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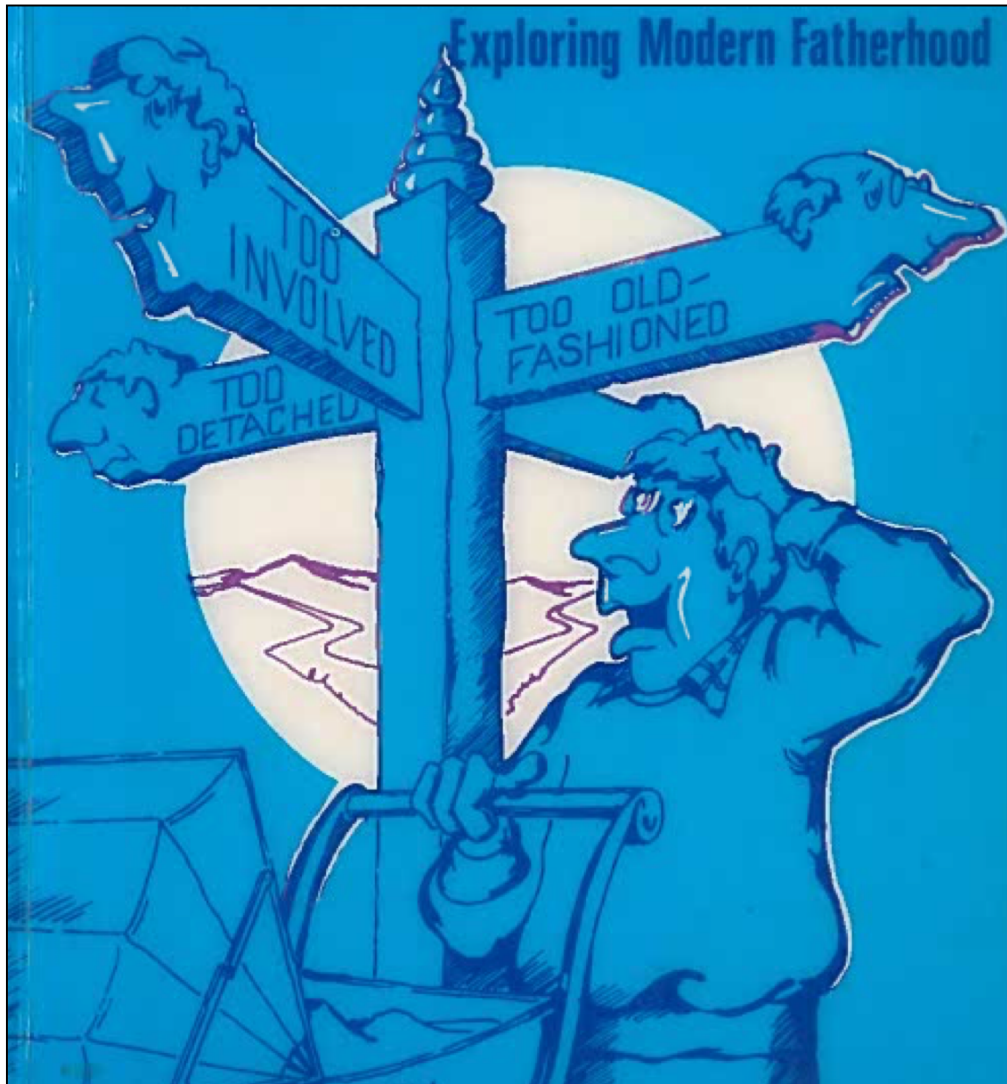
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# **‘On the Margins of Family and Home Life?’ Working-class Fatherhood and Masculinity in Post-War Scotland**



Source: R. Seel, *The Uncertain Father: Exploring Modern Fatherhood* (Bath, 1987).

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## **DECLARATION**

I declare that this thesis has been composed solely by myself and that it has not been submitted, in whole or in part, in any previous application for a degree. Except where stated otherwise by reference or acknowledgment, the work presented is entirely my own.

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis examines working-class fatherhood and masculinities in post-war Scotland, the history of which is almost non-existent. Scottish working-class fathers have more commonly been associated with the ‘public sphere’ of work, politics and male leisure pursuits and presented negatively in public and official discourses of the family. Using twenty-five newly conducted oral history interviews with men who became fathers during the period 1970-1990, as well as additional source materials, this thesis explores the ways in which their everyday lives, feelings and experiences were shaped by becoming and being fathers. In examining change and continuities in both the representations and lived experiences of fatherhood during a period of important social, economic, political and demographic change, it contributes new insights to the histories of fatherhood, gender, family, and everyday lives in Scotland, and in Britain more widely. It argues that ideas and norms surrounding fatherhood changed significantly, and were highly contested, during this period. Fathers were both celebrated as ‘newly’ involved in family life, signified by rising attendance at childbirth and increased practical and visible participation in childcare, but also increasingly scrutinised and deemed to be losing their ‘traditional’ breadwinning and authoritarian roles. Although there were significant continuities, a combination of factors caused these shifts, including the changing structure and composition of the labour market, deindustrialisation, the increasing participation of mothers in employment and second-wave feminism. Shifting ideas about gender relations were also accompanied by changing understandings of parent-child relationships and child welfare, in the wake of rising divorce and the growth of one-parent families. In highlighting the complexity and diversity of fatherhood and masculinity amongst working-class men, by placing their relationships, roles, status and identities as fathers at the forefront, and by speaking to men themselves, this thesis adds an important and neglected insight to the Scottish family and provides a fresh perspective on men’s gendered identities. Fathers were central to, rather than on the margins of, family and home life, and fatherhood was, in turn central to men’s identities and everyday lives.

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## INTRODUCTION

In 1999, during a debate about ‘fathers in the family’, Lord Northbourne, the cross-bench spokesman for families and children, asked the Government, ‘what is the role of fathers in our society today?’ Some ‘fifty years’ prior, he noted, the question ‘would not have been worth asking’:

The role of a father was to protect and provide for his family, to love and cherish them, and to set a good example to his children...for tens of thousands of years the responsibilities of fatherhood were clearly understood...the same is not true today.<sup>1</sup>

Northbourne’s observations highlight a number of important themes about fatherhood in the late twentieth century. Notably, it reflects the issue of change over time, as well as the extent to which fathers were the feature of intense public and political debates surrounding gender and the family that emerged in the wake of significant social, economic and demographic change in the decades following the Second World War. The changing composition and structure of the labour market, second-wave feminism and an increase in divorce, cohabitation and remarriage, were central in facilitating cultural shifts and new discussions about fathers. Moreover, it demonstrates the negative characterisation of these debates, seemingly indicating that men did not ‘understand’ the responsibilities of fatherhood or their role in society. During this period both masculinity and fatherhood were seen to be entering a period of ‘crisis’ at the same time as the nuclear, heterosexual family, with men either unable, or unwilling to, care and provide for their families.<sup>2</sup> Northbourne was praised for bringing ‘the vulnerable position of fathers’ and one of the ‘most important and serious issues in social policy’ to the forefront: ‘men with no role in their families and families without fathers.’<sup>3</sup> Concerns about what fatherhood meant, who the father should be and what

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<sup>1</sup> Hansard, Fathers in the Family (HL 02 November 1999 vol 606 cc801-19).

<sup>2</sup> J. R. Gillis, ‘The Marginalisation of Fatherhood in Western Countries’, *Childhood*, 7(2), (2000), pp. 225-238; G. Jagger and C. Wright, ‘End of Century, End of Family?: Shifting Discourses of Family Crisis’ in G. Jagger and C. Wright (eds.), *Changing Family Values* (London, 1999), pp. 17-36; R. Collier, ‘Men, Heterosexuality and the Changing Family: (Re)constructing Fatherhood in Law and Social Policy’ in G. Jagger and C. Wright (eds.), *Changing Family Values* (London, 1999), pp. 38-58; B. Hobson (eds.), *Making Men into Fathers: Men, Masculinities and the Social Politics of Fatherhood* (Cambridge, 2002); J. Lewis, ‘The Problem of Fathers: Policy and Behaviour in Britain’ in B. Hobson (eds.), *Making Men into Fathers: Men, Masculinities and the Social Politics of Fatherhood* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 125-149.

<sup>3</sup> Hansard, Fathers in the Family (1999).

he should do, further highlights a preoccupation with the meanings of parenting and, more specifically, the gendered differentiation between motherhood and fatherhood.

Uncertainty regarding the role of the father during this period was also evident in the work of social researchers. Deborah Lupton and Lesley Barclay described fatherhood as a 'rather amorphous phenomenon', Louie Burghes, Lynda Clarke and Natalie Cronin noted 'neither roles nor behaviour are as clearly or definitely socially defined as they once were', while Peter Moss maintained that 'what fatherhood was is perhaps fairly clear, what it might become is less so.'<sup>4</sup> While fatherhood was a phenomenon around which there did indeed exist many and often competing discourses as well as practices during the late twentieth century, the notion that the roles and responsibilities of the father were easily defined, homogenous or fixed in the past, for 'tens of thousands of years' no less, was unfounded. Fatherhood is instead shaped by the material and cultural characteristics of the historical period, and has always been subject to change. Historians of fatherhood have shown that 'fathering meant different things, at different times, to different actors: much depended on the context.'<sup>5</sup>

'Father' refers to the biological or social relationship whereby men come to be attached to a particular individual, whilst 'fathering' denotes the personal experiences, actions, and activities that men, as fathers, engage in. 'Fatherhood' refers to the wider societal-historical context in which fathering takes place and the social, cultural and political representations, ideas and discourses of men as fathers.<sup>6</sup> Like motherhood, it is a socially constructed category and, as this thesis examines, there were significant shifts in the ideals and norms surrounding fatherhood over the second half of the twentieth century.<sup>7</sup> Fatherhood is also a legal status. As noted, the legal rights and responsibilities of men who are fathers, whether married or unmarried, separated or cohabitating, biological or 'social', became an increasingly contested issue in the late twentieth century.<sup>8</sup> During this period, the historical role of marriage as a way of legally attaching men to children was affected by demographic changes in family

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<sup>4</sup> D. Lupton and L. Barclay, *Constructing Fatherhood: Discourses and Experiences* (London, 1997), p. 3; L. Burghes, L. Clarke and N. Cronin, *Fathers and Fatherhood in Britain* (London, 1997), p. 9; P. Moss (eds.), *Father Figures: Fathers in Families in the 1990s* (Edinburgh, 1995), p. 4.

<sup>5</sup> J.M. Strange, *Fatherhood and the British Working Class, 1865-1914* (Cambridge, 2015), p. 2.

<sup>6</sup> T. Miller, *Making Sense of Fatherhood: Gender, Caring and Work* (Cambridge, 2010), p. 6.

<sup>7</sup> E. Dermott and T. Miller, 'More Than the Sum of its Parts? Contemporary Fatherhood Policy, Practice and Discourse', *Families, Relationships and Societies*, 4(2), (2015), p. 9.

<sup>8</sup> JRF, *Fathers, Marriage and the Law* (York, 1999).

formation and dissolution, and by developments in genetic testing and reproductive technology.<sup>9</sup> Legally, fatherhood is treated variously through genetic, social or marital ties to children, the rights and responsibilities of which can be awarded on different bases, with the possibility of different men sharing the status of fatherhood and playing important roles in a child's life.<sup>10</sup> Fatherhood is therefore a diverse, fluid and ambiguous concept, associated with different meanings in different contexts.

Despite continuing contemporary debates surrounding fatherhood, as well as a growing historiography, its history largely remains 'an untold story.'<sup>11</sup> Scholarship on fatherhood in the twentieth century is in its infancy, and in Scotland, remains almost non-existent. Here, understandings and experiences of working-class fathering are particularly marginalised. Using original oral histories and a range of additional source materials, this thesis examines working-class fatherhood and masculinities in post-war Scotland, with a particular focus on the late twentieth century. In exploring the lived experience of fatherhood and by talking to men themselves, it recovers fathers from the margins of family and home life; contributing new insights to the histories of fatherhood, gender, family, and everyday lives in Scotland, and in Britain more widely.

### ***Fatherhoods and Masculinities***

Whilst there is no shortage of histories of men, the history of masculinity - the study of men as gendered beings - is a relatively recent area of interest.<sup>12</sup> Prior to second-wave feminism, gendered notions of 'separate spheres' impacted significantly upon historical narratives: 'the private sphere of family and household was women's - and thus outside history - just as the public sphere belonged to men and should therefore be written about without reference to women.'<sup>13</sup> While feminist research subsequently retrieved women and their public lives from historical obscurity, it also placed gender as a central

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<sup>9</sup> R. Collier and S. Sheldon, *Fragmenting Fatherhood: A Socio-Legal Study* (Oxford, 2008); 'A Hard Time to be a Father? Reassessing the Relationship between Law, Policy and Family (Practices)', *Journal of Law and Society*, 28(4), (2001), pp. 520-45.

<sup>10</sup> R. Collier, 'Fatherhood' in P. Crane and J. Conaghan (eds.), *The New Oxford Companion to Law* (Oxford, 2008). In contemporary society, the law is moving to a position in which a mixture of genetic links, marital ties, and demonstrated intention to create and care for a child can each be relevant in determining who is a 'legal' father. Moreover, paternity can now be established with a high degree of accuracy through blood tests and DNA fingerprinting.

<sup>11</sup> L. King, *Family Men: Fatherhood and Masculinity in Britain, c. 1914-1960* (Oxford, 2015), p. 5.

<sup>12</sup> J. Tosh 'The History of Masculinity: An outdated concept?' in J. Arnold and S. Brady (eds.), *What is Masculinity? Historical Dynamics from Antiquity to the Contemporary World* (Basingstoke, 2011), pp. 17-34.

<sup>13</sup> J. Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (London, 1999), p. 4.

category of analysis.<sup>14</sup> Masculinity became recognised as a ‘problematic gender construct’ and from the 1980s academic studies began to explore men’s experiences of ‘being men.’<sup>15</sup> Masculinity has since been shown to be multiple, dynamic, and culturally as well as historically specific. *Manful Assertions* by John Tosh and Michael Roper, for example, provided case studies of time-situated masculinities from 1800 to the 1980s, emphasising their ‘divergent, often competing and above all...changing forms.’<sup>16</sup> Diverse masculinities exist in particular times, places and cultures, and are always subject to change. They are, as leading masculinities theorist R. Connell notes, ‘in a word, historical.’<sup>17</sup>

A focus on ‘multiple masculinities’ further encompasses men’s gendered identities as constructed and experienced in relation to other markers of identity such as class, age, ethnicity and sexuality.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, Connell’s concept of ‘hegemonic masculinity’, though contested, has been influential in understanding hierarchies among masculine constructs.<sup>19</sup> It refers to the dominant codes of ‘being a man’ which are legitimised as ‘normal’ and ‘natural’ regardless of how much they contrast with the everyday lives of men, most of whom ‘live in a state of some tension with, or distance from, the hegemonic masculinity of their culture/community.’<sup>20</sup>

Historical and contemporary explorations of men as gendered beings, and controversial debates surrounding fathers, has meant fatherhood, and its relationship to masculinity, also emerged as an area of academic interest.<sup>21</sup> While sociologists

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<sup>14</sup> M. Francis, ‘The Domestication of the Male? Recent Research on Nineteenth and Twentieth Century British Masculinity’, *The Historical Journal*, 45(3), (2002), p. 638; J.W. Scott, ‘Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis’, *The American Historical Review*, 91(5), (1986), pp. 1053-1075; K. Harvey and A. Shepard, ‘What Have Historians Done with Masculinity? Reflections on Five Centuries of British History, circa 1500-1950’, *Journal of British Studies*, 44(2), (2005), pp. 274-280.

<sup>15</sup> See e.g. M.S. Kimmel (eds.), *Changing Men: New Directions in Research on Men and Masculinity* (London, 1987), p. 10; A. Brittan, *Masculinity and Power* (Oxford, 1989); M. Mac an Ghaill (eds.), *Understanding Masculinities: Social Relations and Cultural Arenas* (Buckingham, 1996); A. Clare, *On Men: Masculinity in Crisis* (London, 2000); R. Connell, *The Men and the Boys* (London, 2005). While the study of masculinities grew from the 1980s onwards, fatherhood was not a pivotal focus of early work.

<sup>16</sup> M. Roper and J. Tosh, *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain since 1800* (London, 1991), p. 1.

<sup>17</sup> R. Connell, *Masculinities* (London, 1995), p. 185.

<sup>18</sup> J. Arnold and S. Brady (eds.), *What is Masculinity? Historical Dynamics from Antiquity to the Contemporary World* (Basingstoke, 2011).

<sup>19</sup> R. Connell, *Gender and Power* (California, 1987). This concept has been used widely in gender studies in many disciplines but has also attracted considerable criticism. For an overview see R.W. Connell and J.W. Messerschmidt, ‘Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept’, *Gender and Society*, 19(6), (2005), pp. 829-859.

<sup>20</sup> Connell, *Masculinities*, p. 11.

<sup>21</sup> Historical studies of fatherhood expanded significantly and more rapidly in the American context. See e.g. E. A. Rotundo, ‘American Fatherhood: A Historical Perspective’, *American Behavioral Scientist*, 29(1), (1985), pp. 7-23; J. H. Pleck, ‘American Fatherhood in Historical Perspective’ in M.S. Kimmel (eds.), *Changing Men: New Directions in Research on Men and Masculinity* (London, 1987), pp. 83-98; R. L. Griswold, *Fatherhood in America: A History* (Minneapolis, 1994); R. LaRossa, *The Modernisation of Fatherhood*



researched fatherhood from the late 1970s and there is substantial research on the place and role of fathers in contemporary society, historians have only relatively recently begun to explore the meanings and experiences of fatherhood, and the place of men within the home and family.<sup>22</sup> There exists, for example, a growing body of work on middle-class fathers in Britain in the nineteenth century and earlier, which illustrates how domesticity was integral to middle-class masculinity and that fathers then, as now, were bound to their children by ‘powerful and primitive emotion.’<sup>23</sup> Tosh has dispelled the myth of the distant, forbidding Victorian patriarch and uncovered evidence of very involved fathers in nineteenth century England; suggesting that men were significant and present within the home and fathers achieved considerable levels of intimacy with their children.<sup>24</sup> Eleanor Gordon and Gwyneth Nair also maintain that there was ‘complexity to the constitution of fatherhood’, arguing that parental roles were conceived, interpreted and experienced in varied ways. In their study of middle-class Victorian Glasgow, they found tender, caring and affectionate fathers who revelled in family life, far removed from the stereotype of ‘remote and stern paterfamilias.’<sup>25</sup> Earlier still, Joanne Bailey has argued that ‘feeling’ and ‘tenderness’ were emphasised in constructions of mid-eighteenth and early nineteenth century fatherhood in England and that fathers sought to combine such ideals with economic provision within their own identities: ‘the good father was tenderly affectionate,

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(Chicago, 1997); R. LaRossa, *Of Men and War: World War Two in the Lives of Fathers and their Families* (Chicago, 2011); S. Bruzzi, *Bringing Up Daddy: Fatherhood and Masculinity in Post-War Hollywood* (London, 2005); J. W. Leavitt, *Make Room for Daddy: The Journey from Waiting Room to Birthing Room* (North Carolina, 2009).

<sup>22</sup> For the sociological studies on fathers and fatherhood see e.g. L. McKee and M. O’Brien (eds.), *The Father Figure* (London, 1982); C. Lewis, *Becoming a Father* (Milton Keynes, 1986); R. Lewis and M. Sussman (eds.), *Men’s Changing Roles in the Family* (London, 1986); C. Lewis and M. O’Brien (eds.), *Reassessing Fatherhood: New Observations and the Modern Family* (London, 1987); Moss, *Father Figures*. For contemporary studies of fatherhood see e.g. A. Doucet, *Do Men Mother? Fathering, Care and Domestic Responsibility* (Toronto, 2006); E. Dermott, *Intimate Fatherhood: A Sociological Analysis* (London, 2008); Miller, *Making Sense of Fatherhood*; A. Burgess, ‘Family Man: British Fathers’ Journey to the Centre of the Kitchen’, [www.fatherhoodinstitute.org.uk/](http://www.fatherhoodinstitute.org.uk/), accessed 25 Nov 2013.

<sup>23</sup> Tosh, *A Man’s Place*, p. 100. In the UK, historical studies of fatherhood have largely centred on middle-class fatherhood, in the nineteenth century, often in England. See e.g. L. Davidoff and C. Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, c. 1780-1850* (London 1987); M. Doolittle, ‘Missing fathers: Assembling a History of Fatherhood in Nineteenth Century England’ (PhD Thesis, University of Essex, 1996); L. Davidoff, M. Doolittle, J. Fink, and K. Holden, *Family Story: Blood, Contract and Intimacy, 1830-1960* (London, 1999); E. Gordon, and G. Nair, ‘Domestic Fathers and the Victorian Parental Role’, *Women’s History Review*, 15(4), (2006), pp. 551–559; E. Ewan and J. Nugent (eds.), *Finding the Family in Medieval and Early Modern Scotland* (Aldershot, 2006); T. Broughton and H. Rogers (eds.), *Gender and Fatherhood in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 2007).

<sup>24</sup> Tosh, *A Man’s Place*; J. Tosh, ‘Authority and Nurture in Middle-Class Fatherhood: The Case of Early and Mid-Victorian Fatherhood’, *Gender and History*, 8(1), (1996), pp. 48-64.

