club. Matthews's memories of his childhood are that his parents got on well with each other. His mother worked part time as a doctors receptionist and his father was a mechanic. Matthew describes his father as remote, reluctant to get involved and emotionally unresponsive. Whereas Matthew says he is emotionally open with his children. Both Laura and Matthew have liberal views of fathering. When able Matthew works form home or can build up 'time owing' thereby taking long weekends.

**Mike and Dianna**

Mike and Dianna met through work. Mike is an architect and Dianna a secretary. They have two daughters, Sarah 11 years old and Rebecca 10 years old. Mike has fond memories of his interaction with his father even though his father died when he was 11. After this he felt insecure. Both Mike and Dianna have a traditional parenting style. Each has clear ideas concerning their parenting responsibilities, Mike's being to materially provide for his family. They maintain that because of this clear understanding concerning their roles they experienced little tension between themselves, as a couple, with the birth of their first child.

**Nathan and Julia**

Nathan and Louise have been married for eleven years and have two children, Stuart 9 years old and Helen 7 years old. Nathan is a graphic designer and Julia is a part time ward clerk. Nathan was determined that his children would not have a remote relationship with him as he had with his father. His overriding childhood memory of his father was of a man that did not communicate. He states that at times he found it difficult to talk to his father as his father had a 'barrier' up. Nathan relied on his

mother and brother for emotional support. Louise encourages Nathan's involvement with the children and would like him to be able to have more flexibility in his job as he works a traditional nine to five daily.

**Neil and Lesley**

Neil and Lesley have been married for eleven years. They have two children, Jonathan 10 years old and Rosa 8 years old. They were both well established in their professions before meeting when in their thirties. Neil is a college lecturer and Lesley is a Health Visitor. They decided to start a family soon after marriage, a major consideration being their ages. Neither expected that having children would alter their outlook on life unduly. However Lesley chose to work part time after having the children. Neil states he has great flexibility in his work, he's able to work from home when not teaching. His memories of childhood are 'the usual'. His mother stayed at home to care for him and his sister and his father worked for the local bus company. Neil states that he did not do much with his father and had little to say to him. Neil sees himself as being demonstrative, affectionate and emotional with his children.

**Nick and Pauline**

Nick and Pauline have two children, Kyle 10 years old and Samantha 8 years old. They have been married for twelve years. Nick is in insurance and Pauline is a full time student midwife. Nick has clear childhood memories of his father. He recalls how his father used to discourage open displays of affection. However he remembers his father being openly affectionate to his mother. Nick rationalises this by asserting that his father held very strong views of what a man should do and how a man should behave. Although Nick was always sure that his father loved him he regrets not having an emotional and more demonstrative relationship with his father. Where Nick and Pauline's children are concerned Nick maintains that he is demonstrative with the children and Pauline would not want it any other way. She states that the children go to either of them with their problems with Samantha tending to go to Nick more.

**Owen and Joan**

Owen and Joan met while young teenagers at a youth club. They lost contact for a while and met up again in their early twenties. They married two years after and had their first child, Tom three years later. They also have a daughter Serena who is 8 years old. Owen is an independent financial advisor and Joan works part time in The Citizens Advice Bureau. They both hold traditional views on parenting, Neil taking on the major financial responsibilities of family life and Joan taking on the domestic responsibilities. Although there are clear cut responsibilities for the practicalities of domestic life when they talk of the emotional responsibilities of child care this demarcation is less evident. Owen asserts that a key part of fathering for him is to provide emotional as well as physical support for his children. In so doing he maintains that he has become more openly expressive emotionally.

**Paul & Lorna**

Paul and Lorna met at university and were married for 10 years before they had children. They now have 3 sons, 11, 9 and 6 years old. Paul works as a 'computer software methods consultant' and Lorna is a drama teacher. Both come from traditional family backgrounds. Paul has clear memories of childhood. The domestic division of labour was traditional and Paul's mother had paid employment but worked to suit home life. Paul believes he is more emotionally expressive with his children than his father was with him although Paul had to teach himself to be demonstrative. His father was embarrassed by open displays of affection however this embarrassment did not extend to his mother and he grew up being aware that his parents loved each other. Paul and Lorna initially found parenting very difficult, not least as it impacted on their own relationship and curtailed many of the activities they once enjoyed together. These difficulties have been resolved. Paul maintains that being a father has challenged his own notions of identity, adding to it and aiding his relationship with Lorna.