<sup>25</sup> Gordon and Nair, ‘Domestic Fathers’, p. 554.

sensitised and moved by babies; he provided hugs, material support and a protective helping hand.’<sup>26</sup>

Collectively, this scholarship challenges assumptions that fathers in the past were ‘respected but feared’ and remained ‘invisible, distant and aloof in their parenting roles’, or that close father-child relationships are a distinctly modern development, a product of the 1970s or later.<sup>27</sup> Fathers have been much more involved in family and home life than has been historically assumed. Moreover, it highlights the way in which fatherhoods, like masculinities, are culturally and historically specific. With its emphasis on diversity, fluidity and hierarchy, the framework of masculinities is therefore a helpful way of enriching understandings of fatherhood. As Bailey notes, it provides the opportunity to explore ‘how far fatherhoods were competing, overlapping or in tension’ in public discourses, as well as how individual men interacted with these when constructing their identities.<sup>28</sup>

The growing literature exploring fatherhood indicates that historian John Demos’ assertion that ‘fatherhood has a very long history, but virtually no historians’, no longer holds true.<sup>29</sup> Nevertheless, the emphasis on middle-class fatherhood in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries signifies, however, that certain groups of fathers and certain historical periods, remain overlooked. The history of twentieth-century fatherhood, for example, ‘remains neglected.’<sup>30</sup> Out with general histories of family life, very few historians have examined fatherhood as a specific experience during this century. Julie-Marie Strange’s recent book explores *Fatherhood and the British Working-class* in the period c.1865-1914, while Tim Fisher’s unpublished thesis research focuses on the representations and experiences of working-class fathers in Britain between 1900 and the outbreak of the Second World War.<sup>31</sup> In providing one of the very few articles to explore fatherhood in Scotland, Lynn Abrams has examined working-class fathers in the late eighteenth and early twentieth centuries, and Laura King has

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<sup>26</sup> J. Bailey, ‘A Very Sensible Man’: Imagining Fatherhood in England, c.1750-1830’, *The Journal of the Historical Association*, 95(319), (2010), p. 291.

<sup>27</sup> T. Jump and L. Haas, ‘Fathers in Transition’ in M.S. Kimmel (eds.), *Changing Men: New Directions in Research on Men and Masculinity* (London, 1987), p. 98.

<sup>28</sup> J. Bailey, ‘Masculinity and Fatherhood in England, 1760-1839’ in J. Arnold and S. Brady (eds.), *What is Masculinity? Historical Dynamics from Antiquity to the Contemporary World* (Basingstoke, 2011), p. 175.

<sup>29</sup> Demos quoted in LaRossa, *The Modernisation of Fatherhood*, p. 3.

<sup>30</sup> L. King, ‘Hidden Fathers? The Significance of Fatherhood in Mid-Twentieth-Century Britain’, *Contemporary British History*, 26(1), (2012), p. 26.

<sup>31</sup> Strange, *Fatherhood and the British Working Class*; T. Fisher, ‘Fatherhood and the Experience of Working-Class Fathers in Britain, 1900–1939’ (PhD Thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2004).

recently produced the first comprehensive academic history of fatherhood in Britain between the First World War and 1960.<sup>32</sup>

As well as being a very recent development, the history of twentieth century fatherhood is therefore also mainly focused on the first half of the century.<sup>33</sup> No historical study currently explores fatherhood post-1960, despite the important social developments that occurred during this period. Economic, cultural, demographic and political changes disrupted family and gender relations and, as this thesis examines, affected the ways in which fatherhood was conceived and experienced. Gender identities defined by employment and position in the family were challenged by the changing nature and meaning of work, particularly in Scotland in the wake of deindustrialisation.<sup>34</sup> In the first half of the twentieth century, the heavy industries of coal mining, iron and steel manufacture, engineering and shipbuilding, dominated the Scottish labour market. Working in such manual labour, as well as the ability to earn a wage for one's family, were central to definitions of working-class male identity and masculinities were formed within and through these industrial work cultures.<sup>35</sup> The transition from manufacturing to services, a rise in maternal employment as well as wider changes to welfare and education in the post-war period, rendered the connection between manual work and masculinity less tenable and weakened the material base and ideology of fatherhood in terms of sole financial provision. Industrial employment declined by approximately one-third between 1966 and 1981 in both Scotland and the UK, amounting to over 300,000 jobs in Scotland.<sup>36</sup> 100,000 Scottish manufacturing jobs were lost during the 1970s alone, at a rate faster than the rest of

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<sup>32</sup> L. Abrams, 'There was Nobody like my Daddy': Fathers, the Family and the Marginalisation of Men in Modern Scotland', *The Scottish Historical Review*, 2(206), (1999), pp. 219-242; King, *Family Men*. For other exceptions e.g. T. Fisher, 'Fatherhood and the British Fathercraft Movement, 1919-1939', *Gender and History*, 17(2), (2005), pp. 441-62; F. Mort, 'Social and Symbolic Fathers and Sons in Post-war Britain', *Journal of British Studies*, 38(3) (1999), pp. 353-84.

<sup>33</sup> The history of the family after the Second World War 'remains in its infancy.' P. Thane, 'Introduction: Exploring Post-War Britain', *Cultural and Social History*, 9(2), (2012), p. 271; A. Davis, *Modern Motherhood: Women and the Family in England, 1945-2000* (Manchester, 2012); M. Peplar, *Family Matters: A History of Ideas about Family since 1945* (London, 2002); S. Innes and L. McKie, 'Doing What is Right': Researching Intimacy, Work and Family Life in Glasgow, 1945-1960', *Sociological Research Online*, 11(2), (2006), [www.socresonline.org.uk](http://www.socresonline.org.uk), accessed 19 Aug 2016.

<sup>34</sup> P. Payne, 'The Economy' in T.M. Devine and R.J. Finlay (eds.), *Scotland in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (Edinburgh, 1996), pp. 13-45; L. Paterson, F. Bechhofer and D. McCrone, *Living in Scotland: Social and Economic Change since 1980* (Edinburgh, 2004).

<sup>35</sup> A. McIvor, 'The Realities and Narratives of Paid Work: The Scottish Workplace' in L. Abrams and C.G. Brown (eds.), *A History of Everyday Life in Twentieth Century Scotland* (Edinburgh, 2010), pp. 103-130; R. Johnston and A. McIvor, 'Dangerous Work, Hard Men and Broken Bodies': Masculinity and in the Clydeside Heavy Industries, c. 1930 - 1970s', *Labour History Review*, 69(2), (2004), pp. 135-152.

<sup>36</sup> N. Buxton, 'The Scottish Economy, 1945-1979: Performance, Structure and Problems' in R. Saville, *The Economic Development of Modern Scotland 1950-1980* (Dundee, 1985) p. 49.

the UK.<sup>37</sup> As men and women's participation in the labour market converged considerably, mass and long-term unemployment also grew from the 1970s onwards, with heavy industrial areas, including West-Central Scotland, experiencing the highest rates. By 1997, the male unemployment rate in Scotland was higher than the female rate.<sup>38</sup>

The story and process of deindustrialisation, however, is not merely an economic one or 'a "body count" of manufacturing jobs', but a social, cultural and political phenomenon which shapes and reshapes places, cultures, and identities over time.<sup>39</sup> Daniel Wight's ethnographic study of a mining village in Lanarkshire in the early 1980s, for example, depicted 'a sexually segregated society' wherein domestic work, employment, leisure and consumption were all significantly structured by gender.<sup>40</sup> Key aspects of working-class masculinity within the community included the moral worth attached to providing for the family through hard physical labour, in which earning a wage, and one's reputation as a 'worker' rather than 'waster' asserted masculinity. Masculine identity was also directly expressed through consumer power, namely alcohol consumption. With an unemployment rate for males over sixteen at 37% in 1982, however, the study nevertheless highlights the way in which these long held and widely accepted gendered roles and behaviours were increasingly challenged by economic instability and rising female employment, and depicts men struggling to maintain their self-esteem in the face of mass unemployment.<sup>41</sup> In the decades that followed Wight's research, gender relations 'permanently changed' within many households in mining communities and other industrial settings, as more women became dual and primary financial providers.<sup>42</sup>

Significant changes were also occurring in families and households from the post-war period onwards, particularly in the last decades of the twentieth century. The rise in divorce, cohabitation and remarriage, although not new, also led to the

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid, p. 61.

<sup>38</sup> H. Young, 'Being a Man: Everyday Masculinities' in L. Abrams and C.G. Brown (eds.), *A History of Everyday Life in Twentieth Century Scotland* (Edinburgh, 2010), p. 132.

<sup>39</sup> J. Cowie and J. Heathcott, *Beyond the Ruins: The Meanings of Deindustrialization* (New York, 2003) in T. Strangleman, J. Rhodes and S. Linkon, 'Introduction to Crumbling Cultures: Deindustrialization, Class and Memory', *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 84 (2013), p. 8, J. Rhodes, 'Youngstown's 'Ghost'? Memory, Identity, and Deindustrialization', *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 84 (2013), pp. 55-77.

<sup>40</sup> D. Wight, *Workers, Not Wasters: Masculine Respectability, Consumption and Unemployment in Central Scotland: A Community Study* (Edinburgh, 1993), p. 18.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, p. 25.

<sup>42</sup> A. Perchard, "'Broken Men" and "Thatcher's Children": Memory and Legacy in Scotland's Coalfields', *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 84 (2013), p. 90.

‘restructuring’ and increasing diversity of family life; as did trends towards fewer children, later in life, outside of marriage.<sup>43</sup> The number of births in Scotland declined by almost 40% between 1971 and 2001, while the proportion of births to unmarried parents increased almost five-fold over the same period.<sup>44</sup> As Gordon has argued, family life in the period since the Second World War has been ‘distinguished by rapidity and profound nature of change...[though] many of the most significant changes did not take place until the 1970s.’<sup>45</sup>

Moreover, there were shifting ideas about childhood, child rearing and personal relationships during this period. One of the key changes considered to have occurred was the increasing significance placed upon intimacy in family and marital contexts, including an intensification of discourses surrounding self-disclosure, emotional commitment, equality and understanding.<sup>46</sup> This affected cultural meanings of parenthood and parent-child relationships, as well as attitudes to the care and nurturance of children. Parents increasingly desired, and were expected to be, highly present, involved and engaged with their children in diverse ways, and there were changing ideas about the role of parents on child development and child welfare. Elizabeth Roberts’ study of *Women and Families* in the period 1940-1970, for example, found that during this period families became ‘more child-centred’ and parents increasingly ‘more aware of the emotional, psychological and intellectual needs of their children.’<sup>47</sup> Roberts’ study participants aspired for their children to have a ‘better life’ and remain unburdened from responsibility for as long as possible, concepts she argued were relatively new to the working-class. The more general move towards home and child-centred family life was made possible by increasing standards of living and housing, as well as growing affluence and consumerism, ‘which brought more living space, more toys, and a culture of more play into home life’, experienced albeit

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<sup>43</sup> Scottish Executive, *Family Formation and Dissolution: Trends and Attitudes among the Scottish Population* (Edinburgh, 2004); K. Hinds and L. Jamieson, ‘Rejecting Traditional Family Building? Attitudes to Cohabitation and Teenage Pregnancy in Scotland’ in J. Curtice, D. McCrone, A. Park and L. Paterson (eds.), *New Scotland, New Society?* (Edinburgh, 2002), pp. 33-64. Diversity and instability have always been features of family life. See e.g. ‘A History of Working-Class Marriage in Scotland 1855-1976’, [workingclassmarriage.gla.ac.uk/](http://workingclassmarriage.gla.ac.uk/); P. Thane, ‘Happy Families?’ (2010), [www.historyandpolicy.org](http://www.historyandpolicy.org), accessed 24 May 2016.

<sup>44</sup> Scottish Executive, *A Gender Audit of Statistics: Comparing the Position of Women and Men in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 2007), p. 19.

<sup>45</sup> E. Gordon, ‘The Family’ in L. Abrams and E. Gordon (eds.), *Gender in Scottish History Since 1700* (Edinburgh, 2006), p. 258.

<sup>46</sup> L. Jamieson, ‘Intimacy Transformed? A Critical Look at the ‘Pure Relationship’’, *Sociology*, 33(3), (1999), pp. 477-494; Lupton and Barclay, *Constructing Fatherhood*.

<sup>47</sup> E. Roberts, *Women and Families 1940-1970: An Oral History* (London, 1995), p. 140.

unevenly between social groups.<sup>48</sup> As expectations of affection and parental love changed in the post-war period and beyond, rigid hierarchal, authoritative relations between parents and children were increasingly called into question and, as King argues, there was growing emphasis on softer disciplinary methods.<sup>49</sup>

Alongside a move towards ‘prizing of the child’, there were also enhanced concerns over the well-being and perceived emotional and physical vulnerability of children from the mid-twentieth century.<sup>50</sup> Matthew Thomson has highlighted the period from the Second World War to the 1970s as one of ‘segregation’ between children and the outside, urban world, with developing anxiety about the potential risks faced by children in the form of traffic, television, and ‘sexual danger.’ Such concerns, though having longer-term roots, were in part due to the experience of war, and coincided with post-war reconstructionist idealisations of domesticity and the family. The emerging concerns for children’s psychological and emotional welfare were reflected in the creation of new spaces for children to live, learn and play in, such as playgrounds, as well as the increasing importance of psychological thought on child development. During the 1940s and 1950s, for example, John Bowlby’s work on ‘attachment theory’ and maternal deprivation placed special emphasis on the continuous presence and nurturing role of mothers, though during the 1970s, psychological theories on the role of the father also proliferated.<sup>51</sup> Thomson pays particular attention to the 1970s as a period of transition, when thinking about the child shifted considerably from previous decades in the context of economic instability and an increasing awareness of problems of poverty, abuse, and social isolation *within* the home and family. By the 1980s, changing ideas about child welfare were, moreover, reflected in the shift from parental *rights over* children to *responsibilities for* children, as well as debates about the impact of divorce on children and purposeful policy attempts aimed at maintaining parent-child relationships, both inside and outside of marriage.<sup>52</sup>

Discourses and expectations of ‘more’ equal and intimate relationships between parents and children as well as men and women therefore placed a new

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<sup>48</sup> M. Thomson, *Lost Freedom: The Landscape of the Child and the British Post-War Settlement* (Oxford, 2013), p. 224; C. Langhamer, ‘The Meanings of Home in Post-war Britain’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 40(2), (2005), pp. 341-462.

<sup>49</sup> King, *Family Men*.

<sup>50</sup> Thomson, *Lost Freedom*, p. 1.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> S. Sarre, *A Place for Fathers: Fathers and Social Policy in the Post-War Period* (London, 1996).

cultural focus on their quality, non-hierarchical and voluntary nature. Writing of Scotland, Lynn Jamieson argues that expectations of the heterosexual couple relationship as the key site 'of an intimacy that involved both loving care and deep understanding were undoubtedly higher' in the second than the first half of twentieth century, whilst Claire Langhamer has shown that notions of 'romantic love', in the 'quest for self-actualization' were becoming more central to ideals of British marriage in the post-war years, displacing older, pragmatic considerations and aspirations for a 'good' breadwinner or homemaker.<sup>53</sup> The perceived shift from marriage as an 'institution' to a 'relationship' during this period was celebrated in the ideal of the 'companionate marriage', for example, with emphasis on an 'equal but different' partnership, closeness and more fluid, equal divisions of labour.<sup>54</sup> Though inequalities in personal life persisted and as Jamieson emphasises, 'loving, caring and sharing' remained as important as 'knowing and a deep understanding' in practicing intimacy, these shifting ideals and practices surrounding familial relationships since the end of the Second World War held particular implications for ideas and norms surrounding fatherhood.<sup>55</sup>

Indeed, significant shifts in fatherhood are, as a result, often popularly located during the second half of the twentieth century. Since the close of the 1970s in particular, men's roles as fathers have been widely observed and discussed by social researchers and fathers gained unprecedented visibility on the political agenda in the 1980s and 1990s. It was during this period, researcher Charlie Lewis notes, that fathers 'entered the limelight.'<sup>56</sup> As noted, new importance was placed on parental responsibility and child welfare with anxiety about the growing separation of marriage and parenthood and the 'decline' of the 'traditional' nuclear family.<sup>57</sup> The fathers' rights movement was established, there was a dramatic growth in fathers attending childbirth and a rise in their involvement with childcare, alongside new importance

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<sup>53</sup> L. Jamieson, 'Changing Intimacy: Seek and Forming Couple Relationships' in L. Abrams, and C. G. Brown (eds.) *A History of Everyday Life in Twentieth Century Scotland* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2010), p. 78; C. Langhamer, 'Love, Selfhood and Authenticity in Post-War Britain,' *Cultural and Social History*, 9(2), (2012), p. 277.

<sup>54</sup> D. Clark (ed.), *Marriage, Domestic Life and Social Change: Writings for Jacqueline Burgoyne* (1944-88) (London, 1991).

<sup>55</sup> L. Jamieson, *Intimacy: Personal Relationships in Modern Societies* (Cambridge, 1998), p 163; V. Gillies, *Family and Intimate Relationships: A Review of Sociological Research* (London, 2003).

<sup>56</sup> Lewis, *Becoming a Father*, p.1.

<sup>57</sup> Hobson, *Making Men into Fathers*.

placed on their role in child development.<sup>58</sup> The increasing emphasis placed upon emotionally involved and intimate parenting was crystallised in the cultural construct of the ‘new man’ and ‘father’ – who was caring, sensitive, nurturing, and willing to take equal responsibility for childcare – and seemingly replacing the traditional archetype of the father as ‘provider.’<sup>59</sup> Alongside the greater emphasis on close father-child relationships and shared parenting by men, there was also a significant shift in the acceptability of men displaying emotion, with the public display of fatherhood becoming increasingly prized and celebrated.<sup>60</sup>

Fatherhood was imbued with further significance during the late twentieth century in Britain, but also more widely in America and Western Europe. Though a number of fathers’ roles, as provider, playmate, nurturer and disciplinarian were not ‘new’, the context in which they were enacted shifted considerably, as did the relative importance placed upon various functions, and how men should balance these. Collectively, these changes evoked a new set of norms around men’s parenting and masculinities and created different contexts for negotiating fatherhood. While Fisher argues that fatherhood was ‘refocused’ in the interwar period, and King asserts it ‘intensified’ in the immediate post-war years, neither period witnessed a direct challenge to rigid notions of gendered parenting responsibilities or stimulated debate about fathers’ ‘proper’ roles in relation to that of mothers.<sup>61</sup> In the late twentieth century, however, wider gender relations and roles were increasingly challenged. Emerging second-wave feminism and the Women’s Liberation movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s challenged the social and legal subordination of women to men in relation to family, work and sexuality and made various demands regarding equal pay and employment rights, free childcare, contraception and abortion, and violence against women. Feminist and sociological analysis of married and domestic life during this period would highlight that idealised, ‘modern’, ‘companionate’ marriages were far from symmetrical and the growing significance of love and intimacy in public discourses about couple and parent-child relationships was not always reflected in lived experience. Many feminists highlighted women’s central role in mothering, particularly in early childhood, and the sexual division of labour in the family as being

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<sup>58</sup> M. Lamb, *The Role of the Father in Child Development* (New York, 1976); N. Beail and J. McGuire (eds.), *Fathers: Psychological Perspectives* (London, 1982).

<sup>59</sup> K. Daly, ‘Reshaping Fatherhood: Finding the Models’, *Journal of Family Issues*, 19(10), (1993), pp. 510-530.

<sup>60</sup> Dermott, *Intimate Fatherhood*.

<sup>61</sup> Fisher, ‘Fatherhood and the Experience of Working-Class Fathers’; King, *Family Men*.



central to gender inequality. The very first Women's Liberation Conference in Oxford in 1970, for example, made explicit calls for men to be more involved in infant care and housework, with Rochelle Wortis arguing that 'if the undervaluation of women in society is to end, we must begin at the beginning, by a more equitable distribution of labour around the child rearing function and the home...men can and should begin to take a more active part in affective and cognitive interaction with children.'<sup>62</sup> These criticisms and the substantial movement of mothers into paid work deconstructed the public/private dichotomy and subjected men's domestic involvement to greater scrutiny. From the late 1970s, some feminists influenced by psychoanalysis were also to argue that men's greater involvement in nurturing infant children could be key to restructuring intimacy and the forging of a 'new', less oppressive masculinity.<sup>63</sup> Overall, second-wave feminism questioned 'conventional' gendered relationships and, alongside wider changes to the labour market and the family, challenged the traditional sites and expressions of masculinity in the spheres of work, family and society more generally. Indeed, just as masculinity and femininity are inherently relational concepts, understandings and experiences of fatherhood clearly exist in relation to those of motherhood.

Change and continuity, however, are often found together. The relationship between fatherhood and masculinity was complex, with the ideal of the practically and emotionally 'involved' father existing alongside more traditional forms of masculinity, based around paid employment and providing. As indicated above, public discourses provided contradictory representations of fatherhood, portraying particular groups of fathers in positive and negative terms. Fatherhood was simultaneously presented as a 'problem and as a resource', with discussions surrounding 'father absence and father presence', 'responsibility and irresponsibility', 'absent fathers...and involved fathers.'<sup>64</sup> As an individual experience, Jane Lewis argues, 'trends toward both more caring and more distant fathering' may have co-existed and men may even have transitioned back and forth between these two modes of fatherhood within their own lifetime.<sup>65</sup> Competing ideals and practices surrounding fatherhood and masculinity during this period may be considered as being: 'in constant struggle, a kind of overlapping or even

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<sup>62</sup> L. Segal, *Slow Motion: Changing Masculinities, Changing Men* (London, 1990), p. 39.