**Peter & Jane**

Peter and Jane have been married for 13 years. They live with their three children, Gemma 13 years old, Louise 9 years old and David 8 years old. Peter is an optician and works for a national company, Jane has had a variety of jobs but presently works from home. Peter has an older sister whereas Jane is an only child. Jane describes herself as not having a 'maternal instinct' and therefore does not perceive herself as being a 'natural' mother. Having children was not something that she thought about prior pregnancy. Peter on the other hand had always thought that he would father. Peter remembers his childhood as being fairly traditional. Both his father and mother worked and he remembers his father being active with him at weekends but not at other times. Early on in parenthood Peter found employment constrained his ability to father the way that he wanted. With promotions he was able to free-up time to be at home more, these opportunities he extends to his staff when possible. Jane appreciates the amount of time Peter spends in the home, as she did not want to replicate, for her children, the gendered upbringing she received.

**Phillip and Mary**

Phillip and Mary have been married for 15 years and have two children, Richard 13 years old and Sarah 10 years old. Phillip and Mary met through work; he is a hospital manager and she a senior nurse. Phillip's parents were divorced when he was 17 and his mother re-married after he had left home. He gets on well with both his father and stepfather. He has fond memories of his childhood although recognised the tension that existed between his parents during his teenage years. The birth of their first child altered the value Phillip placed on his work. Before parenthood he was committed to his job for the benefit of those using the NHS, with parenthood this commitment was extended to providing a secure home for his family. Mary took her full maternity entitlement with each child thereby enabling her to continue with her career progression. Phillip maintains that he might not have been able to be as involved with the children had it not been for Mary's job. Working shifts meant that both domestic

and emotional responsibilities fell to him at times. He sees this 'extra' involvement as a bonus stating that his children know him better than he knew his father at their age and that there is an 'ease' with their relationship that he never experienced with his father.

**Richard and Sheila**

Richard and Sheila met at university. They continued to see each other after they graduated and describe this as 'casual'. They eventually married after being settled in employment. Richard is a doctor in general practice and Sheila is an English teacher, both work full time. They have three children two boys, Richard and Martin, 11 and 9 years old and a girl, Camilla, 6 years old. Sheila was initially concerned that motherhood would take her away from teaching. She and Richard made the decision that Sheila would stay at home with the children until the youngest was old enough for play school. This she did returning to full time teaching shortly after Camilla's third birthday. Richard's father was also a doctor and his childhood memories of him is of a man more dedicated to his work than his home, preferring the contact of his friends and colleagues rather than his family. Richard does not criticise seeing this as a 'normal' thing that fathers did. He however is active with his children, taking them on trips, helping them with homework and supporting and encouraging their sporting and musical talents.

**Ross and Pat**

Ross and Pat have been married for fourteen years and have two daughters, Mary 10 years old and Elizabeth 7 years old. Ross is employed as a sales representative and Pat is a part time sales assistant. Ross regrets that his job restricts the amount of time he has to spend with the children and his wife and would like to be in the position to spend extra time. In this respect he sees a similarity with his own father although he is unsure whether his father would have necessarily spend the extra time on him. Ross's father did undertake activities with Ross but these reflected his father's interests more

than his. Ross maintains that fathering has opened him up emotionally he sites missing the children as evidence of this.

**Shane and Barbara**

Shane and Barbara have been married for twelve years and have two children, Sharon 10 years old and Michael 7 years old. Shane is a self employed accountant and Barbara is a part time housing officer. Shane describes his childhood as 'frightening' and insecure. This insecurity is centred on his father's behaviour. Shane's father worked hard to support his family but on occasions Shane remembers him coming home after work and drinking to the extent whereby he became verbally abusive to his mother. He felt incompetent, as he believed he should have been able to 'protect' her. Shane sees his own fathering style as a clear reaction to his childhood. Barbara states that Shane can be over sensitive at times however this in itself encourages the children to be demonstrative and openly affectionate towards him. This display of warmth and the feelings it engenders for Shane is something that he believes only his children can give him. He states that his relationship with them is unique and no other relationship can match it or matters more.

**Sheridan and Liz**

Sheridan is a violinist with a local orchestra and Liz is a private singing coach. They met when Sheridan did a workshop for the local youth orchestra. They have been married for fifteen years and have two sons, Damon 13 years old and Mat 10 years old. Sheridan has fond memories of his childhood. His father was very active with him, his brother and sister, and remains so. They frequently go to football matches together and his father helps with the children. Sheridan enjoys the type of flexibility his job creates. When not rehearsing his time is very much his own a part from performances and daily practice. This flexibility allows him to have a considerable amount of contact with his children. Financially providing for his family is important to him but so too is his need to be involved in all aspects of his children's lives. Liz,

although wanting and appreciating Sheridan's fathering style, initially found it difficult maintaining that she was unsure of her role. These tensions have been resolved and they maintain they have achieved a balance based on their abilities.

**Simon and Natasha**

Simon is a web designer and his wife Natasha works part time at a local chemist. They have two children, a son Gary, 11 years old, and a daughter Kate 8 years old. Simon was an only child and states his mother spoilt him. The time he spent with his father he describes as 'special' as they did not often do things together. Simon and Natasha met through Natasha's brother. They were married three years before having their first child. Natasha wanted to stay at home while the children were young but appreciates and encourages Simon's fathering. Simon maintains that he is more open with his feelings toward his children than his father was towards him and that his children reciprocate emotionally.

**Steve and Caroline**

Steve and Caroline met and married within a year. They have been married for twelve years and have three children, Emma 11 years old, Phillipa 9 years old and Mark 7 years old. Steve is 'area small business advisor' of a national bank and Caroline is a speech therapist working full time. Steve describes his family life when a child as 'normal'. His mother did not have paid employment thereby undertaking most of the care for him and his younger sister. His father provided the financial support for the family. He remembers family days out and extended family gatherings but did not do much with his father alone. He has a clear memory of his father slapping his back on his tenth birthday when he was expecting a hug. Since then his father has not been tactile with him although he is with his grand children. Caroline and Steve operate their family life through the opportunities that are available. Steve, although having some degree of choice where his work is concerned would have liked, particularly when the children were younger, the opportunity to officially take time off rather than

reorganising his work schedule. Steve maintains that being a father is something that he always wanted and says he is surprised by the deep emotional bond he has with his children.

**Stuart and Amy**

Stuart and his wife Amy are both civil servants working full time. They have been married for 16 years and have two daughters aged 9 and 14 years. Stuart describes his upbringing as traditional. His father was a sales representative for a building firm and his mother worked part time in a guest house. Stuart and Amy met through a mutual friend and were married 9 months after that first meeting. They had their first child, Charlotte, 2 years later. Amy and Stuart decided that Amy would take maternity leave and then return to full time work. Stuart's overriding memory of his father, when he was young, was that of a gentle but distant man. He likes to think his father is emotional but is not certain. Stuart asserts that he has a closer emotional relationship with his children than he had with his father.

**Tom and Jackie**

Tom and Jackie have two children. The eldest, Susan, is 12 years old, and the younger James is 10 years old. Tom is a self-employed engraver and Jackie works part time as a clerical assistant. This is Jackie's second marriage, her first lasting a year. There are no children from this marriage. Both Tom and Jackie are only children and Jackie's mother died shortly after her marriage to Tom. Tom describes himself as being very pampered and spoilt by his mother but his father treating him with 'coolness'. He remembers clearly the detachment he felt from his father and maintains that this was because his father showed little affection towards him. Tom and Jackie did not want this father-child relationship to extend to their children. Initially, with parenthood, both wanted a 'traditional' family and Jackie did not expect to return to work. However with time she felt she wanted to contribute financially to the family and did so. Tom maintains that the way their family operates

is fairly traditional but differs by the way the emotional work is less gendered divided. He openly encourages his son to be demonstrative and to talk about his problems and believes this attitude has helped him to communicate more affectively with his children. Tom finds it difficult to disassociate himself with being a father as it pervades all areas of his life.

**Will and Christine**

Both Will and Christine are solicitors who run their own practice. They have been married for thirteen years and have two children, Harry 11 years old and Beth 7 years old. Will's father died when he was 5 years old and his mother remarried when he was 8 years old. Although having no clear memory of his father he remembers clearly the fathering he received from his stepfather. His stepfather was distant until Will became a teenager then his stepfather became more involved with him, taking him out and teaching him to fish and helping him with school projects. Although Will's stepfather was not openly affectionate towards him, Will never the less understood that his stepfather did care for him. Will and Christine are both liberal in their attitudes to parenting believing that parenting roles are ascribed. They each want their children to be able to go to either of them with their problems and it is in this area that Will gains his greatest satisfaction as a father.

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