<sup>63</sup> See e.g. N. Chodorow, *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender* (Berkeley, 1978); D. Dinnerstein, *The Rocking of the Cradle: and the Ruling of the World* (London, 1978).

<sup>64</sup> A. Gregory and S. Milner, 'What is "New" about Fatherhood? The Social Construction of Fatherhood in the UK and France', *Men and Masculinities*, 14(5), (2011), p. 590.

<sup>65</sup> Lewis, 'The Problem of Fathers', p. 127.

a co-existence of the two narratives even in everyday life and the lifecycle of historical and contemporary fathers.’<sup>66</sup>

The decades following the Second World War are therefore not only a significant period in which to study fatherhood, but also gender and family life, and is, as such, a much-needed development. Consequently, this thesis contributes to the growing history of fatherhood in the twentieth century by examining working-class fathers in the post-war period, with a specific emphasis on the last decades of the century. It begins before the ‘discovery’ of the ‘new’ man and ends when the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 formally acknowledged that both parents should be responsible for and share in the upbringing of their children. In a similar approach to Angela Davis’ study of *Modern Motherhood* in the second half of the twentieth century, it employs fatherhood as a lens through which to explore the complex social, economic and political changes taking place during this period.<sup>67</sup> It examines how fathers experienced these significant social developments, and how they themselves were influential in facilitating change and continuity. In doing so, it bridges a gap between historical studies of fatherhood at the beginning of the twentieth century, and current sociological research exploring contemporary fatherhood.

A growing historiography has proven the diversity and complexity of fatherhood and masculinities in the past; however, certain aspects of both remain overlooked. Social class, for example, created very different contexts in which men understood and experienced fathering.<sup>68</sup> Whilst fatherhood has been seen as an acceptable part of middle-class masculinity and middle-class fathers have been given a place within the private sphere from the eighteenth century onwards, working-class fathers largely continue to be positioned as peripheral to family life in historical narratives. The tyrannical, feckless, or absent working-class father, who ‘took so often for himself what he should have spent on his family’, was ‘harsh to his children’ and ‘violent when drunk’ is, moreover, an enduring stereotype.<sup>69</sup> Discourses surrounding ‘good’ working-class fathers and husbands also tend to be placed in the negative context of male alcoholism, domestic violence and desertion: ‘they did not drink their

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<sup>66</sup> M. Oechsle, U. Müller, and S. Hess (eds.), *Fatherhood in Late Modernity: Cultural Images, Social Practices, Structural Frames* (Germany, 2012), p. 64.

<sup>67</sup> Davis, *Modern Motherhood*, p. 1.

<sup>68</sup> J. Bailey, ‘The History of Mum and Dad: Recent Historical Research on Parenting in England from the 16th to 20th centuries’, *History Compass*, 12(6), (2014), pp. 489-507.

<sup>69</sup> M. Young and P. Willmott, *Family and Kinship in East London* (London, 1957), p. 18.

wages nor did they beat their wives.<sup>70</sup> Historical accounts of working-class family life, particularly in the first half of the twentieth century, instead emphasise ‘a world of robust and good humoured’ females, who, as William Knox argues, engaged in a ‘hard and relentless struggle to make ends meet’, often inconvenienced by men.<sup>71</sup>

In Scotland, popular and historical discourses on fatherhood have been ‘distinctively condemnatory.’<sup>72</sup> The ‘hard man’, for example, remains a powerful construction of masculinity, particularly in Glasgow and the West. Although obscuring considerable variation within gender and class, it has popularly been associated with manual labour in the heavy industries, as well as a ‘masculinised, aggressive’ culture, reflected in hard drinking, heavy smoking, cynical humour and the performance of machismo.<sup>73</sup> In contemporary society, it remains connected with social problems such as ill health, high mortality and violence among men.<sup>74</sup> These images of working-class masculinities have particular implications for representations of fatherhood. Abrams, for example, has argued that the Scottish working-class father has largely been marginalised, stereotyped and placed by historians as ‘elsewhere’ from family and home life: ‘when he is not at work – in the pub, the working men’s club, on the allotment or in the company of his pigeons rather than his children.’<sup>75</sup>

The negative image of the working-class father has persisted because so little scholarship has sought to rectify his ‘peripheral status in the family story.’<sup>76</sup> Strange’s recent monograph, for example, aimed to amend the ‘unflattering portrayal’ of British working-class fathers, who, she argues, have continued to remain ‘out of favour.’<sup>77</sup> Drawing on the autobiographies of adult-children, she challenges simplistic representations of such fathers as either ‘feckless’ or ‘respectable’, to explore the wealth of diversity in between. Though many fathers did spend much time at work, for example, they were also embedded in the ‘material and imaginative spaces’ of family and home, in which mundane, everyday practices provided space and time in which

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<sup>70</sup> Strange, *Fatherhood and the British Working Class*, p. 6.

<sup>71</sup> W.W. Knox, *Industrial Nation: Work, Culture and Society in Scotland 1800-Present* (Edinburgh, 1999), p. 531.

<sup>72</sup> Abrams, ‘There was Nobody’, p. 219.

<sup>73</sup> H. Young, ‘Hard Man, New Man: Re/composing Masculinities in Glasgow, C.1950-2000’, *Oral History*, 35(1), (2007), pp. 71-81; Johnston and McIvor, ‘Dangerous Work, Hard Men and Broken Bodies’; Wight, *Workers, Not Wasters*.

<sup>74</sup> A. Bartie and A. Fraser, ‘Speaking to the “Hard Men”: Masculinities, Violence and Youth Gangs’ in L. Abrams and E. Ewan (eds.), *Nine Centuries of Man: Manhood and Masculinities in Scottish History* (Edinburgh, 2017).

<sup>75</sup> Abrams, ‘There was Nobody’, p. 221.

<sup>76</sup> Strange, *Fatherhood and the British Working Class*, pp. 1-5.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid*, p. 1.

considerable father-child intimacy could be achieved.<sup>78</sup> As Strange concludes, fathers did and do matter.

In the handful of studies that do examine fatherhood in the working classes, the stereotype of the 'drunken, brutal working-class father' is not found to be the norm. Trevor Lummis' case study of East Anglian fishermen and their families in the period 1890-1914, though a specific case, found evidence of compassionate and participant fathers. Poverty, poor housing and overwork were undoubtedly features of working-class family life, but 'in accepting the more dramatic deviant as the norm', Lummis argues, '[we] simply repeat the class biased image of the father.'<sup>79</sup> Fisher's exploration of fatherhood in early twentieth century Britain also suggests working-class fathers were loving and involved parents, whilst Joanna Bourke, in her study of working-class culture in Britain from 1890 until 1960, argues that 'for every negative, distant husband or father, there were dozens of warm, working-class domestic men.'<sup>80</sup> Abrams similarly reappraised the notion that working-class fathers were peripheral to family life during this period. Using oral histories, autobiographies and records of child welfare organisations, fatherhood was found to be a central part of male identity and masculine pride. Far from 'incapable, feckless and frequently absent individuals', were accounts of indulgent, affectionate and sentimental figures who valued the time spent at home with their family.<sup>81</sup> Abrams found that the conduct of working-class fathers contrasted significantly with the official and popular discourses of fatherhood which marginalised them.

This thesis contributes to the growing historiography of fatherhood by examining working-class fathers in post-war Scotland, chronologically complementing the recent scholarship on the first half of the century. Class is a dynamic relationship, however, which is historically specific and subject to change. It is subjective, based on perceptions, feelings and identity, as well as rooted in material and cultural practices.<sup>82</sup> The nature of class changed significantly during this period, and whilst never an entirely homogenous group, it becomes increasingly difficult to define 'the working-

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid, pp. 211-215.

<sup>79</sup> T. Lummis, 'The Historical Dimension of Fatherhood: A Case Study 1890-1914' in L. McKee and M. O'Brien (eds.), *The Father Figure* (London, 1982), p. 44.

<sup>80</sup> Fisher, 'Fatherhood and the Experience of Working-Class Fathers'; J. Bourke, *Working Class Cultures, 1890-1960: Gender, Class and Ethnicity* (London, 1994), p. 96.

<sup>81</sup> Abrams, 'There was Nobody', p. 227.

<sup>82</sup> Bourke, *Working Class Cultures*; C. Vincent, S. Bell, and A. Braun, 'It's like saying "coloured": Understanding and Analysing the Urban Working Classes', *The Sociological Review*, 56(1), (2008), p. 62.

class' from the post-war period onwards.<sup>83</sup> Industrial decline, decreasing levels of absolute poverty as well as increasing welfare provision and social mobility 'created a more privatised way of life and consumerist mentality' while further cultural shifts including the expansion of television, overseas holidays, car and home ownership arguably formed the process of an 'homogenising culture.'<sup>84</sup> These changes impacted on both the ideals and practices surrounding fatherhood. King has demonstrated that rising standards of living, reduced family size, decreasing working hours and enhanced leisure time in post-war Britain meant men were able to spend more time at home, facilitating the ideal of the family man and playful dad.<sup>85</sup> These national developments had their roots in the interwar period; however, the 1950s is positioned as a key turning point. During this decade, King notes, a 'family-oriented masculinity' developed across class boundaries, as patterns and expectations of family life became more uniform. In Scotland, lower incomes and higher levels of deprivation, poverty, poor housing and health may have delayed such trends, but Scottish families and households were not entirely excluded from them.<sup>86</sup> Abrams, for example, maintains that trends in working-class fatherhood and family life in Scotland were 'broadly similar' with the rest of Britain by the first half of the twentieth century, and that there was a 'sea-change' in attitudes in the 1930s and 1940s which encouraged Scottish men to be more involved in family life.<sup>87</sup> Hilary Young, joining Abrams as one of the few scholars to explore men's experiences of fatherhood and the nature of masculinity at home in mid-twentieth century Scotland, similarly argues that these post-war changes 'facilitated the transition of male recreation from the pub to the home.'<sup>88</sup>

While collectively these shifts had significant implications for understandings and experiences of class, class inequalities and differences endured and continued to shape material standards of living, culture, politics, and personal identity. According to Selina Todd, it remains an important conceptual framework for understanding

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<sup>83</sup> Roberts, *Women and Families*, pp. 6-7.

<sup>84</sup> Knox, *Industrial Nation*, chapter 27; J. Foster, 'Class' in A. Cooke, I. Donnachie, A. MacSween and C. A. Whatley (eds.), *Modern Scottish History: 1707 to the Present* (Edinburgh, 1998), pp. 201-234; C. Lannelli and L. Paterson, 'Social Mobility in Scotland since the Middle of the Twentieth Century', *The Sociological Review*, 54(3), (2006), pp. 520-545.

<sup>85</sup> King, *Family Men*.

<sup>86</sup> See e.g. L. Abrams and L. Fleming, 'From Scullery to Conservatory: Everyday Life in the Scottish Home' in L. Abrams and C. G. Brown (eds.), *A History of Everyday Life in Twentieth Century Scotland* (Edinburgh, 2010), pp. 48-75.

<sup>87</sup> Abrams, 'There was Nobody', p. 219, 233.

<sup>88</sup> Young, 'Being a Man', p. 146.

twentieth century Britain, with both 1945 and 1979 as significant turning points.<sup>89</sup> Following the latter, issues of class, politics and national identity have intersected in Scotland, despite experiencing similar trends in terms of economic change, occupational structure and social mobility as the rest of Britain.<sup>90</sup> The proportions of people identifying as working and middle-class have, moreover, remained stable since the early 1980s. In 2012, six in ten people in Britain thought of themselves as ‘working-class.’<sup>91</sup> At a British-national level, class was also to be found in public and political notions of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ fathering. Discourses surrounding the ‘absent’, ‘feckless’ and ‘irresponsible’ father were frequently presented as being prevalent among working-class and ethnic minority groups, and more specifically an ‘under-class.’<sup>92</sup> The ideal of the ‘new’ father and ‘new man’, in contrast, was predominantly constructed as white and middle-class.<sup>93</sup> This thesis, then, focuses on working-class fatherhood in post-war Scotland, where working-class fathers have more commonly been associated with the ‘public sphere’ of work, politics and male leisure pursuits and presented negatively in public and official discourses of the family.

### ***Scottish Historiographical Landscape***

In Scotland, the history of fatherhood – and particularly working-class fatherhood – is virtually non-existent.<sup>94</sup> While Strange explicitly sought to take up the case of ‘invisible fathers’, identified by Abrams in 1999, this work and that of other scholars have examined working-class fathers in a wider British context.<sup>95</sup> In Scotland specifically, there has been little research to revise such conceptions of working-class fathering. Assumptions about ‘separate spheres’, the dichotomy of the female home and the male

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<sup>89</sup> S. Todd, ‘Class, Experience and Britain’s Twentieth Century’, *Social History*, 39(4), (2014), pp. 489-508; S. Todd, *The People: The Rise and Fall of the Working-Class, 1910-2010* (London, 2014).

<sup>90</sup> D. McCrone, ‘We’re A’ Jock Tamson’s Bairns: Social Class in Twentieth Century Scotland’ in T.M. Devine and R.J. Finlay (eds.), *Scotland in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (Edinburgh, 1996), pp. 102-121.

<sup>91</sup> A. Heath, M. Savage and N. Senior, ‘Social Class: The Role of Class in Shaping Social Attitudes’ in A. Park et al (eds.), *British Social Attitudes: the 30<sup>th</sup> Report* (London, 2013), p. 173.

<sup>92</sup> V. Gillies, ‘Understandings and Experiences of Involved Fathering in the United Kingdom: Exploring Class Dimensions’, *Annals of the American Academy*, 624(1), (2009), pp. 49-60.

<sup>93</sup> Collier and Sheldon, *Fragmenting Fatherhood*.

<sup>94</sup> For exceptions see Abrams, ‘There was Nobody’; Young, ‘Being a Man’; N. Kennedy, ‘Father/Child Relationships: An Examination of the ‘Hard-Man’ Stereotype Attached to Working-class Scottish Men in the period 1960-1985’, (UG Dissertation, University of Strathclyde). Closer attention is being paid to fathers in publications on the English family, and fathers are also to be found in histories of English masculinities. For an overview see e.g. Bailey, ‘Masculinity and Fatherhood in England.’

<sup>95</sup> Strange, *Fatherhood and the British Working Class*, p. 2.

workplace, have had and continue to have a considerable impact on the ways in which men and women are located in Scottish historiography.<sup>96</sup> Writing in 1986, for example, T.C. Smout asserted the topic of the family as in need of urgent attention by historians, arguing that ‘the history of the family, and of child upbringing and the place of women within and without the home, is so neglected in Scotland as to verge on becoming a historical disgrace.’<sup>97</sup> While Smout’s observation reflected the agenda to place women on the historical record, it also highlights the tendency of historians to correlate family with home and home with mothers. Despite a growing history of the family over the past thirty years, this very statement may be applied to fathers, whereby men’s roles and experiences of being a father and of family life remain largely overlooked.

Scottish national narratives also tend to remain ‘gender blind.’ Despite the development of Scottish women’s history, and gender history more broadly, women continue to be divorced from the ‘weighty histories of nation’, and placed within separate chapters, often on family and community.<sup>98</sup> Conversely, men are rarely located in these spheres. As Christopher Harvie notes in the foreword to the fourth edition of *No Gods and Precious Few Heroes*, there are now four accounts of Scotland’s twentieth century, including his own.<sup>99</sup> While these national histories cannot be expected to explore fatherhood in-depth and such texts, as noted, do not place gender as a key category of analysis, it is nevertheless interesting to explore how men, as fathers, are represented within them, if they appear at all. Harvie, for example, briefly argues that ‘bringing up children and running households’ were ‘unthinkable for men.’ Family life was ‘run by wives, grannies and aunts’, though in the post-war period ‘fathers played a greater part in family life and DIY.’<sup>100</sup> Richard Finlay’s portrayal of fathers is no more flattering. He notes that because men were expected to ‘hand over’ their wages to the family, single men were more likely to work over-time than fathers: ‘as he was unlikely to see any of the money, the response was, “why bother?”’ As for a child going to university, Finlay positions this social mobility as a ‘source of

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<sup>96</sup> L. Abrams, ‘Gendering the Agenda’ in L. Abrams and E. Gordon (eds.), *Gender in Scottish History Since 1700* (Edinburgh, 2006), p. 4.

<sup>97</sup> T.C. Smout, *A History of the Scottish People 1830-1950* (London, 1986), p. 292.

<sup>98</sup> Abrams, ‘Gendering the Agenda’, p. 3.

<sup>99</sup> C. Harvie, *No Gods and Precious Few Heroes, Scotland 1900-2015* (Edinburgh, 2016); T. Devine, *The Scottish Nation 1700-2000* (London, 1999); R.J. Finlay, *Modern Scotland 1914-2000* (London, 2004); C.M.M. Macdonald, *Whaur Extremes Meet: Scotland’s Twentieth Century* (Edinburgh, 2009).

<sup>100</sup> Harvie, *No Gods and Precious Few Heroes*, p. 75.

unmitigated pride' for mothers, but as an 'awkward fact that had to be explained away' by working-class fathers, who placed status and pride in manual labour.<sup>101</sup> Catriona Macdonald argued as recently as 2009 that fathers were peripheral to family life:

Unlike most other areas of Scottish society, women were central to the operation of the family. Males, by comparison appeared to contribute remarkably little to discourses on family life. But that silence is important. It might either denote a dismissive attitude to the family marking it out as female territory and hence unimportant, or simply reflects that men remained in control of what was considered really important – the public world out with the home.<sup>102</sup>

These stereotypes, depicted in figure 0.1, are not 'untruths.' In post-war Britain, King has shown that some fathers were not only uninterested in family life and failed to fulfil their parental responsibilities, but also constituted a 'difficult and unpredictable element within it.'<sup>103</sup> Ann Donaldson's doctoral research into domestic violence in late twentieth century Scotland indicates that some men continued to exploit their power as the head of the household in the form of abuse and violence towards their wives and, in some cases, children too.<sup>104</sup> Male violence against women and girls, moreover, remains prevalent in contemporary society. While this thesis does not seek to dismiss some of the more negative dynamics within family life, it nevertheless avoids a "deficit model of fatherhood", as outlined by Strange, which focuses on 'the failures, flaws and shortcomings of men.'<sup>105</sup> 'Absent' and 'tyrannical' working-class fathers (and mothers) no doubt existed, as they do today. Relying on such representations, however, fails to reveal the complexity and diversity of lived experience. As demonstrated, the handful of accounts that do explicitly explore experiences of being and having a father in Scotland suggest men were 'more than shadowy and marginal figures in Scottish family life and certainly more than the dour, aloof or drunken figure of popular stereotypes.'<sup>106</sup>

Where men do appear in historical narratives of family life, their involvement has largely been understood through their position as husbands or partners, rather

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<sup>101</sup> Finlay, *Modern Scotland*, p. 277-79.

<sup>102</sup> Macdonald, *Whaur Extremes Meet*, p. 160.

<sup>103</sup> King, *Family Men*, p. 101.

<sup>104</sup> A. Donaldson, 'An Oral History of Domestic Abuse in Scotland 1979-1992' (Ongoing PhD Thesis, University of Strathclyde).

<sup>105</sup> Strange, *Fatherhood and the British Working Class*, p. 2.

<sup>106</sup> Gordon, 'The Family', p. 254.



than as fathers. Finlay, for example, presents men as being ‘caught in a spiralling vortex of manliness that *women had to put up with*’, while Macdonald noted that ‘for the *Scottish housewife*, the “new man” in Scotland was still in his infancy even as the century closed.’<sup>107</sup> Broader histories of the family, gender and society have also focused on gender equality in the home, and upon the ‘quantity’ of men’s contributions in relation to childcare and housework.<sup>108</sup> Arthur McIvor argued, for example, that in late twentieth century Scottish society, the ‘Victorian concept of “separate spheres” remained pervasive and immune to any but marginal dilution’: ‘*Scottish husbands* had not significantly altered their role within the family.’<sup>109</sup> Callum Brown commented that ‘by the end of a century which witnessed vast improvements in gender equality in most spheres, the home remained stubbornly resistant’, while Fiona McKay suggests ‘the Scottish Family changed remarkably in the twentieth century though attitudes, conventions, customs and gender roles were harder to break and remake.’<sup>110</sup>

The historiographical attention on men’s relationship to the home via their status as a husband overlooks how family members constructed and negotiated their family relationships and responsibilities, as well as neglecting the other roles men played within the family; for example, their engagement in the educational, disciplinarian and emotional aspects of child rearing.<sup>111</sup> It also fails to acknowledge the significant shifts occurring within conceptions and experiences of fatherhood and masculinity in the late twentieth century. The relationships of parent/child and husband/wife, for example, were increasingly separate and distinct following the rise in divorce and remarriage. Sociologist Carol Smart suggests that during this period the parent-child relationship superseded the couple relationship.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Finlay, *Modern Scotland*, p. 278; Macdonald, *Whaur Extremes Meet*, p. 134. Emphasis added.

<sup>108</sup> A. McIvor, ‘Gender Apartheid? Women in Scottish Society’ in T.M. Devine and R.J. Finlay (eds.), *Scotland in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (Edinburgh, 1996), pp. 188-209; A. McIvor, ‘Women and Gender Relations’ in A. Cooke, I. Donnachie, A. MacSween and C. A. Whatley (eds.), *Modern Scottish History: 1707 to the Present* (Edinburgh, 1998), pp. 161-187.

<sup>109</sup> A. McIvor, ‘Women and Work in the Twentieth Century’ in A. Dickson and J.H. Treble (eds.), *People and Society in Scotland: Vol. III, 1914-1990* (Edinburgh, 1994), p. 164.

<sup>110</sup> C. G. Brown, ‘Charting Everyday Experience’ in L. Abrams, and C. G. Brown (eds.), *A History of Everyday Life in Twentieth Century Scotland* (Edinburgh, 2010), p. 39; F. McKay “‘A Slow Revolution?’ Gender Relations in Contemporary Scotland’ in G. Hassan and C. Warhurst (eds.), *Anatomy of the New Scotland: Power, Influence and Change* (Edinburgh, 2002), pp. 277-284.

<sup>111</sup> L. McKee, ‘Fathers’ Participation in Infant Care: A Critique’ in L. McKee and M. O’Brien (eds.), *The Father Figure* (London, 1982), pp.120-138; A. Doucet, ‘Gender Equality and Gender Differences in Household Work and Parenting’, *Women’s Studies International Forum*, 18(3), (1995), pp. 271-284; L. Clarke and M. O’Brien, ‘Father Involvement in Britain: The Research and Policy Evidence’ in R. D. Day and M. E. Lamb (eds.), *Conceptualising and Measuring Father Involvement* (New Jersey, 2004).

<sup>112</sup> C. Smart and B. Neale, *Family Fragments?* (Cambridge, 1998).

**Figure 0.1. Cartoons: stereotypes of Scottish fatherhood and masculinity**



Sources: "Away an' Ask your mother!": *Your Scottish father's favourite sayings* (2002) p. 22; *Project on Fatherhood: Report of the Youth at Risk Advisory Group, Scotland* (Dundee, 1987), p. 14, 20.

Exploring fatherhood as a 'specific experience' involves distinguishing men's roles as father from that of partner, and differentiating between domestic chores and father-child interactions and relationships. King's conceptualisation of a 'family-orientated' masculinity, for example, allows for a more complex exploration of the variety of roles men played within their families and their experiences of home life.<sup>113</sup> Significant shifts can occur within masculinities and femininities, even when the differentiation between them remains strong, whilst an exclusive focus on gender convergence or divergence can obscure the extent of change. As King effectively demonstrates, men could foster positive relationships, embrace fatherhood and be 'family men', without challenging their masculinity and while unequal divisions of labour remained intact. This thesis, while acknowledging that motherhood and fatherhood are inherently linked, recognises that the role of the father was distinct and considers changing family life from the perspective of men. It explores fatherhood as an identity and fathering as a 'daily emotional, intimate practice.'<sup>114</sup>

Despite the recent development of a history of masculinity in Scotland, adding growing complexity to understandings of men's experiences in relation to a range of topics such as boyhood and adolescence, marriage, employment, leisure, occupational health, and war; overall it remains in its 'infancy.'<sup>115</sup> There has been less attention

<sup>113</sup> King, *Family Men*.

<sup>114</sup> Oechsle et al, *Fatherhood in Late Modernity*, p. 312.

<sup>115</sup> Abrams, 'Gendering the Agenda', p. 7. See e.g. L. Abrams and E. Ewan (eds.), *Nine Centuries of Man: Manhood and Masculinities in Scottish History* (Edinburgh, 2017).

paid, however, to fatherhood, and fatherhood as an aspect of masculinity. Historical narratives of the lives of Scottish working-class men have tended to explore ‘public’ rites of passage and rarely upon men’s ‘private’ experiences of becoming and being a father.<sup>116</sup> The overlooked relationship between fatherhood and masculinity is curious given their intersecting points; becoming a father is a common life event for men. It also represents a significant shift in both life cycle and life-style and how men perceive and experience fatherhood clearly influences the way they perceive themselves as men. Women’s history provides a helpful framework for problematising men’s roles and experiences through a gendered lens. It has proved that ‘the lack of visibility of women in Scottish history’, was not a result of ‘absence from political, social or public life’, but as a result of ‘the blindness of historians to the significance of women’s experience.’<sup>117</sup> The lack of visibility of fathers in Scottish history may not be a result of their absence from family life, but of the blindness of historians to the significance of men’s experience as partners, husbands and fathers.

Exploring themes of masculinity and fatherhood in Scotland are significant because not only do national histories and grand narratives tend to marginalise gendered experiences, representations of Scotland as a ‘manmade’ and patriarchal country, of Scottish society as ‘exceptionally male dominated’, are pervasive.<sup>118</sup> This characterisation of Scotland as a masculine ‘industrial nation’ stems from the social, cultural, and economic significance of heavy industry, both historically and in popular memory.<sup>119</sup> Throughout the twentieth century, literature, film, and national events, such as the Glasgow Empire Exhibition of 1938, served to reinforce the importance of Scotland’s industrial character, particularly the male dominated industries of shipbuilding, engineering and coal mining. These industries dominated the Scottish labour market in the first half of the century, particularly in West-Central Scotland, and were central to the economy and day to day life of many communities. As Andrew Perchard argues, the image of the industrial male worker emerged ‘as a symbol of the

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<sup>116</sup> See e.g. Bartie and Fraser, ‘Speaking to the “Hard Men”’; A. Chand, *Masculinities on Clydeside: Men in Reserved Occupations During the Second World War* (Edinburgh, 2016); D. Walker, ‘“Danger was something you were brought up wi”: Workers Narratives on Occupational Health and Safety in the Workplace’, *Scottish Labour History*, 46(11), (2011), pp. 54-70; L. Abrams, ‘The Taming of Highland Masculinity: Inter-personal Violence and Shifting Codes of Manhood, c.1760-1840’, *Scottish Historical Review*, 1(233), (2013), pp. 100-122.

<sup>117</sup> E. Breitenbach and E. Gordon (eds.), *Out of Bounds: Women in Scottish Society 1800-1945* (Edinburgh, 1992), p. 4.

<sup>118</sup> Breitenbach and Gordon, *Out of Bounds*, p. 4.

<sup>119</sup> Knox, *Industrial Nation*.

Scottish nation [and] was firmly embedded in the popular cultural consciousness, reinforcing an industrial DNA of sorts for Scotland.’<sup>120</sup> Though Scottish industry gradually contracted across the twentieth century, particularly from the mid-1960s and accelerating from the 1980s, these representations of heavy industry remain connected with the ‘hard man’ image associated with Scottish masculinity, with Glasgow especially having long held the reputation for being a “hard city” with a particularly masculine image.’<sup>121</sup>

West-Central Scotland therefore makes an important Scottish case study. The decline of the heavy industries and manufacturing base shifted the balance of economic power from the West, dominated by engineering and shipbuilding, to the East, dominated by North Sea Oil industry and financial services.<sup>122</sup> During the early 1970s half of Scotland’s unemployment was confined to Clydeside and the surrounding areas of West-Central Scotland.<sup>123</sup> The uneven impacts of economic and social change, both between and within different cities, regions and nations, held particular implications for meanings of work, identity and culture. The widespread restructuring of the labour market, for example, affected political outlooks in Scotland. From the 1960s through to the 1980s, support for the Conservative Party collapsed and there was a majority rejection of the economic agenda of Margaret Thatcher’s New Right Conservative government in the 1980s and early 1990s. The government’s approach to the Miner’s Strike of 1984-85, as well as the enforcement of Poll Tax in 1989-91, in particular, stimulated hostility in Scotland and, arguably, reinforced a ‘distinctive’ class and national identity.<sup>124</sup> The political, cultural and social tensions provoked by deindustrialisation were, moreover, evidenced in growing popular support for Scottish devolution, realised in 1997.<sup>125</sup>

Furthermore, deindustrialisation is a continuing social, cultural and economic phenomenon which, according to Perchard, remains firmly embedded within the Scottish national, collective narrative. His oral history of the demise of Scotland’s coal mining industry suggests this process was ‘profoundly personal’ and has left ‘prevailing

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<sup>120</sup> Perchard, “Broken Men” and “Thatcher’s Children”, p. 83.

<sup>121</sup> J. Phillips, ‘Deindustrialization and the Moral Economy of the Scottish Coalfields, 1947 to 1991’, *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 84 (2013), pp. 99-115; Bartie and Fraser, ‘Speaking to the “Hard Men”’, p. 258.

<sup>122</sup> Buxton, ‘The Scottish Economy, 1945-1979.’

<sup>123</sup> Hansard, Unemployment (Glasgow) *HC Deb 28 May 1971 vol 818 cc802-19*.

<sup>124</sup> McCrone, ‘A New Scotland?’, p. 677.

<sup>125</sup> Perchard, “Broken Men” and “Thatcher’s Children”

psychological and deep cultural scars' in mining communities, alongside those of shipbuilding, steel and other industrial workplaces.<sup>126</sup> Jim Strangleman, John Rhodes and Sherry Linkon similarly argue that industrial and masculine identities are cross-generational, that meanings of the industrial past and deindustrialisation can remain significant for those who have never had experience of industrial employment. The long-term social and cultural legacies may be transmitted through those who lived through it, vestiges on the landscape or by the economic and social consequences of industrial decline in the form of poverty and social problems.<sup>127</sup> The 2001 census found that whilst the average Scottish unemployment rate was 7%, East Ayrshire, Dundee, Glasgow city, Inverclyde, North Ayrshire, Western isles and West Dunbartonshire experienced male unemployment rates of between 10 and 14%.<sup>128</sup> In 2006, one-third of former coalfield communities accounted for 20% of the most disadvantaged areas in Scotland, as measured by the Scottish Multiple Deprivation Index, with figures for Ayrshire and former Central coalfields almost double those for non-coalfield areas.<sup>129</sup>

Health inequalities are also evident, with 'excess' mortality rates found for Scotland compared with England and Wales, as well as for Glasgow compared with similar post-industrial UK cities. Excess mortality in Scotland, reflected in terms such as the 'Scottish effect' and 'Glasgow effect', refers to the higher, 'unexplained' mortality over and above that accounted for by differences in socioeconomic profile and deprivation. Scottish mortality first deviated in 1950s and became more prominent from the 1980s, and the 'effect' is found to be most marked in and around West Central Scotland and, in particular, Glasgow.<sup>130</sup> The rate of deaths under the age of 65 in Scotland, for example, is currently 20% higher than in England and Wales, whilst the rate for Glasgow was 30% higher compared with Liverpool, Manchester and Belfast, cities with similar historical backgrounds and comparable levels of deprivation. Glasgow also has higher levels of reported crime rates and violence than the Scottish, and the UK, average, including a higher homicide rate, with nineteen killings per million people in Scotland between 1985 and 1994, in comparison to eleven per

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<sup>126</sup> Perchard, "Broken Men" and "Thatcher's Children", p. 93.

<sup>127</sup> Strangleman, Rhodes and Linkon, 'Introduction to Crumbling Cultures', p. 9.

<sup>128</sup> Young, 'Being a Man', p. 132.

<sup>129</sup> Perchard, "Broken Men" and "Thatcher's Children", p. 79.

<sup>130</sup> D. Walsh, G. McCartney, C. Collins, M. Taulbut and G. Batty, *History, Politics and Vulnerability: Explaining Excess Mortality in Scotland and Glasgow* (Glasgow, 2016), p. 7.

million in England and Wales.<sup>131</sup> These associations of industrial decline, ill health and violence sustain Glasgow and the West's masculine 'hard man' image in popular commentary and reinforce negative characterisations of Scottish fathering.

Whilst there is much that is distinctive about Scotland and the West-Central region, and although this thesis focuses upon the lived experiences of fathers in this area, many of the social developments in family, work and gender, as well as shifting understandings of fatherhood, occurred across Britain as a whole during this period. It recognises that Scotland experienced similar *long-term* trends in terms of economic change, occupational structure and social mobility with the rest of Britain and that West-Central Scotland is a region which shares certain similarities with other former industrial cities and regions in the UK, despite some interesting points of distinction.<sup>132</sup> In doing so, it contributes to both Scottish and British historiography, though it is beyond the scope of this thesis to make a comparative argument about the distinctiveness of Scottish fathering. No existing historical study of fatherhood post 1960 currently exists within British history and, as Pat Thane argues, the historian of 'recent times' often has 'little historical research and interpretation to learn from, build upon, reject.'<sup>133</sup>

Masculinities and fatherhoods nevertheless need to be understood in their specific historical, geographical and social contexts, despite more uniform ideals and patterns of family life and labour market trends.<sup>134</sup> By using West-Central Scotland as a case study, this thesis acknowledges that variations in attitudes and behaviours at a local, community, or regional level may be equally, if not more, important than cultural differences which exist between different nations in Britain.<sup>135</sup> Paul Thompson's oral history of fishing communities in Scotland, conducted between 1970 and 1980, for example, found marked regional differences in parenting styles and meanings of childhood. In Lewis, for example, parents were found to be strict and use physical punishment, with children raised to be obedient, follow their elders, and 'know their place.'<sup>136</sup> By contrast, Thompson noted the 'exceptional progressiveness of

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<sup>131</sup> Young, 'Being a Man', p. 131.

<sup>132</sup> C. Lannelli and L. Paterson, 'Social Mobility in Scotland since the Middle of the Twentieth Century,' *The Sociological Review*, 54:3, (2006), pp. 520-545.

<sup>133</sup> Thane, 'Exploring Post-War Britain', p. 271.

<sup>134</sup> Bailey, 'Masculinity and Fatherhood in England', p. 168.

<sup>135</sup> King, *Family Men*.

<sup>136</sup> P. Thompson, 'The Family and Child-Rearing as Forces for Economic Change: Towards Fresh Research Approaches', *Sociology*, 18(4), (1984), pp. 522.

childrearing' in the Shetlands where, as nowhere else in Britain, corporal discipline was not socially accepted.<sup>137</sup> Parents favoured 'reasoning' and children were encouraged to actively participate in family and community life and take responsibility from an early age. Thompson accounted for the significant differences in relation to religion, the position of women in the family and wider gender relations. This thesis makes a contribution to the gendered history of Scotland, by recovering men's experiences of home and family life in the second half of the twentieth century from historical obscurity. It addresses a number of gaps in the histories of fatherhood, gender and the family, by examining *working-class* fatherhood, in the *post-war period*, in *West-Central Scotland*. Given the emphasis on the social construction of masculinities and fatherhoods in particular times and settings, the research is an analysis of a specific place, historical period and group of fathers.

Clearly no one study of fatherhood can encompass every issue surrounding fathers and fathering. This thesis therefore seeks to explore a number of key themes. Were Scottish fathers on the margins of family and home life, contributing 'remarkably little'? What did it mean to be father in late twentieth century Scotland? How was 'fatherhood' constructed in wider British public and political discourse over this period? Did this reflect the realities of everyday life and what implications did this have for Scottish fathers, mothers and their children? What constituted 'good' and 'bad' fathering? What was the relationship between fatherhood and masculinity amongst working-class men? This research aims to answer these unexplored questions, and to uncover a new dimension to the history of Scotland by providing fresh perspectives on men's gendered identities, and experiences of fatherhood. In doing so, it challenges the unflattering representations of working-class men as parents and demonstrates that there were many different ways of being a man and a father in modern Scotland. The following section discusses the methods employed to do this.

## ***Methodology***

This research is based primarily upon the in-depth oral history interviews I conducted with twenty-five fathers. The interviewees were born between 1938 and 1968, with the vast majority (twenty-four) born in the period between 1940 and 1960. As specified

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<sup>137</sup> P. Thompson, T. Wailey and T. Lummis, *Living the Fishing* (London, 1983), p. 336.

on the recruitment information, all of the men became fathers for the first time between 1970 and 1990 in West-Central Scotland and self-identified as being ‘working-class.’ This cohort (those who became fathers between 1970 and 1990) was selected to reflect that such interviewees were able to look both backwards to their childhood in the immediate post-war period and to their own experiences of being a father in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s thereafter. The year 1990 was chosen as the end date for participation in order to ensure that interviewees had significant experiences of fathering before the close of the twentieth century.

Due to the fluid and subjective nature of class identities, particularly over the life course, the difficulties in defining ‘working-class’ in the post-war period, and the considerable variation to be found within classes, this thesis takes a broad definition of the term ‘working-class.’ There was no attempt to quantify participants’ ‘class’ by taking into consideration indicators such as occupation, education or housing, given these were diverse and fluid for individuals over time. The recruitment poster requested the participation of ‘working-class fathers’, and so it can be assumed that participants deemed themselves to be suitable interviewees.<sup>138</sup> While a more concerted effort or specific mention could have been made to recruit more men from ‘traditional’ working-class occupations, such as mining, steel and shipbuilding, these industries declined rapidly from the 1970s onwards, and the realities and meanings of work changed for many men during this period. The employment histories of participants were highly diverse (both as a group and as individuals) in the types of work undertaken, and in reflecting the significant restructuring of the Scottish economy and widening access to further and higher education in the second half of the twentieth century.<sup>139</sup> Some men worked within the same company or profession their entire working lives, whilst others changed jobs regularly. Three interviewees went to university after school, whilst five others pursued educational qualifications in later life after working in manual labour. Todd urges historians to discard ‘supremely ahistorical’ idealisations of what ‘an “ideal” working-class ought to look like.’<sup>140</sup> Class

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<sup>138</sup> This is the approach taken by Bourke, *Working Class Cultures*, and Roberts, *Women and Families* in their studies of working-class family life.

<sup>139</sup> Occupations of participants included: shipbuilders, steelworkers, mechanics, engineers, teachers, electricians, salesmen, civil servants, joiners, iron monger, pawnbroker, family support worker, lorry driver, researcher, bus driver, taxi driver, janitor, welfare rights officer, learning and development officer.

<sup>140</sup> Todd, ‘Class, Experience and Britain’s Twentieth Century’, p. 504.



is a relationship, ‘there can be no “ideal” or “traditional” working class.’<sup>141</sup> Moreover, the study is primarily concerned with men’s home, rather than working, lives.

While I sought to interview fathers who self-identified as being ‘working-class’, and men volunteered to participate on this basis, it became increasingly evident that class was something which, for many, was difficult to define or to identify with. This is a finding in both classic and more recent studies of working-class life. While Roberts noted that few of her respondents agreed on what was meant by being ‘working-class’, Davis highlighted the difficulties experienced by her interviewees in being assigned to a class.<sup>142</sup> Moreover, while the proportion of people self-identifying as being middle-class (around a third) or working-class (six in ten) has not changed since the early 1980s, *British Social Attitudes* notes that when asking people to place themselves into a particular class category, ‘nearly half the British population is reticent to do so.’<sup>143</sup> This indicates the ‘paradox of class’: that while structurally class is ‘pertinent’ to people’s lives, it is no longer a principal marker of social identity.<sup>144</sup> As Val Gillies notes, for the last few decades, class has been the ‘elephant in the room’: ‘it clearly exists as a potent and prevailing social distinction, but is rarely articulated or acknowledged as such.’<sup>145</sup>

For my own interviewees, understandings of class were similarly complex. A few found it difficult to view themselves in class terms and questioned its contemporary relevance, particularly while reflecting on the significant social mobility or rising standards of living experienced over their lifetime. For others, their class identity was tied to their political and social views or involved an element of ‘othering’ – they did not feel themselves to be middle-class and ‘worked for a living’, so were therefore working-class. Subjective class identities could also exhibit a different trajectory from their objective class position, based upon employment, education and income. Family background and upbringing; occupation and often the occupation of parents; values, politics and hobbies; locality and neighbourhood, and, usually, a combination of all of the above, were some of the indicators men drew upon when reflecting on their class identity and/or position.

In total, twenty-five interviews were conducted. Contact with participants was made through existing networks and by circulating posters by email and physical form

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<sup>141</sup> Todd, *The People*, p. 7.

<sup>142</sup> Roberts, *Women and Families*, p. 6-7; Davis, *Modern Motherhood*, p. 40-49.

<sup>143</sup> Heath et al, ‘Social Class’, p. 176.

<sup>144</sup> M. Savage, *Class Analysis and Social Transformation* (Milton Keynes, 2000).

<sup>145</sup> V. Gillies, *Marginalised Mothers: Exploring Working-Class Experiences of Parenting* (London, 2007), p. 19.

to organisations such as trade unions, family history groups, men's sport and leisure clubs, the Workers' Educational Association Scotland, the Scottish Working People's History Trust, One Parent Families Scotland, Fathers Network Scotland and Families Need Fathers Scotland. I gave short recruitment presentations at the meetings of a few of these groups, and snowballing was also effective. The recruitment strategy and the interviews conducted were not intended to gather a 'representative sample' but instead aimed to uncover a variety of individual lived experiences and allow sensitivity to the experiences of different groups such as married and unmarried fathers, resident and non-resident fathers, 'social' and legal fathers, ethnic minority fathers, young fathers, disabled fathers and fathers of disabled children, working fathers and unemployed fathers, lone fathers and stepfathers. The diverse and fluid experience of fatherhood for individual men is somewhat lost within these categories, and a single participant can and did span these different cohorts, in different contexts, across the life course, sometimes simultaneously. Broadly speaking, however, the cohort that emerged were what might be termed 'traditional' married fathers, alongside three lone fathers, two of which were 'stay at home' fathers, six non-resident fathers, two adoptive fathers, one father of a disabled child and one 'teenage' father. All interviewees were white and heterosexual, meaning the experiences of ethnic minority fathers and LGBTQ fathers are not explored. Moreover, it is important to note that the recruitment advertisements may not have reached or attracted those who are socially marginal to the community groups and 'traditional' working-class organisations that were targeted, and that the research does not engage with men who are typically considered 'hard to reach.' Those who were social work clients, whose children were the subject of child protection hearings, or who have served prison sentences, for example, did not choose to come forward. This thesis is limited to one, relatively small, disparate group of men, though as Kate Fisher argues, 'oral history provides the historian with dense and rich qualitative material rather than strength in numbers.'<sup>146</sup>

Interviews mostly took place in participants' own homes, throughout West-Central Scotland, although a few were conducted in the interview rooms at the Scottish Oral History Centre, as well as the Lanarkshire Family History Society. Two of the interviewees' wives were present for some of or the entire interview. During the in-depth, semi-structured interview, participants were asked to recall their memories,

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<sup>146</sup> K. Fisher, 'An Oral History of Birth Control Practice, c. 1925-1950: A Study of Oxford and South Wales' (DPhil Dissertation, University of Oxford, 1997), quoted in Davis, *Modern Motherhood*, p. 4.

experiences and feelings about fatherhood as part of a broader life-history narrative exploring other aspects of male identity, including childhood, work, social lives, and relationships. Interviewees were informed on issues of consent and ethics, and were asked to complete a 'recording agreement form.' Thereafter, all interviews were recorded digitally, transcribed and analysed. The oral testimonies created, and the men who provided them, form the principal focus of this research. Their full biographies and a reference table can be found in the appendix.

The oral history in this thesis is both 'reconstructive' and 'interpretative.' Oral sources provide the means to explore aspects of the past which are poorly documented or which cannot be accessed from other sources, and with the aim of providing a voice for those who would otherwise be 'hidden in history.' It is invaluable in writing the history of everyday, 'ordinary' life, and in particular the history of the family. As Paul Thompson noted, oral history has a 'transforming impact' in this sense and, without it, the historian can discover relatively little of these private areas.<sup>147</sup> In Scotland, oral history has been central in developing our understanding of the everyday in the twentieth century.<sup>148</sup> Gender identities and in particular, the role of the workplace in forging working-class masculinities, have been key themes in oral history research in Scotland, while the family and home life is a growing area of interest.<sup>149</sup> As well as making visible themes or groups which have been marginalised in historical narratives, oral history is able to question and challenge the stereotypes and narratives that dominate this historiography. Abrams and Young, for example, employed oral evidence to problematise the notion of the 'hard man' and stereotype of the selfish, brutish, working-class father in Scotland.<sup>150</sup>

The oral narratives recorded for this thesis build upon this scholarship to address the significant gap in understandings of how men experienced family life, as

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<sup>147</sup> P. Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History* (Oxford, 2000), p. 8.

<sup>148</sup> A. Bartie and A. McIvor, 'Oral History in Scotland', *The Scottish Historical Review*, 92(234), (2013), pp. 108-136. See e.g. L. Abrams and C.G. Brown (eds.), *A History of Everyday Life in Twentieth Century Scotland* (Edinburgh, 2010).

<sup>149</sup> Current projects at the University of Glasgow are using oral history to explore *A History of Working-class Marriage in Scotland, c. 1855-1976*, as well as *Housing, Everyday Life and Wellbeing over the Long-term: Glasgow 1950-1975*. Recent PhD research includes A. Thomson, *Marriage and Marriage Breakdown in Late Twentieth-Century Scotland* (PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 2014); Y. McFadden, *Creating a Modern Home: Modernity, Gender and Culture in Suburban Glasgow, 1945-1975* (PhD Thesis, University of Glasgow, 2016). For the use of oral history to explore the gendered nature of work see e.g. McIvor, 'The Realities and Narratives of Paid Work'; Walker, 'Danger was something you were brought up wi.' For other scholarship employing oral history in Scotland see e.g. W. Ugolini, *Experiencing War as the 'Enemy Other': Italian Scottish Experience in World War II* (Manchester, 2011); A. Bartie, *The Edinburgh Festivals: Culture and Society in Post-War Britain* (Edinburgh, 2013).

<sup>150</sup> Abrams, 'There was Nobody'; Young, 'Hard Man, New Man.'

well as the nature of masculinity at home. Unlike their middle-class counterparts, there are very few subjective accounts of fatherhood amongst the working-classes, and very little is known about fatherhood from men themselves. Abrams article, for example, employed the life histories of working-class women.<sup>151</sup> Oral history allowed the opportunity to explore what it meant to be a father from the perspective of men, and importantly, how this experience changed for individuals over time.

Fatherhood may produce distinct activities and identities for men, at different stages throughout their lifetime. As Bailey has argued, shifts across the life-course 'are ripe for enquiry to uncover the dynamic and mutable nature of parenthood.'<sup>152</sup> Oral history is a revealing methodology in this regard, examining how men's biographies intersected with 'the period and places they were rooted', rather than drawing isolated examples from diverse and varied source materials.<sup>153</sup> This is particularly illuminating for the late twentieth century, in which demographic changes led to fathering increasingly taking place in a variety of family and household contexts, with men more likely to experience more than one 'type' of fathering over their life-course. It also provides a way to examine fathers' presence in the lives of their adult children. The men I interviewed were often simultaneously fathers, husbands/partners and grandfathers, continuing to perform these roles and identities. Oral history is therefore an interesting and useful method to explore the way in which gender and fathering intersects with age.<sup>154</sup>

Oral testimonies are also effective in exploring the 'emotional and embodied dimensions of fatherhood', which historians have only recently begun to examine.<sup>155</sup> Strange looks to her working-class auto-biographers for a research agenda, exploring how 'children and fathers invested meaning in paternal identities and practices.'<sup>156</sup> She argues that mundane, everyday practices and inanimate objects were 'steeped in feelings'; for some authors, fathers' performance of parental duties and obligations was

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<sup>151</sup> Abrams used the Stirling Women's Oral History Project.

<sup>152</sup> Bailey, 'The History of Mum and Dad', p. 502.

<sup>153</sup> R. Rutherford, 'Three Faces of Fatherhood as a Masculine Category: Tyrants, Teachers and Workaholics as "responsible family men" during Canada's Baby Boom' in J. Arnold and S. Brady (eds.), *What is Masculinity? Historical Dynamics from Antiquity to the Contemporary World* (Basingstoke, 2011), p. 325.

<sup>154</sup> C. Emslie, K. Hunt and R. O'Brien, 'Masculinities in Older Men: A Qualitative Study in the West of Scotland', *Journal of Men's Studies*, 12(3), (2004), pp. 207-226; Davidoff et al, *Family Story*; Young, 'Being a Man.'

<sup>155</sup> Lupton and Barclay, *Constructing Fatherhood*, p. 22.

<sup>156</sup> Strange, *Fatherhood and the British Working Class*, p. 2.

‘transcendal’ and represented ‘intimate acts of devotion.’<sup>157</sup> By analysing letters written by working-class fathers during the First World War, Fisher has demonstrated the way in which men attempted to maintain a father-child relationship over a long period of absence, with ‘routine’ enquiries about family life revealing both affection and emotion.<sup>158</sup> As King noted of her analysis of pre-existing oral history collections to explore fatherhood in the first half of the twentieth century, the value in oral history lies in ‘the deep, reflective narratives of family memories around feelings, personal stories and identities.’<sup>159</sup>

While the growing scholarship on the history of parenting and the family engages with the history of emotions, in Scotland, ‘a feeling history of the family...is yet to be written.’<sup>160</sup> As Katie Barclay, Tanya Cheadle and Eleanor Gordon have argued, a fuller history of Scottish family life requires recognising that as well as being a primary site where power dynamics and status in family relationships occur, it is also ‘where people build a sense of home, and where they love.’<sup>161</sup> An emphasis on the subjective and emotive history of the family, and fatherhood in particular, is significant, given ‘culture’ gives shape to emotional life: ‘varying emotional regimes have influenced forms of parental expression and practice.’<sup>162</sup> During the period under question, discourses surrounding the ‘involved’, sensitive and intimate father intensified, emphasising that men should reveal their emotions, openly demonstrate their love and affection and participate in caring activities with their children.<sup>163</sup> Oral history is therefore a particularly appropriate methodology in which to address these themes.<sup>164</sup> Conducting original interviews provided the opportunity to speak to fathers about fatherhood. The recorded narratives created were then used to explore the actions, emotions and identities of fathers themselves; which cannot be recovered from other sources in the Scottish context, and were invaluable in examining how fathering and masculine identities and experiences shift over the life-course. In using oral

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<sup>157</sup> Ibid, p. 18.

<sup>158</sup> Fisher, ‘Fatherhood and the Experience of Working-Class Fathers.’ Some of the letters explored by Fisher are from the Scottish War Museum.

<sup>159</sup> King, *Family Men*, p. 13.

<sup>160</sup> K. Barclay, T. Cheadle and E. Gordon, ‘The State of Scottish History: Gender’, *The Scottish Historical Review*, 234(92), (2013), p. 96.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid, p. 96.

<sup>162</sup> Bailey, ‘The History of Mum and Dad’, p. 489; S. Matt, ‘Current Emotion Research in History: Or, Doing History from the Inside Out’, *Emotion Review*, 3(1), (2011), pp. 117-124.

<sup>163</sup> Dermott, *Intimate Fatherhood*.

<sup>164</sup> Gender, family and oral history all share the agenda of making visible those groups and themes that have been marginalised in historical narratives.

testimonies, this thesis puts men's experiences of fatherhood, 'all its hope, joys and pleasures as well as anxieties', at the forefront.<sup>165</sup>

The oral history in this study is also 'interpretative' and there are particular methodological and theoretical considerations in creating and using oral sources. In reconstructing the past through people's memories, oral historians have explored the complex and multiple ways that memories are constructed and narrated. The public discourses of the time being remembered may be very different from the time within which the memory is being recalled, and the identities that people embrace in the present, can affect the memories they have about the past. The interviewee does not therefore only recall the past, but also asserts his or her interpretation of that past and as a result, 'the "voice of the past" is inescapably the voice of the present too.'<sup>166</sup> The way in which narrators draw on public discourses in constructing accounts of their past is commonly referred to as the 'cultural circuit.'<sup>167</sup> Memories, moreover, can be 'composed' by narrators using public language and cultural meanings to make sense of 'past and present lives', while in another sense individuals 'compose' memories to attain 'composure', allowing them to feel comfortable within their narrative.<sup>168</sup> As Alistair Thomson notes, in practice the two are inseparable.<sup>169</sup>

The subjective nature of oral history is in fact, a key strength, and the 'dialogue with the present' a particularly productive means of exploring the past.<sup>170</sup> In recognising that memories are composed and constructed, and exploring how and why people narrate their life histories like they do - how they structure, frame and perform their stories, why they include particular memories and omit others - are all important elements in exploring individual subjectivity as well as the relationship between the past and the present. Oral evidence does not have to be literally or factually 'true' in order to be of historical value, but rather, the subjective meanings embedded in people's memories of the past are all valid.<sup>171</sup> For Alessandro Portelli, oral sources 'tell

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<sup>165</sup> Lupton and Barclay, *Constructing Fatherhood*, p. 6.

<sup>166</sup> J. Tosh, *The Pursuit of History* (London, 2015), p. 321.

<sup>167</sup> A. Thomson, *Anzac Memories* (Oxford, 1994).

<sup>168</sup> 'Composure' was first coined by G. Dawson, *Solider Heroes: British Adventure, Empire and the Imagining of Masculinities* (London, 1994), pg. 22-23; P. Summerfield, 'Culture and Composure: Creating Narratives of the Gendered Self in Oral History Interviews', *Cultural and Social History*, 1(1), (2004), pp. 65-93.

<sup>169</sup> Thomson, *Anzac Memories*.

<sup>170</sup> S. Szeter and K. Fisher, *Sex before the Sexual Revolution: Intimate Life in England* (Cambridge, 2010), p. 11.

<sup>171</sup> A. Portelli, 'What makes Oral History different' in R. Parks and A. Thomson (eds.), *The Oral History Reader* (London, 1998), pp. 63-74.

us not just what people did, but what they wanted to do, what they believed they were doing, and what they now think they did', while according to Luisa Passerini, 'the guiding principle should be that all autobiographical memory is true, it is up to the interpreter to discover in which sense, where [and] for which purpose.'<sup>172</sup>

Oral history can therefore be used to explore how men's narratives and identities were shaped by the historical and contemporary ideals of fatherhood with which they were confronted. The 'cultural circuit' surrounding fatherhood can be explored, that is the way in which personal accounts are informed by 'public legends', including the negative stereotypes surrounding Scottish fathers and 'hard men', and assumptions about 'more involved' fathers in contemporary society. As will be explored throughout the thesis, participants employed past and present discourses to frame and contextualise their own experiences, and it was not always easy for some men to reconcile these constructions. Although people draw on public discourses and use them to shape their own life narratives, gaps and tensions may exist between individual accounts and dominant public representations, or when recalling difficult memories. In some instances, interviewees can experience discomposure, 'a kind of psychic unease at their inability to align subjective experience with discourse.'<sup>173</sup> As Davis notes however, much can be learnt through analysing the 'silences, uncertainties and contradictions' within oral history interviews.<sup>174</sup> More recently, Abrams has employed the concepts of 'coherence system' and 'epiphanic moment' to explore and explain narrative strategies; how narrators reconcile past and present versions of the self in life story telling. The latter, for example, refers to 'moments of acute self-recognition', both in the interviewee's past life experience but also in the present day interview.<sup>175</sup>

Inter-subjectivity, which refers to the 'interpersonal dynamics of the interview situation', is another key consideration in employing and creating oral history.<sup>176</sup> As Angela Bartie and McIvor have noted, the oral history source is a product of the

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<sup>172</sup> A. Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History* (New York, 1991), p. 50; L. Passerini, 'Women's Personal Narratives: Myths, Experiences and Emotions' in Personal Narratives Group, *Interpreting Women's Lives: Feminist Theory and Personal Narratives* (Indiana, 1989), p. 197.

<sup>173</sup> L. Abrams, *Oral History Theory* (London, 2010), p. 69.

<sup>174</sup> Davis, *Modern Motherhood*, p. 6

<sup>175</sup> L. Abrams, 'Liberating the Female Self: Epiphanies, Conflict and Coherence in the Life Stories of Post-War British Women', *Social History*, 31(9), (2014), p. 21.

<sup>176</sup> Abrams, *Oral History Theory*, p. 54.

interview situation, ‘the memoir that is created when interviewer meets interviewee.’<sup>177</sup> The oral historian is not a neutral presence but instead crucial in the creation of the source, not only in terms of lines of questioning, but also the relationship established. According to Portelli, interviewees ‘are always, though perhaps unobtrusively, studying the interviewers who “study” them.’<sup>178</sup> Gender, race, accent, name, appearance and age as well as status and beliefs may impact on the shared narrative created in ways difficult to quantify. As the interviewer, my own biography, identity and ideologies, principally my position as a young female, impacted not only upon the narratives told to me and the source created but also my interpretation of this information.<sup>179</sup> Such complexities of the interview dynamic are highlighted by one participant Louisa, who remarked to me and her husband John during a conversation about childbirth: ‘sitting listening to the two of you...it’s interesting because your expectations of today are very different from John’s.’<sup>180</sup>

Oral history then, is told through multiple lenses. The interview is a ‘three-way dialogue’: the interviewee engages in a conversation with the interviewer, with his/her past/present self, and with past and present cultural discourses.<sup>181</sup> Young’s research examining masculinity in mid-twentieth century Scotland provides a key article in exploring a number of these considerations, principally the role of gender in the construction and composure of identities.<sup>182</sup> Young found diverse inter-subjectivities in her interviews with older male respondents, and claims her position as a young, educated, liberated woman, signified a discourse for shifting gender norms, and affected the ways in which men constructed their historical and contemporary masculine identities. According to Young, she represented the discourse of the ‘new man’ and feminism. Some participants attempted to position themselves as ‘new men’ in response, while another perceived her, or what she perhaps represented, as a threat, attempting to establish himself as a ‘hard man.’ The portrayal of an ‘acceptable’

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<sup>177</sup> Bartie and McIvor, ‘Oral History in Scotland’, p. 109.

<sup>178</sup> Portelli, ‘What Makes Oral History Different’, p. 70.

<sup>179</sup> Participants may have viewed me as a university student, university researcher or historian. They may also have considered me to be working-class or middle-class (although as discussed ‘class’ is not something which interviewees easily identified with). My own motivation in conducting research into fatherhood in Scotland, aside from an interest in family life and gender relations, was that my own father contrasted significantly from those fathers depicted in the Scottish historiography I read as an undergraduate student.

<sup>180</sup> SOHCA/054/21 Interview with John McSherry, 20<sup>th</sup> February 2015.

<sup>181</sup> Abrams, *Oral History Theory*, p. 59, 76.

<sup>182</sup> Young’s interviewees were born in the period between 1929-1938, and married in the 1950s and 1960s.



masculinity was a key activity for both the male and female interviewees she interviewed.<sup>183</sup>

Gender has been highlighted as a central issue in qualitative interviewing regarding intersubjectivity, but also in relation to male and female interviewees and the ways in which they narrate, construct and compose their life stories.<sup>184</sup> Men's narratives have been characterised as placing emphasis on working and public lives, as well as their own personal actions, avoiding intimate and emotional subjects such as parenting. Sociologist Sue Sharpe, for example, commented that fathers, unlike the adult daughters she interviewed in the early 1990s, were 'relatively inarticulate' in regard to expressing emotion, while Michel Peplar noted that in the older group of men he interviewed about family and domestic life in the post-war period, such questioning seemed to 'get in the way of the real stories some men wanted to tell.'<sup>185</sup>

In contrast, Julia Brannen's research on fatherhood across three generations in the twentieth century, found that 'fathers exhibited strong emotion.' Several of the men interviewed were reported to have become 'tearful' and 'overcome by their emotions.'<sup>186</sup> Similarly, Tina Miller noted that it was 'little surprise' that almost all of the interviews she conducted with fathers lasted longer than those she carried out for an equivalent study on motherhood, given it may have been the first time men had the opportunity to speak in emotional and frank ways about their experiences of being a father.<sup>187</sup> On the whole, I also found my participants to be willing to talk at length about fatherhood and family life, with interviews lasting on average between one and half to over two hours. The feelings of love, elation and pride alongside those of a sense of anxiety, helplessness and vulnerability expressed, do not indicate that men were constrained. It is important to recognise, nevertheless, that the sample was self-selecting, those who responded to the advertisement and volunteered to be interviewed about their experiences of fathering presumably had something to say, and may have

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<sup>183</sup> Young, 'Hard Man, New Man.'

<sup>184</sup> M. Schwalbe and M. Wolkomir, 'The Masculine Self as Problem and Resource in Interview Studies of Men', *Men and Masculinities*, 4(1), (2001), pp. 90-103; C. Gattrell, 'Interviewing Fathers: Feminist Dilemmas in Fieldwork', *Journal of Gender Studies*, 15(3), (2006), pp. 237-251; M. Robb, 'Exploring Fatherhood: Masculinity and Intersubjectivity in the Research Process', *Journal of Social Work Practice*, 18(3), (2006), pp. 395-406; J. Duncombe and D. Marsden, 'Love and Intimacy: The Gender Division of Emotion and 'Emotion Work': A Neglected Aspect of Sociological Discussion of Heterosexual Relationships', *Sociology*, 27(2), (1993), pp. 221-241. Duncombe and Marsden depict men as unable or unwilling to disclose feelings, not only in interview situations, but also in relationships in general.

<sup>185</sup> S. Sharpe, *Fathers and Daughters* (London, 1994) p. 6; Peplar, *Family Matters*, p. 113.

<sup>186</sup> J. Brannen, *Fathers and Sons: Generations, Families and Migration* (Basingstoke, 2015), p. 42.

<sup>187</sup> Miller, *Making Sense of Fatherhood*, p. 186.

placed significant weight on their identities and commitments as parents. Overall, this thesis uses oral history to give a voice to those fathers 'hidden in history', and to interpret how they constructed their memories in the context of shifting ideals and norms of fatherhood, gender and family life. It adopts the view of McIvor and others that oral sources are 'both informative and interpretative in quality, representing peoples own subjective interpretations of the past and reflecting discourses, as well as informing us about real people and real material circumstances.'<sup>188</sup>

A range of primary material complemented the oral testimonies in order to explore some of the dominant conceptions of fatherhood in the late twentieth century. While discourses can be multiple and competing, some can be hegemonic over others, particularly if issued from a political institution such as the state, which plays a central role in the 'definition, construction and control of fathers and fatherhood.'<sup>189</sup> The Conservative Party's New Right ideology and policies between 1979 and 1997, as will be examined, had particular implications for families, shaping men and women's practices around parenthood and work in significant ways. Government reports and enquiries, Hansard parliamentary debates as well as legal and legislative change around parenting and family life at a British and Scottish-national level, have been examined in order to explore how fatherhood was constructed in political discourse. Prior to devolution in 1999, all legislation in Scotland was issued from the UK parliament at Westminster. These wider British discourses are analysed in conjunction with the oral testimonies, exploring whether they were a reality for, and how they impacted upon, Scottish families and fathers.

Major publications and empirical research conducted on fathers and the family from the 1970s onwards was also consulted.<sup>190</sup> These sociological studies challenged the 'mother-focused paradigm' of family research and drew attention to the constraints imposed by society on men's fathering practices. Moreover, the records of One Parent Families Scotland (OPFS) were used to examine the experiences and conceptions of lone, non-resident and divorced fatherhood, while the archives of the National Childbirth Trust (NCT) were consulted to provide information regarding men's role and status in childbirth, a central shift in fatherhood during this period. While as an

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<sup>188</sup> McIvor, 'The Realities and Narratives of Paid Work', p. 104.

<sup>189</sup> J. Hearn, 'Men, Fatherhood and the State: National and Transnational Perspectives' in B. Hobson (eds.), *Making Men into Fathers: Men, Masculinities, and the Social Politics of Fatherhood* (Cambridge, 2002), p. 270.

<sup>190</sup> See e.g. Lewis, *Becoming a Father*; Lewis and Sussman, *Men's Changing Roles in the Family*; McKee and O'Brien, *The Father Figure*; Lewis and O'Brien, *Reassessing Fatherhood*.

organisation, the NCT largely drew in participants from white, middle-class backgrounds; the archive itself provides a significant insight into the history of childbirth and maternity from the post-war period.

While it is not an exhaustive account, collectively the additional source materials were appropriate for exploring the dominant, but often contradictory, discourses surrounding fatherhood during this period. As noted, the foundations of this research are the emotions, personal stories and identities of fathers themselves. According to Tosh, further insight into fatherhood and masculinity as a lived experience is required, and the normative codes which underpinned men's lives explored for their 'reception' and 'interpretation.'<sup>191</sup> Although inherently interlinked, it is therefore important to differentiate between fathering expectations, practices and experiences (what fathers did and felt) and the discourses surrounding fatherhood (the diverse, no means consistent beliefs about fathers).<sup>192</sup> Political constructions which idealise one particular family form or fatherhood, for example, are often at odds with the diverse realities of lived experience.<sup>193</sup> On the other hand, while popular and medical discourses that emphasised the importance of fathers at childbirth were likely to be a major factor in men's decision, the more men who were present, the more discourses were likely to emphasise its importance. Overall, this thesis takes the view that while it is important to acknowledge the distinction, discourses as well as practices are interdependent, each shaping one another.<sup>194</sup>

## ***Chapter Outline***

This thesis examines working-class fatherhood in post-war Scotland with a particular focus on the late twentieth century. It responds to calls for a greater understanding of men and masculinities in Scotland, an 'emotional' history of the family, and more research into fatherhood in the twentieth century, with a focus on class and regional difference. It sheds light on the heterogeneity and complexity of men's experiences of fatherhood and challenges the largely negative, popular, cultural and historical stereotypes surrounding Scottish fatherhood. Each chapter provides an overview of

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<sup>191</sup> Tosh, 'The History of Masculinity: An out-dated concept?'

<sup>192</sup> LaRossa, 'The Historical Study of Fatherhood'

<sup>193</sup> G. Jagger and C. Wright (eds.), *Changing Family Values* (London, 1999); Peplar, *Family Matters*.

<sup>194</sup> Davidoff et al, *Family Story*.

the historical context and debates, before focusing upon the experiences of fathers themselves through an analysis of the original oral testimonies. Chapter One explores men's experiences of becoming a father. Charting the dramatic rise in fathers attending childbirth from the 1970s onwards, as well as shifting family structures, it examines the decision to have children; including the complex emotions and practical changes experienced during childbirth and early parenthood. Fatherhood was a significant turning point in the lives of participants as well as central to their personal identities, while attending childbirth was important in signifying a move to more 'involved' fathering, evoking a new set of norms around men's parenting and masculinities. Chapter Two focuses upon men's experiences of being fathered in the immediate post-war period, with an emphasis on father-son relationships. It examines the ways in which interviewees' recollections of their fathers were used to inform narratives of their own fathering identities, practices and behaviours.

The third chapter examines the role of the father in relation to work and provisioning. It argues that while elements of breadwinning ideology and behaviours were disrupted during the late twentieth century in the wake of dramatic shifts in the labour market, including deindustrialisation and the rise of maternal employment, financial provision continued to be a central feature of fatherhood and masculinity. The narratives recorded reveal, however, that enduring stereotypes of fathers as mere economic providers conceal the complex experiences and emotions of this act and the considerable tensions some men faced in balancing both work and home life. Chapter Four explores continuity and change in fathers' various roles in the family, focusing on themes such as the father-child relationship, leisure, discipline, practical childcare and housework. Although emotion was not 'new' to fatherhood in the late twentieth century, emotional expression, giving one's time and 'being there' were central in men's construction of 'good' fathering, which is also explored.

Chapter Five explores both the political and cultural representations, as well as lived experience, of non-resident fatherhood in the wake of significant demographic change. It examines political concerns surrounding the growing separation of marriage and parenthood and the impact of 'fatherless families' as well as the legal and social policy responses to such concerns. The sixth and final chapter explores the representations and experiences of lone fatherhood. It examines how men negotiated their primary caregiving roles, in relation to the perceived 'natural' superiority of women's caring and the continued associations between masculinity and paid work.

Both chapters demonstrate how sole or non-resident care of children involved a change not only in men's practical circumstances, but also in father-child relationships and in their roles and identities. Finally, the conclusion draws together the main findings and indicates areas for further research.

The historical study of fatherhood has direct implications in contemporary society, where fatherhood remains a widely discussed issue. Men's involvement or lack of involvement in family life continues to provoke controversial debate in politics, the press, and in social media in relation to stay-at-home dads, 'absent' fathers, custody rights and paternity leave. The notion that today's fathers are more involved or 'better' than their predecessors remains pervasive. The strict separation of gender roles within the heterosexual family unit has diminished (but has not disappeared), cultural images of and attitudes towards fatherhood have changed significantly and new masculinities based in the realm of the family are observable in everyday life.<sup>195</sup> Questions over caring and providing remains 'challenging and contested terrain', and gendered stereotypes continue to influence the perceived importance of mothers and fathers, particularly in social policies.<sup>196</sup>

In 2014, the Scottish Parliament launched an enquiry into Fathers and Parenting. Although initially focused upon the experiences of single fathers, and fathers with shared custody of children, the enquiry latterly extended to the practical and social challenges faced by all fathers in Scotland, highlighting how little is known about the experience of Scottish fatherhood in either a historical or contemporary context. One of the main themes heard in evidence, from organisations and fathers themselves, was the negative social attitudes and cultural perceptions towards fathers in Scotland. The founder of Fathers Network Scotland, for example, argued that 'in our culture we believe that men exist on a spectrum from useless at best to, at worst, violent or abusive – in other words, a risk.'<sup>197</sup> The implication that fatherhood has (or has not) changed over time and contemporary debates surrounding men's interest and involvement in family life must be placed in an historic context, not only for historical scholarship but society at large.<sup>198</sup> This thesis readdresses the past, contextualises a dynamic and controversial present, and holds implications for the men, women and

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<sup>195</sup> Modern Fatherhood Project, [www.modernfatherhood.org](http://www.modernfatherhood.org), accessed 3 Dec 2014.

<sup>196</sup> Miller, *Making Sense of Fatherhood*, p. 191; L. King, 'Supporting Active Fatherhood in Britain' (2012), [www.historyandpolicy.org](http://www.historyandpolicy.org), accessed 7 Oct 2013.

<sup>197</sup> Scottish Parliament, 'Fathers and Parenting: 1<sup>st</sup> Report' (2014) [www.scottish.parliament.uk](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk), accessed 20 Sept 2015.

<sup>198</sup> LaRossa, *The Modernisation of Fatherhood*.

children of the future, with the hope to provide a ‘recognisable and useable past’ for contemporary discussions of fatherhood.<sup>199</sup>

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<sup>199</sup> Abrams, ‘Gendering the Agenda’, p. 1.

## CHAPTER ONE 'Full of Wonderment': Becoming a Father

I quite enjoyed it when she cried 'cause I used to like walking up and down singing to her and my son as well [laughs]...You felt you were close to them and they were looking at you, they were kinda focussing what attention they had on you as an individual, and they smiled. As well as crying, they smiled as well, and you knew they were content.<sup>200</sup>

Becoming a father is a crucial part of many men's lives and identities, representing a significant shift in both life cycle and life-style, common to the majority of men at some point in their lives. Historical narratives of the lives of Scottish working-class men, however, have tended to explore 'public' rites of passage such as boyhood and adolescence, employment, male leisure pursuits, and rarely men's 'private' experiences of becoming and being a father. As the introduction demonstrated, the late twentieth century was a period in which the cultural meaning of fatherhood underwent significant change and the roles, rights and responsibilities of fathers entered public and political debate, reflecting the significant social and economic change occurring in working and family lives.<sup>201</sup> The 1970s, in particular, have been considered a watershed in the social construction of fatherhood and in what men, as fathers, actually 'did.' The 'new' father, it is asserted, was 'involved', both emotionally and in the practical care of children and housework. The dramatic uptake in fathers attending childbirth during this period was more than any other phenomenon, central in signifying a move to more intimate fathering, evoking a new set of norms around men's parenting and masculinities. The trend was also significant in convincing contemporaries that fathers were significantly different from previous generations.

For much of the twentieth century, childbirth, like childrearing, was considered to be a female domain. While the conception of children could be seen as a marker of masculine status, virility and sexuality, birth could challenge and undermine masculinity; participating was not a 'man's place' or a 'manly' thing to do.<sup>202</sup> As feminist sociologist Ann Oakley argued in her 1979 study *Becoming a Mother*, 'the meaning of "fathering" is insemination; "mothering" means child-rearing [...] a proper man fathers children, who are then a visible confirmation of his sexual and social normality.'<sup>203</sup> Given that women both carry and deliver children, their role in

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<sup>200</sup> [SOHCA/054/21] McSherry.

<sup>201</sup> McKee and O'Brien, *The Father Figure*; Lewis and O'Brien, *Reassessing Fatherhood*.

<sup>202</sup> Bourke, *Working Class Cultures*; Tosh, *A Man's Place*; King, *Family Men*.

<sup>203</sup> A. Oakley, *From Here to Maternity: Becoming a Mother* (Middlesex, 1979), p. 198.

reproduction has historically and culturally been conceived as being ‘natural, instinctive and inevitable.’<sup>204</sup> The role of the father in these areas has necessarily been viewed as less central.

In the space of a mere decade, however, fathers attending the birth of their children shifted from being extraordinary to an established social norm. Estimates suggest that attendance increased from 5% in the 1950s to as much as 97% in the early 1990s and, more specifically, rose almost threefold from 35% to 90% between the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>205</sup> Writing in 1987, one fatherhood researcher observed that ‘the presence of the father at birth is now so clearly expected in Britain, that it is probably as hard for a man to stay out of the delivery room, as it was for him to get in only a decade ago.’<sup>206</sup> In contemporary Britain, the presence of fathers at childbirth is now largely deemed a foregone conclusion, and only one in twenty-five fathers are not present.<sup>207</sup>

The dramatic increase in paternal attendance at childbirth is symbolic of wider changes to fatherhood, family life and masculinity during this period. It signified shifting understandings and ideals of ‘good’ fathering, in which fathers were increasingly encouraged not only to be providers, but hands-on carers as well as emotionally close to their children. While emotions were not in themselves new to fatherhood, emotional openness and expression were considered to be ever significant to the father-child relationship, and were often popularly contrasted with the negative qualities of the emotionally and physically distant father figure of the past. As Ester Dermott notes, attending childbirth is tied to the idea of ‘a more emotionally engaged and mature masculinity’ which rejects the suppression of emotion and the denial of vulnerability by men.<sup>208</sup>

This chapter examines men’s recorded narratives of becoming a father in the late twentieth century. It explores the shifting routes into fatherhood and charts the changing role and position of men during childbirth in the context of shifting maternity care provision, and psychological interest in the benefits of ‘involved’ fatherhood. It also examines government policies, or lack of, for fathers during the period of early parenthood, exploring attitudes to and provision of paternity and parental leave. By

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<sup>204</sup> Collier and Sheldon, *Fragmenting Fatherhood*, p. 37.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid, p. 62.

<sup>206</sup> S. Jackson, ‘Great Britain’ in M. E. Lamb (eds.), *The Father’s Role: Cross-Cultural Perspectives* (New Jersey, 1987), p. 37.

<sup>207</sup> NCT, [www.nct.org.uk/birth/who-can-be-birth-partner](http://www.nct.org.uk/birth/who-can-be-birth-partner), accessed 9 Nov 2016.

<sup>208</sup> Dermott, *Intimate Fatherhood*, p. 64



using oral testimonies, this chapter will show that despite being ‘hidden’ in historical narratives, fatherhood was and is a crucial and central component of men’s identities and experiences in modern Scotland. The stereotype is well documented, that men do not talk, and specifically do not talk about intimate and emotional subjects such as parenting. Scottish working-class fathers have, in particular, been portrayed as distant figures, appearing only on the periphery of family and home life.<sup>209</sup> The narratives collected of feelings of love, elation and pride alongside those of a sense of anxiety, helplessness and vulnerability, provide, however, an insight into men’s significant but unexplored experiences of becoming a father, as well as the shifting relationship between fatherhood and masculinity during the late twentieth century. Fatherhood was remembered as a time of individual transformation.

### ***‘Joining the club?’ Having Children***

While fathers are not an homogenous group, there is a ‘virtual absence of readily available statistics’ on how many men became fathers, at what age, and to how many children.<sup>210</sup> The 1992 *British Household Panel Survey* was the first national survey in Britain to ask men about their fertility histories.<sup>211</sup> The first demographic analysis of fatherhood using that survey found that in the early 1990s, the most common age for men to have their first child was between the age of twenty-five and twenty-nine, while one third of fathers had children under twenty-five. More than nine in ten children were born to men who were married and more than four out of every five fathers were living with all of their children under the age of eighteen.<sup>212</sup> Under-reporting of fathers in demographic research continued, however. As late as 2007, the Scottish Government noted that because men’s fertility was not the subject of systematic collection, ‘a rounded picture of the fertility behavior of the Scottish population as a whole’ could not be given.<sup>213</sup>

Over the course of the twentieth century, there have nevertheless been a number of key demographic trends which affected both the timing and nature of fatherhood.<sup>214</sup>

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<sup>209</sup> Macdonald, *Whaur Extremes Meet*.

<sup>210</sup> A. Burgess, *Fatherhood Reclaimed: The Making of the Modern Father* (London, 1997), p. 104.

<sup>211</sup> Clarke and O’Brien, ‘Father Involvement in Britain’, p. 43.

<sup>212</sup> Burghes et al, *Fathers and Fatherhood*, pp. 21-30.

<sup>213</sup> Scottish Executive, *A Gender Audit of Statistics*, p. 20.

<sup>214</sup> Jamieson, ‘Changing Intimacy: Seek and Forming Couple Relationships.’

Significantly, there were fewer children and smaller families, with average Scottish family size falling from six in 1911 to 1.9 in 2001.<sup>215</sup> Figure 1.1 shows that births in Scotland fell from 100,660 to 62,342 between 1965 and 1977, whilst the overall number of births declined by almost 40% between 1971 and 2002.<sup>216</sup> Over this same period, the birth rate per 1000 of the population fell from 16.6 to 10.1.<sup>217</sup> Not only were people having fewer children over this period, they were also having them later in life, and increasingly outside of marriage. The trend towards later childbearing is underlined by the average age of parents at birth. As shown by table 1.1, the average age at which men became fathers in Scotland increased from 28.4 in 1974 to 32.7 in 2014.<sup>218</sup> Moreover, the proportion of births to unmarried parents increased from 8.1% in 1971 to 42.6% in 2000.<sup>219</sup> As Chapters Six and Seven will explore, a rise in divorce, cohabitation and remarriage also created increasingly diverse and fluid contexts in which fathering took place.

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<sup>215</sup> L. Abrams, E. Gordon, D. Simonton and E. Yeo (eds.), *Gender in Scottish History Since 1700*. (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2006), p. 259.

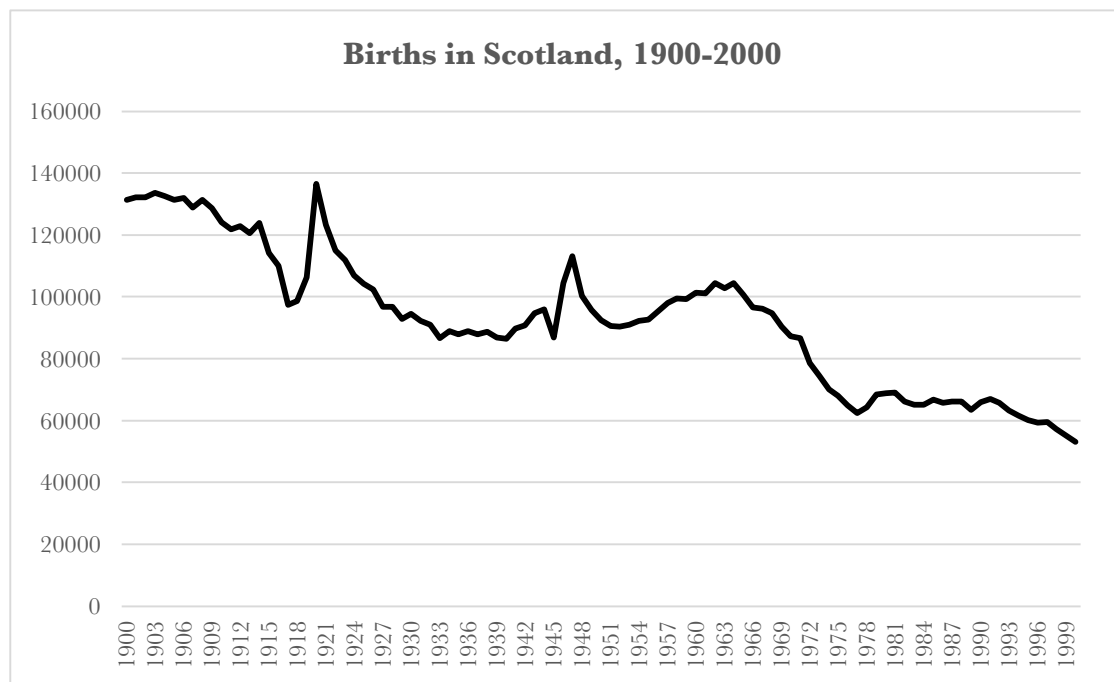
<sup>216</sup> Scottish Executive, *A Gender Audit of Statistics*, p. 18; National Records of Scotland, Registrar General, Table BT.1: Births, by sex, Scotland, 1855 to 2015.

<sup>217</sup> National Records of Scotland, Registrar General, Table P1(b): Population and vital events, Scotland, 1971 to 2015, [www.nrscotland.gov.uk](http://www.nrscotland.gov.uk), accessed 9 May 2017.

<sup>218</sup> National Records of Scotland, 'Registrar General's Annual Review of Demographic Trends' (2015), [www.nrscotland.gov.uk/](http://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/), accessed 14 Mar 2016.

<sup>219</sup> National Records of Scotland, Registrar General, Table P1(b): Population and vital events, Scotland, 1971 to 2015, [www.nrscotland.gov.uk](http://www.nrscotland.gov.uk), accessed 9 May 2017.

**Figure 1.1**



Source: National Records of Scotland, Registrar General Scotland, Birth Time Series Data, Table BT.1: Births, by sex, Scotland, 1855 to 2015. [www.nrscotland.gov.uk](http://www.nrscotland.gov.uk), accessed 9 May 2017.

Although men's attitudes towards having children have been overlooked, partly as a consequence of the dearth of data on male fertility, they are as relevant to women's, in understanding these demographic trends, as well as wider social change in gender relations and family life.<sup>220</sup> The men I interviewed, for example, became fathers at various stages of their lives and for diverse personal and practical reasons. For many, particularly those who became fathers for the first time in the early 1970s, children were often described as simply 'happening' very quickly after marriage. Frank, who became a father for the first time in 1972, noted that the 'kids just came along' after getting married in 1971: 'we never planned anything, not a thing!' while Joseph, who had his first child in 1974 at the age of twenty-five recalled, 'it wasn't a conscious decision, it was like most people I think, it just happened.'<sup>221</sup> John D similarly remembers that 'it just happened' in the late 1970s when he and his wife got engaged, married and had their son within nine months, aged sixteen and seventeen: 'just the done thing in they days.'<sup>222</sup>

<sup>220</sup> L. Jamieson, K. Backett-Milburn, R. Simpson and F. Wasoff, 'Fertility and Social Change: the neglected contributions of men's approaches to becoming partners and parents', *Sociological Review*, 58 (3), (2010), pp. 463-485.

<sup>221</sup> SOHCA/054/25 Interview with Frank Fleming, 19<sup>th</sup> March 2015; SOHCA/054/02 Interview with 'Joseph' (pseud.), 17<sup>th</sup> July 2014.

<sup>222</sup> SOHCA/054/17 Interview with John Duffy, 30<sup>th</sup> January 2015.

These men distanced themselves from contemporary ideals of planning and later parenthood and, for many, having children within marriage was an unconscious, taken-for-granted decision. As Alistair, who had his first child in 1974, reflected, both marriage and parenthood ‘was something that was expected of you, something pre-programmed into you, that you got married, you got a mortgage, you had children...there was some sort of societal expectation of what you were doing so having got married, having children was the next logical extension.’<sup>223</sup> For John, who married in the September of 1969 and whose wife fell pregnant in the October, ‘there was no thought of planning as such. We just married and were pregnant’:

I was shocked because I didnae think it would happen that quickly but delighted because that’s why you got married was to have children and the only concern was the baby gonnae be okay. So I was chuffed to bits, the fact I was gonnae be a dad and we didnae think about the material...ye just got by.<sup>224</sup>

A number of sociological studies during this period reported that men rarely made the conscious decision to become fathers.<sup>225</sup> Lewis’ study with 100 fathers in 1979-80 found that while 76% of the men had assumed they would become parents, half had never seriously discussed the subject with their wives before falling pregnant.<sup>226</sup> In Lorna McKee’s 1979 study with around 360 young, working-class fathers, four-fifths were not using birth control when their partner became pregnant, and half of those married men in the sample had wed during the pregnancy.<sup>227</sup>

For some interviewees, though children were firmly tied to marriage, conscious decisions *were* taken regarding material circumstances. A key theme to emerge, for example, was the delay in having children for a number of years in order to build homes or careers and to enjoy both freedom and disposable income. Kenneth, who became a father for the first time in 1975, reflected that ‘we waited till we got on our feet a bit, and got what we wanted basically for a home, not a house, a home, and then decided that we would try for children.’<sup>228</sup> Anthony noted that he and his wife ‘needed

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<sup>223</sup> SOHCA/054/06 Interview with ‘Alistair’ (pseud.), 8<sup>th</sup> December 2014.

<sup>224</sup> [SOHCA/054/21] McSherry.

<sup>225</sup> D. Owens, ‘The Desire to Father: Reproductive Ideologies and Involuntarily Childless Men’ in L. McKee and M. O’Brien (eds.), *The Father Figure* (London, 1982), pp. 72-86.

<sup>226</sup> Lewis, *Becoming a Father*, p.

<sup>227</sup> M. Simms and C. Smith, ‘Young Fathers: Attitudes to Marriage and Family Life’ in L. McKee and M. O’Brien (eds.), *The Father Figure* (London, 1982), pp. 139-152.

<sup>228</sup> SOHCA/054/26 Interview with Kenneth Paul, 7<sup>th</sup> April 2015.

to get established' before starting a family in 1976, Alistair reflected they 'had to wait till we paid off the furniture', and Donald, in a similar situation, recalled, 'it was just a matter of when we could afford them.'<sup>229</sup> Other men commented on enjoying the standard of living afforded through two incomes. Ian, who became a father for the first time in 1984, recalled that 'we thought if we continued to have two wages and quite a decent wage coming that you would never do it...that if we left it any longer, we would be used to going a nice holiday, we would have got used to having the extra money and if we wanted to have kids, now was the time to do it', while Leslie remembers 'we decided for a couple of years after we got married we were gonnae enjoy ourselves', before starting a family in 1990.<sup>230</sup> Such decisions were described as being made jointly, and financial considerations, namely mothers' temporary or permanent departure from work, were anticipated and featured in the decision to start a family. These narratives highlight that through effective contraception, the timing of parenthood and parenthood itself increasingly became an active choice, made by both parents.

By late 1980s, children were no longer necessarily a taken-for-granted or socially expected part of adult or married life. Three of the men I interviewed, for example, noted that they had not expected to have children. James recalled feeling disbelief when finding out he was going to be a father for the first time in 1987 at the age of thirty, 'I don't think I could believe it...this is just not something I ever planned, I didn't think it would ever happen. I didn't think I was cut out to be a dad... I never thought I would be a dad.'<sup>231</sup> Leslie, who was thirty-one when he became a father, reflected that he 'wasnae really a paternal type of person, I could have quite easily went through ma life without having children [...] I thought how will I get on as a dad? Ye worry about these kinds of things.'<sup>232</sup> Tam, born in 1956, described never having 'the compulsion to have kids' before having his first daughter of three in 1986 at the age of thirty. While reproduction is often considered a 'female' issue, Tam's memory shows the degree of control men also had over such decisions. His narrative below also highlights the way in which 'involved' and care-giving fatherhood were increasingly becoming incorporated into hegemonic notions of masculinity and publically prized:

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<sup>229</sup> SOHCA/054/14 Interview with 'Anthony' (pseud.), 21<sup>st</sup> January 2015; [SOHCA/054/06] 'Alistair'; SOHCA/054/27 Interview with 'Donald' (pseud.), 12<sup>th</sup> May 2015.

<sup>230</sup> SOHCA/054/04 Interview with Ian Robb, 26<sup>th</sup> October 2014; SOHCA/054/08 Interview with Leslie Watson, 16<sup>th</sup> December 2014.

<sup>231</sup> SOHCA/054/15 Interview with James Oakes, 24<sup>th</sup> January 2015.

<sup>232</sup> [SOHCA/054/08] Watson.

We used to [pause] disagree about it. I was like that “I’m quite happy the way we are” and I had lost ma job on the buses...so I thought what am I gonnae do? So I was oot wae [wife] one day and there was guys taking their weans to school and they were holding their hands and I thought aw that’s nice and I suppose it’s cause I was twenty-nine by then and I was thinking “aw that’s really nice, look at they wee...” and the maternal thing, it just hits you and I still remember saying, “you want weans?” she went “you know I want weans” so skip nine month later.<sup>233</sup>

The routes to fatherhood were therefore diverse over the course of the late twentieth century, negotiated with partners within the context of information about contraception and reproduction, social expectations surrounding the role of women and their place in the labour market, as well as rising standards and expectations of living. Finding out they were going to have children was recalled with various emotions by men. They simultaneously remembered feeling ‘happy’, ‘delighted’, ‘over the moon’, ‘proud’, ‘taken aback’, as well as in ‘shock’, ‘fright’ and ‘terrified.’ The period of their wives’ pregnancy was therefore both a happy and exciting but equally worrying time for men. When explicitly asked about their expectations of fatherhood during pregnancy, most men noted that they did not have any preconceived ideas about the types of fathers they wanted to be. Having children was just something that was inevitable for most, and they would do their best to ensure their children were healthy, happy and safe. As the next chapter will demonstrate, however, their own experience of being fathered was often an important element in interviewees’ definitions of themselves as fathers, whether as a point of comparison or as a template. The following section examines the changing role of the father in pregnancy and childbirth across the second half of the twentieth century, and also explores men’s, often emotional, narratives as they recalled the birth of their children.

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<sup>233</sup> SOHCA/054/10 Interview with Tam McGrail, 6<sup>th</sup> January 2015.

**Table 1.1. Average age of parents in Scotland 1975-2000**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Average age of mother</b>	<b>Average age of father</b>
1975	26.0	28.4
1976	26.0	28.5
1977	26.1	28.6
1978	26.2	28.6
1979	26.3	28.7
1980	26.3	28.7
1981	26.3	28.8
1982	26.3	28.9
1983	26.4	29.0
1984	26.5	29.0
1985	26.5	29.1
1986	26.6	29.2
1987	26.7	29.3
1988	26.8	29.5
1989	27.0	29.7
1990	27.2	29.9
1991	27.4	30.0
1992	27.7	30.3
1993	27.9	30.5
1994	28.2	30.8
1995	28.4	31.0
1996	28.5	31.2
1997	28.7	31.4
1998	28.8	31.6
1999	28.9	31.7
2000	29.0	31.9

Source: National Records of Scotland, 'Registrar General's Annual Review of Demographic Trends' (2015), Infographic Report, Figure 2.1: Number of births and average age of parents at birth, Scotland, 1975-2015, [www.nrscotland.gov.uk](http://www.nrscotland.gov.uk), accessed 9 May 2017.

***'The last thing you needed was a husband in cluttering up the place?'***

### ***Childbirth***

In 1957, a *BBC Panorama* documentary on natural childbirth showed a five second clip of a woman giving birth, the first time a baby being born was televised in Britain.<sup>234</sup>

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<sup>234</sup> National Childbirth Trust Archive (NCT), Box F (Founding File): 'Birth of a Baby on TV' 4<sup>th</sup> Feb

While newspapers at the time questioned whether the controversial scenes should have been shown, today the entire birth is captured on the award-winning documentary *One Born Every Minute*.<sup>235</sup> There have been a number of changes to childbirth over the second half of the twentieth century, and alongside these, the role and position of men has changed significantly. Historically birth was considered to be an intensely private, 'female' affair. In the 1957 edition of Benjamin Spock's *Baby and Child Care*, just two pages were devoted to the fathers' role in birth in the 600-page best-selling infant care manual. Spock noted that once the father gets his wife safely to hospital, 'then he's really done': 'he can sit in the waiting room...and worry about how the labour is going, or he can go to his unbelievably lonely home. It's no wonder that a man may take this occasion to drink in company at the bar.'<sup>236</sup>

Estimating the proportion of men who were present at childbirth during this period is problematic. Hospitals did not record such information; social research studies may have differentiated, or failed to differentiate between how many fathers were present during any part of the labour and delivery or the whole of the birth, while calculating the numbers of men attending home births is even more difficult.<sup>237</sup> In John and Elizabeth Newson's study of *Infant Care in an Urban Community* in 1958, 13% of men in their sample of 700 families were present when their wives gave birth at home.<sup>238</sup> Elizabeth Roberts' oral history of ninety-eight working-class women and men found only one male participant had attended the birth of his children between 1940 and 1970.<sup>239</sup> By the early 1980s, however, studies, such as that demonstrated in table 1.2, found that between 80% and 90% of British men attended at least part of the labour, and by the late 1980s, two-thirds were attending all the stages of the birth of their children.<sup>240</sup> The growth in fathers attending childbirth was therefore a dramatic rather than gradual shift, with the greatest change occurring over only a decade. Moreover, this trend occurred across all regions and social classes across Britain as a whole.

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1957, *Daily Mirror*.

<sup>235</sup> *One Born Every Minute*, Channel 4, 2010-Present.

<sup>236</sup> B. Spock, *The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care* (1957), p. 17.

<sup>237</sup> L. King, 'Hiding in the Pub to Cutting the Cord? Men's Presence at Childbirth in Britain c. 1940s-2000s', *Social History of Medicine* (forthcoming, 2016).

<sup>238</sup> J. Newson and E. Newson, *Patterns of Infant Care in an Urban Community* (Harmondsworth, 1965), pp. 28-29.

<sup>239</sup> Roberts, *Women and Families*, p. 96.

<sup>240</sup> Bell et al found that only 13.5% of fathers in their study did not attend either the labour or delivery., p. 15; Lewis found that 85% of the 100 fathers he interviewed attended their wives labour, with 67% staying for delivery.



**Table 1.2. Fathers attending the birth of their first child, 1950s-1990s**

Decade	Percentage of fathers attending the birth of their first child
1950s	5%
1960s	10%
1970s	35%
1980s	90%
1990s	97%

Source: J. Smith 'The First Intruder: Fatherhood, a Historical Perspective' in P. Moss (eds.), *Father Figures: Fathers in Families in the 1990s* (Edinburgh, 1995), p. 21.

There has been little detailed historical examination of the factors contributing to the dramatic rise in fathers attending childbirth.<sup>241</sup> A common argument, however, is its increasing medicalisation, and the challenge posed by a 'feminist, anti-doctor critique' of maternity care.<sup>242</sup> In the post-war period, the hospital became situated as the primary location for childbirth. Between 1963 and 1972, the national rate of deliveries in hospitals rose from 68.2% to 91.4%, and from 1975, never fell below 95%.<sup>243</sup> Home births, which constituted around one third of births between the late 1940s and mid 1960s, fell to under 5% thereafter.<sup>244</sup> Alongside the growth in hospital deliveries, new technologies and intervention in the antenatal period and during birth itself were introduced in the 1970s. Oakley's mid-1970s study of mothers' experiences of pregnancy, labour and childbirth found a high degree of medical intervention, while *British Births*, a national study of deliveries that took place during one week in 1970, found an increased use of oxytocic, episiotomy and caesarean sections.<sup>245</sup>

With the increasing medicalisation of childbirth, came criticism. In 1956, the Natural Childbirth Association was formed, becoming the National Childbirth Trust (NCT) in 1961. As well as providing support and antenatal classes, it raised concerns about increasing medical intervention, campaigned for changes in maternity care and

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<sup>241</sup> Leavitt, *Make Room for Daddy*, has explored men's increasing participation in childbirth in America in the second half of the twentieth century, although no equivalent or substantial work currently exists in the British context. For an exception see King, 'Hiding in the Pub to Cutting the Cord?'

<sup>242</sup> Davis, *Modern Motherhood*, p. 85; A. Davis, 'A Revolution in Maternity Care? Women and the Maternity Services, Oxfordshire c 1948-1974', *Social History of Medicine*, 24(2), (2011), pp. 389-406.

<sup>243</sup> A. Oakley, *The Captured Womb: A History of the Medical Care of Pregnant Women* (Oxford, 1984), p. 215.

<sup>244</sup> Davis, *Modern Motherhood*, p. 92.

<sup>245</sup> Oakley quoted in Davis, *Modern Motherhood*, pp. 85-90.

also supported the presence of fathers during childbirth.<sup>246</sup> In a letter from the NCT to the Department of Health and Social Security in 1972, for example, the Trust urged that during childbirth women are ‘grateful of husband’s help and companionship’ and emphasised the need to develop a ‘loving, caring relationship’ between father and child. ‘It is unfortunate’, it argued, ‘that in some hospitals, he will not be given a friendly welcome, and from some he will be banned all together.’<sup>247</sup> In the NCT Spring Newsletter of 1979, a segment on the ‘rights of parents’ argued that labouring women should be allowed to have the father or another person present ‘at all practical times.’<sup>248</sup>

The movement of fathers from the waiting room to the delivery room was not uncontroversial, however. Within some public and even expert discourses, the father was represented as ‘an obtrusive sightseer and outsider’, who was likely to be a nuisance, burden or threat to the birthing process.<sup>249</sup> One article published in the *British Medical Journal* in 1961, arguing for ‘a more enlightened attitude...where the father is welcome and encouraged to be present at the delivery’, provoked the following response:

Let us not pander to morbid curiosity and sensationalism, nor to those featherbrains who wish to be in the van of a new fashion, by encouraging a highly unnatural trend with the mumbo-jumbo of pseudo-psychology. The proper place for the father, if not at work, is the “local” whither instinct will usually guide him. Family men may be baby-sitting, unless ejected by the mother-in-law.<sup>250</sup>

Such attitudes were often reflected in medical practice and procedures, well into the following decades. Research by the NCT in 1975, based on 614 reports by women throughout Britain, indicated that while the majority wished for fathers to be present, medical staff could be discouraging.<sup>251</sup> Some women commented that their partners had been ‘told to leave’, many ‘were “expelled” or “banished” for certain procedures’, and it was noted ‘there were still a few hospitals...who did not even inform husbands

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<sup>246</sup> Wellcome Library, ‘From Mother to Mother: The National Childbirth Trust Archive’ (2015), [www.blog.wellcomelibrary.org](http://www.blog.wellcomelibrary.org), accessed 9 Mar 2016.

<sup>247</sup> NCT, Box 11: Letter from NCT to DHSS (1972)

<sup>248</sup> NCT, Box 5: Spring Newsletter (1977), p. 3.

<sup>249</sup> R. Early, ‘Private-Masculinities Conceived: Deconstructing Men’s Experiences of Pregnancy, Childbirth and Fatherhood’ (PhD Thesis, University of Bristol, 2005), p. 32.

<sup>250</sup> Quoted in Lewis, *Becoming a Father*, p. 57.

<sup>251</sup> NCT, Box 8A: ‘Some Mothers’ Experiences of Induced Labour’ (1975).

of the birth, where women were told that it was policy never to ring the father.’ The report concluded that ‘a few of the midwives seem to have felt the husband was an alien presence, as did one who told a man to “go to the pub.”’<sup>252</sup> Angela Brown’s research with fathers and medical staff in Scotland between 1977-1980 similarly found fathers presence was only allowed by permission, they were often asked to leave, and then left standing in the corridor ‘quite forgotten’, while Joel Richman, who interviewed 100 fathers at birth in the early 1970s, argued the medical profession actively excluded men.<sup>253</sup> Richman found that fathers, with limited and vague rights in relation to childbirth, were treated as if they were ‘invisible.’<sup>254</sup> One review into men’s experiences of pregnancy and childbirth found that as late as 1982, ‘many hospitals still do not allow fathers to hold their baby during visiting.’<sup>255</sup>

There were various and complex factors leading to the inclusion of fathers in childbirth, despite these attitudes. The natural childbirth movement was not solely responsible for encouraging the trend when, as Lewis argued in 1982, ‘fathers have appeared at the same time that birth has become increasingly unnatural.’<sup>256</sup> It is possible, however, that the movement, as well as second-wave feminism, were important in emphasizing women’s ‘right to choose’ in childbirth.<sup>257</sup> A number of surveys carried out in the early 1970s and 1980s found many women disliked the isolated and impersonal nature of hospital births, while Davis, who conducted oral history interviews with women who became mothers in the period between 1945 and 2000, also found those who gave birth during this period to be critical.<sup>258</sup> A lack of ‘emotional care’ and ‘poor interpersonal skills’ of staff rather than feelings of inadequate medical care or dislike of medical procedures, were emphasised.<sup>259</sup> Women increasingly looked to their partners for the moral and emotional support often lacking in hospitals. One survey of mothers who gave birth between 1940 and 1980, for example, charted the relationship between mothers’ expectations and fathers’

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<sup>252</sup> Ibid, pp. 12-14.

<sup>253</sup> A. Brown, ‘Fathers in the Labour Ward: Medical and Lay Accounts’ in L. McKee and M. O’Brien (eds.), *The Father Figure* (London, 1982), p. 111.

<sup>254</sup> J. Richman, W. Goldthorp, and C. Simmons, ‘Fathers in Labour’, *New Society*, (1975), pp. 143-145.

<sup>255</sup> N. Beail, ‘The Role of the Father during Pregnancy and Childbirth’ in N. Beail and J. McGuire (eds.), *Fathers: Psychological Perspectives* (London, 1982), p. 19.

<sup>256</sup> C. Lewis, ‘A Feeling You Can’t Scratch?’: The Effect of Pregnancy and Birth on Married Men’ in N. Beail and J. McGuire (eds.), *Fathers: Psychological Perspectives* (London, 1982), p. 60.

<sup>257</sup> Davis, *Modern Motherhood*, p. 87.

<sup>258</sup> I.D.G. Richards et al, ‘Use of Maternity Care in Glasgow’ quoted in C. Garcia, R. Kilpatrick and M. Richards (eds.), *The Politics of Maternity Care: Services for Childbearing Women in Twentieth Century Britain* (Oxford, 1990), p. 219.

<sup>259</sup> Davis, *Modern Motherhood*, p. 94; 107.

presence. While in the 1960s, 43% of mothers would have liked fathers present but only 19% were, by the 1970s both the numbers of mothers wanting fathers present (82%) and the numbers of fathers present (71%) had risen.<sup>260</sup>

Fathers were therefore increasingly expected to enhance the quality of childbirth for mothers; to 'make a highly medicalised experience into a humane and family one.'<sup>261</sup> Changing notions of marriage such as the private 'companionate' family, alongside greater sexual openness in the post-war period onwards, were important in situating expectant fathers, rather than other female relatives, as the most suitable individuals to provide support.<sup>262</sup> Studies during this period, for example, found that men employed a number of 'strategies of incorporation' and 'nesting activities' in attempt to share in the experience of pregnancy, such as joint shopping trips to buy baby goods, decorating baby's room and seeing the ultrasound scan.<sup>263</sup>

Childcare books and baby manuals placed increasing emphasis on the supportive role of fathers. *The Experience of Childbirth* (1984) claimed it was no longer suitable for the father to be seen as 'a figure of fun and of music-hall jokes, whom is treated as if he had neither the intelligence nor the humanity to be of any help.' Instead, it was considered 'the right place for the man to be': 'it is not only ludicrous but pathetic to leave him to stride up and down a hospital corridor...whilst the woman "gets on with it."'<sup>264</sup> The media may also have encouraged this national trend. King has argued that, though still highly controversial, positive coverage of fathers attending births became increasingly common in some British newspapers from the 1950s.<sup>265</sup> Within these shifting discourses of men and childbirth, fathers were given a 'legitimate status in the labour room.'<sup>266</sup>

The shifting meaning of childbirth as a significant family event rather than a strictly medical one was, moreover, closely related to new discourses of father-child bonding. Attending was increasingly positioned as not only important and beneficial to mothers, but also to fathers. *The New Childbirth*, first published in 1964, emphasised

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<sup>260</sup> A. Woollett, D. White and L. Lyon 'Observations of Fathers at Birth' in N. Beail and J. McGuire (eds.), *Fathers: Psychological Perspectives* (London, 1982), p. 74.

<sup>261</sup> Woollett, et al, 'Observations of Fathers at Birth', p. 89.

<sup>262</sup> R. Barbour, 'Fathers: The Emergence of a New Consumer Group' in C. Garcia, R. Kilpatrick and M. Richards (eds.), *The Politics of Maternity Care: Services for Childbearing Women in Twentieth Century Britain* (Oxford, 1990), p. 208.

<sup>263</sup> J. Richman, 'Men's Experiences of Pregnancy and Childbirth' in L. McKee and M. O'Brien (eds.), *The Father Figure* (London, 1982), pp. 89-103.

<sup>264</sup> NCT, Box 130: S. Kitzinger, *The Experience of Childbirth* (London, 1984), pp. 150-151.

<sup>265</sup> King, *Family Men*, p. 176.

<sup>266</sup> Early, 'Private-Masculinities Conceived', p. 35.

in the 1979 edition, for example, the importance of attending the birth for the father-child relationship, arguing that it provided ‘a unique opportunity of beginning this relationship *right now*, not several hours later through a pane of glass.’<sup>267</sup> Despite the historically dominant mother-child focus of developmental psychology, from the 1970s researchers began to examine the ways fathers develop relationships and attachments to children, and the subsequent impact on child development.<sup>268</sup> A number of studies found fathers were deeply emotionally affected by the experiences of childbirth, with men expressing feelings of pride, fascination and preoccupation with their child. One study in 1974 with thirty first-time fathers examined *engrossment*, the bond of the father to his new-born. Fathers described that they felt ‘drawn in toward the baby as if it were a magnet’ and perceived their child ‘as the epitome of perfection.’<sup>269</sup> Following the birth, all fathers described feeling extreme elation, or a ‘high’, as well as an increased sense of self-esteem. They felt ‘proud, bigger, more mature and older.’<sup>270</sup>

Growing research exploring men’s relationships to pregnancy, childbirth and new-born children contributed to a discourse that men’s experiences as fathers were important, with significant implications for notions of masculinity. Richman’s research with new fathers revealed a ‘hidden side to masculinity’: ‘cultural stereotypes of male resilience, combativeness and toughness are curiously absent.’<sup>271</sup> Oakley noted that in childbirth ‘feelings, normally inhibited by masculine reserve flood out’, while the 100 first-time fathers interviewed by Brian Jackson reported ‘an ecstatic peak of emotion: a personal Everest.’<sup>272</sup> Of twenty fathers he observed at birth, eighteen were crying and most noted that this was the first they had done so since they were small children themselves. Debates surrounding fathers attending childbirth during this period therefore not only focused on the effect of the father on childbirth but also explored the effect of childbirth on the father.

Although the men in these surveys experienced the outcome of childbirth as positive, feelings of inadequacy, helplessness and distress during their partners’ labour

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<sup>267</sup> NCT Box 79: E. Wright, *The New Childbirth* (London, 1979); p. 203.

<sup>268</sup> See e.g. Lamb, *The Role of the Father*; Beail and McGuire, *Fathers: Psychological Perspectives*.

<sup>269</sup> M. Greenberg and N. Morris, ‘Engrossment: The Newborn’s Impact on the Father’, *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 44(4), (1974), p. 523.

<sup>270</sup> *Ibid*, p. 524.

<sup>271</sup> Richman, ‘Men’s Experiences of Pregnancy and Childbirth’, p. 103; L. McKee and M. O’Brien, ‘Some Current Observations and Historical Perspectives’ in L. McKee and M. O’Brien (eds.), *The Father Figure* (London, 1982), p. 10.

<sup>272</sup> Oakley, *From Here to Maternity*, p. 208; B. Jackson, *Fatherhood* (London, 1984) in Jackson, ‘Great Britain’, p. 38.

were also common findings. As noted, men's experiences could be adversely affected by contact with medical staff. Brown's study, for example, found the large majority of fathers felt peripheral and powerless, feeling unable to help their partners.<sup>273</sup> While fathers were increasingly expected to play a supportive role during labour and childbirth, lack of knowledge and unfamiliarity with birth and procedures could place restrictions on their ability to do so. During this period, few expectant fathers were involved in official *maternity* services, which normally occurred during working hours, and were also perceived to be female-dominated spaces.<sup>274</sup>

Today, fathers attending childbirth have become almost universal, though still regularly debated. In 2009, obstetrician Michel Odent claimed male presence causes more painful and more complicated labours and may trigger marriage breakdown and 'mental disorders' in 'perfectly well-balanced men.'<sup>275</sup> Recent media articles have debated 'Is it *okay* for men to wait outside?' and 'Why dads *should* keep their distance' from the delivery room.<sup>276</sup> In the latter, a self-declared 'four-time veteran' claimed that the majority of men are 'wishing they could check the score in the World Cup' and would be better placed 'at home, in bed...playing golf or watching cricket.'<sup>277</sup> While ultimately the decision of who attends childbirth will be determined by what is right for individual families, these everyday discussions of men and childbirth can still powerfully stereotype expectant fathers as either useless or disinterested. Provision for fathers, and attempts to engage them in both the antenatal and postnatal period, also remains patchy.<sup>278</sup> In 2014, the Scottish Parliament's enquiry into Fathers and Parenting found that only one NHS board ran antenatal classes specifically for fathers, with men feeling excluded from classes aimed primarily at women.<sup>279</sup>

The dramatic, though not uncontroversial, uptake in fathers attending the birth of their children is a relatively new development, which occurred over a short period of time. This trend was reflected within the small group of men that I interviewed. While the majority of those who became fathers before 1976 were not present at the

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<sup>273</sup> Brown, 'Fathers in the Labour Ward', p. 110.

<sup>274</sup> Lewis, *Becoming a Father*, p. 38; Barbour, 'Fathers: The Emergence of a New Consumer Group', p. 202.

<sup>275</sup> 'Men "should stay away from childbirth"', *The Guardian*, 18<sup>th</sup> October 2009. [www.theguardian.com](http://www.theguardian.com), accessed 18. Mar 2016.

<sup>276</sup> 'Is it okay for men to wait outside the delivery room?' *The Telegraph*, 1<sup>st</sup> July 2014, [www.telegraph.co.uk](http://www.telegraph.co.uk), accessed, 18 Mar 2016.

<sup>277</sup> 'Why Dad's should keep their distance from the delivery room' *The Telegraph*, 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2014, [www.telegraph.co.uk](http://www.telegraph.co.uk), accessed 18 Mar 2016.

<sup>278</sup> Early, 'Private-Masculinities Conceived', p. 67.

<sup>279</sup> Scottish Parliament, 'Fathers and Parenting: 1<sup>st</sup> Report.'

birth of their first child (83%), those men who had children in the late 1970s and 1980s were all present.<sup>280</sup> Regardless of whether they attended or not, having a child was remembered by all interviewees as being a life changing and highly emotional event. They recall, often in extremely moving ways, how they felt during childbirth and when they met their children for the first time. The following section explores interviewees' recorded narratives of becoming a father and how they experienced changes in relation to the role and place of the father in childbirth.

When John and Louisa had their first child in 1969, the option for the former to attend the birth, 'wasn't even a consideration': 'men did not attend their children's birth.' Given the lack of provision, John, born in 1947, recalls the thought never 'passed through your mind because it just wasn't an option', and that *had* he wanted to be there, this would have compromised his 'manliness':

There was no option of the father being present at the birth, it's not as if you said "well should I, shouldn't I?" it basically was not the done thing. If you said that you wanted to be present at the birth, people would have thought you were a bit of a weirdo because number one, it wasn't a manly thing to do, and number two, people just didn't do it [...] Obviously things have changed entirely now, but fathers basically weren't even considered as people to be given any kinda thought to when the baby was being born...Obviously years after it became the thing that fathers could attend the birth and I think nowadays it's almost the expected thing for fathers to attend the birth. But certainly when our two children were born that wasn't the case [...] I'm trying to think of a modern equivalent...you know "why didn't you Facebook?" Well Facebook hadn't been invented...Fathers attending their child's birth hadn't been invented.<sup>281</sup>

When his wife went into labour, John, an apprentice engineer, took her to the maternity home, 'got her settled...was told to phone in the morning': 'the whole of night we didn't know how Louisa was doing with the baby, so at seven o'clock I actually had to walk round to the end of street, it was a telephone box and phone to say "how's Louisa? [laughs] Has the baby arrived yet?" As John, now retired, recalls, his wife could have had the baby and he 'just wouldn't have known.'<sup>282</sup> This was a common recollection of many fathers who gave birth during the early 1970s.

Louisa, who was also present at the interview, recalls her memories of this experience. She described childbirth as being bewildering and frightening, and her

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<sup>280</sup> The only father not to attend was an adoptive father.

<sup>281</sup> [SOHCA/054/21] McSherry.

<sup>282</sup> [SOHCA/054/21] McSherry.

narrative below highlights that a primary motivator behind fathers attending childbirth may have been women, who sought emotional support in the context of the increasing medicalisation of birth:

I remember going in and being left [laughs] and all the bits you go through getting prepared for a birth and shaving and everything and I just remember thinking I am absolutely, totally frightened and there was nobody there, just me. And I suppose I could have done with somebody just sitting beside me holding my hand...Maybe even another woman, in my mind maybe...I thought "oh god I wish John was here" but then it was "I just wish I had somebody." You were very much on your own, wae people you didnae know, being in a very personal situation.<sup>283</sup>

The Catholic maternity home in which Louisa gave birth had rigid rules, both during and after childbirth. Mothers received one week's rest and the baby was largely kept in the nursery. Louisa would only occasionally feed her daughter, and as she recalls, 'visitors and dads were not encouraged to lift baby.' The first time John physically held his new-born was when they took her home almost one week later. Prior to that, John only saw his daughter through a glass window:

John: That was just the way things worked in those days but I remember being desperate to get Louisa and the baby out again so we could get baby home and looked after.

Louisa: I think the anger was when his mum and dad were going away two days after she was born and they weren't gonnae let them see her...

John: Aye, basically we had words and...

Louisa: I think I threatened that I was going home...

John: My mum and dad were going to visit my sister and they came down to the hospital with me, one of the visits and said "look, is there any chance of seeing the baby?" and eventually after a lot of discussion, they relented but only through the glass in the nursery. We'd to stand at the nursery and the nun went and got out baby and kinda held her up. And based on that, I took my mother in law and father in law down the next night and said "well you let my mother and father..." [laughs] so they couldn't get holding the baby, they couldn't get touching the baby, it was the other side of the glass.<sup>284</sup>

While attending birth was not considered a 'manly' thing to do, fathers could still be very much invested in the pregnancy and their new-born, and having a child was remembered as a significant event within the family, even if this was not readily

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<sup>283</sup> [SOHCA/054/21] McSherry.

<sup>284</sup> [SOHCA/054/21] McSherry.



recognised by hospitals. John, who had taken two weeks' annual leave, spent that first week 'walking about kicking my heels and I would go and buy wee things for the baby, like a blanket and silly things like that and take it down to the visiting hour [...] just to keep myself occupied and keep my mind concentrated.'

When their second child, a son, was born in 1973, though there was still was 'no offer or expectation the father would attend the birth', the couple noted subtle changes in maternity care and provision. John, in particular, remembered this birth as being 'entirely different', 'things had really moved on':

I think what had changed was the strictness of the baby being kept in the nursery as opposed to the baby at the bed [...] other people could go in and see the baby then and we got things like, the baby's heart beat monitor. So they were much more understanding of families, it wasnae just like a production line and the baby dropped off the end of it, the way it was maybe in the 60s. In the 70s people were more concerned about the family, this is a big event in the family's story, a new child being born.<sup>285</sup>

This subtle change, the baby being by the bedside, was a significant one for John as a father. He was able to feel more involved and included in this important time, in spite of the continuation of some strict hospital practices. John, for example, described taking his three and a half year old daughter, who was not permitted to visit, and standing her up on the windowsill outside of the building, just 'so she could look in and see her wee brother.'<sup>286</sup> For Louisa, however, the changes were not as significant as they were for John, she recollects remaining very much 'on her own': 'that was the only difference, the baby was at my bedside, I had to feed them, I had to change them, that was different. But for somebody being with me at the birth, still the same, wasn't even an option, "do you want anybody? Do you want the father?" nothing, it was just you were taken in "thanks very much, give us a phone."<sup>287</sup> The recorded narratives of John and Louisa provide a significant starting point for tracking changing hospital practices in relation to childbirth, and in particular the way in which fathers being present in the delivery room came to be an established social norm, the 'done thing.' As John notes, 'it's hard to kinda look back at some of the things that happened and put them in the context of today, and today's attitudes.'<sup>288</sup>

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<sup>285</sup> [SOHCA/054/21] McSherry.

<sup>286</sup> [SOHCA/054/21] McSherry.

<sup>287</sup> [SOHCA/054/21] McSherry.

<sup>288</sup> [SOHCA/054/21] McSherry.

For those who became fathers from the late 1970s onwards, there was a strong expectation that men should be present during their child's birth, and for some men there was little discussion, doubt or hesitancy. Ian recalls that he'd 'never thought about not being there' when he became a father in 1984, Pat noted that there was 'nae question' he would be at the birth in 1986, while James similarly recalls that by 1987 when he first became a father, 'you'd be a bit of dinosaur if you were not there. Why wouldn't you be there?'<sup>289</sup> Gerry commented that attending the birth in 1990 was a 'duty': 'it just felt like...you should just be there...I cannae remember discussing it, it was just expected, and wanted...I never ever gave it a thought of no being there.'<sup>290</sup> Moreover, rather than being considered 'unmanly', it was regarded as a marker of 'good' fathering. Notions of the need to 'be there' for the birth paralleled those of 'being there' for children; attending was seen as a commitment to parenthood.

Fathers also viewed attending the birth of their children as signifying wider changes to masculinity and as an important way in which their experience of parenthood differed from their own fathers. The vast majority of the men I interviewed identified attendance at childbirth as a significant societal and cultural change during the period in which they became fathers; it was 'the thing', the 'trendy thing to do.'<sup>291</sup> Ian noted he became a father 'in that decade where it was encouraged you were there and supported' by hospitals, while Pat indicated the importance of peer behaviours: 'the question of not being at the birth would never have entered my head... any of ma pals who had kids by then, had all been at the birth. So, it was just something that never occurred to me, whereas in my father's day not only would it not have occurred to him, I don't think that he would have been allowed to be there.'<sup>292</sup> Such cultural and community norms were powerful in influencing the behaviours of many men and/or the wishes of their partners. Alistair's narrative, in particular, demonstrates the way in which men may have felt pressure to attend. By the time his second daughter was born in 1978, Alistair, born in 1949, recalls, 'if you weren't gonnae be there, that was the exception':

It was a kinda societal thing, it was now coming to be expected that you would be there at the birth [...] So if you seen things on television, my wife

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<sup>289</sup> [SOHCA/054/04] Robb; SOHCA/054/11 Interview with Patrick Clark, 7<sup>th</sup> January 2015; [SOHCA/054/15] Oakes.

<sup>290</sup> SOHCA/054/22 Interview with Gerry Farrell, 5<sup>th</sup> March 2015.

<sup>291</sup> SOHCA/054/16 Interview with Frank McGeoghegan, 26<sup>th</sup> January 2015.

<sup>292</sup> [SOHCA/054/04] Robb; [SOHCA/054/11] Clark.

would watch and say, “he was at the birth” or *Woman’s Hour* they’re talking about husbands being at the birth, “ohh, that might be the thing to do” or pop star or celebrity was there at the birth, “aye you should mibbe think about that.”<sup>293</sup>

While cultural representations of fathers and childbirth were increasingly positive, for individual men the reality of childbirth could be more complex. Charlie, born in 1952, reflected that attending the birth was ‘kinda frowned upon’ when he had his first child in 1976: ‘you were lucky to get into the hospital at the time!’ His memory is dominated by ‘being left’, feeling anxious and helpless, particularly given his unfamiliarity with medical terms and procedures. Then a shipyard worker, he recalls that hospital staff ‘never explained what was really happening’:

That was quite traumatic [laughs]...dads were shunned...at that time you were shoved in a wee room wae all these smokers...you couldnae see from the smoke and you were left there. You were called out and ma two daughters were born through caesarean section so she was rushed into theatre and you were left...We werenae really told what was going on, we were told they were having a section and you were left, they didnae tell you what it was about and what was gonnae happen or nothing so you were just left bewildered, panicking...that was...I’ll never forget that kinda feeling of helplessness, you couldnae dae nothing.<sup>294</sup>

Feelings of vulnerability, helplessness and inadequacy were a consistent memory for the majority of my interviewees regardless of when they became fathers. Gerry, a mechanic, born in 1967, took it for granted that he would attend the birth of his first child in 1990, but nevertheless recalled similar feelings. His narrative below highlights that childbirth could present a challenge to masculinity, when men felt they were supposed to, but were unable to, remain strong and protect their partner:

I just remember getting her in and just standing about feeling pretty helpless. Holding her hand and...there wisnae really anything else you could do [...] the medical staff are coming in and they’re taking different measurements and things and you’re just left half the time in the road ‘cause they’re constantly going by and you’re moving to let them in and out. And then obviously she’s got a lot of pain and there’s nothing ye can do about that either and so you do feel quite vulnerable because you’re there, you’re supposed to be the man of the marriage, you know the protector and aw that, and there’s absolutely nothing ye can do. Ye cannae

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<sup>293</sup> [SOHCA/054/06] ‘Alistair.’

<sup>294</sup> SOHCA/054/18 Interview with Charlie McKay, 10<sup>th</sup> February 2015.

take the pain away, ye cannae do the job of the doctor or anything like that so ye are basically just a spare part in that room at that point.<sup>295</sup>

Such feelings of powerlessness, as well as a lack of function, caused some men to reflect it would have perhaps been more appropriate for them to stay outside of the delivery room, particularly those who had been encouraged or felt pressurised by their partners and others to attend. Frank, for example, described being at the birth of his first child in 1984 as ‘the thing at the time’, but that he felt ‘a bit useless’: ‘if I was given complete and utter choice, I probably wouldn’t have been there. I just felt in many ways you were in the way, you were getting pushed out the way when the midwife had to do something...I was there for both of them but you’d be as well not being there.’<sup>296</sup> Leslie’s wife asked him if he would like to be at the birth of his first son, which he thought was the ‘right thing to do.’ He also described feeling ‘helpless’: ‘I don’t think anybody likes to see somebody in a lot of pain, especially when ye feel that helpless ‘cause there is nothing ye can do.’<sup>297</sup> While men were increasingly obligated to attend to support their partners, a number of interviewees reflected on their perceived inability to do so, highlighting the tensions between childbirth as both a family and medical event.

Narratives of feeling useless were therefore often linked to the continued perception of birth as a medical process, as well as a general feeling of being ‘in the way’ of staff who possessed this medical knowledge. Warren, who became a father in 1980, described his role at the birth as ‘just a hand holder effectively’: ‘you were more like somewhere to hang your coat [laughs] “you hold the coats and stand over there.” And then when the action started it was again, right “can ye take the coats your holding and get out the road a minute?”’<sup>298</sup> Joseph was asked upon arrival at the hospital if he wanted to be present and was ‘quite keen’, ‘it just seemed the right thing to do.’ He nevertheless conceded, ‘you were just there’: ‘never played any part, just humouring you I suppose [...] that was your role, observer and comforter.’<sup>299</sup> Hospital practices could also vary considerably, impacting upon whether men attended or not. While Kenneth, who noted he thought it was important to ‘be there or thereabouts’, missed the birth of his first child in 1975: ‘they asked me to leave and I left and they forgot to

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<sup>295</sup> [SOHCA/054/22] Farrell.

<sup>296</sup> [SOHCA/054/16] McGeoghegan.

<sup>297</sup> [SOHCA/054/08] Watson.

<sup>298</sup> SOHCA/054/13 Interview with ‘Warren’ (pseud.), 20<sup>th</sup> January 2015.

<sup>299</sup> [SOHCA/054/02] ‘Joseph.’

come and get me', it was 'quite something' for Robert to attend the birth of his first daughter in 1971.<sup>300</sup> His wife Sandra had mentioned to staff that he had undertaken a 'Shipmasters Medical' examination, and he was invited in:

I went up thinking I was visiting and they gowned me up and I went into the delivery room...I didn't last the whole period, I [laughs] went out an emergency door, and I'm standing outside the hospital with my cigarette and my gown on [...] Scary...nobody else I knew had been in at the birth, I mean it just wasn't something that happened in those days, it was a very medical thing and to be invited in took me by surprise and I just did it.<sup>301</sup>

Some fathers felt particularly vulnerable during a difficult birth or where there were health problems associated with either baby or mother. Warren's daughter was 'navy blue' when she was born: 'it took an awful long time to change her...to pink so that element was harrowing', while Jim recalled the birth of his third child, who was born with severe physical and mental disabilities: 'I knew immediately the nurse took him...the way they spoke...they took the baby away very quickly in hushed tones and you get this sinking gut feeling.'<sup>302</sup> Joe remembers being 'knocked for six' when his wife had a particularly problematic birth with their fifth child in 1980: 'when she came through they'd taken the baby away into an incubator, but she just wouldnae believe that he was alive [...] she was in a terrible state.'<sup>303</sup> Driving home from the hospital to tell the family, Joe recalls 'I had to pull in 'cause I couldnae control myself. Started to cry and I couldnae control myself.' Fathers could therefore play a supportive function in childbirth even when they were not present. Joe recalls he 'kicked up hell with the matron. I says "you should have been showing her that baby", so they eventually brought him in.'<sup>304</sup> The emotion and vulnerability recalled by these fathers contrast with notions of stoic masculinity in which the display of both is deemed 'unmanly.' The narratives also contrast with a 'hard man' masculinity often associated with working-class men and heavy industrial labour. Pat, a shipyard worker, claimed, 'I still had shipyard muck and grime still on my hands, and was given [first son] before [wife] even got him..."Here's your son."<sup>305</sup>

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<sup>300</sup> [SOHCA/054/26] Paul.

<sup>301</sup> SOHCA/054/05 Interview with Robert Speedie, 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2014.

<sup>302</sup> SOHCA/054/12 Interview with Jim Burns, 12<sup>th</sup> January 2015.

<sup>303</sup> [SOHCA/054/13] 'Warren'; SOHCA/054/23 Interview with Joe Farrell, 10<sup>th</sup> March 2015.

<sup>304</sup> [SOHCA/054/23] Farrell.

<sup>305</sup> [SOHCA/054/11] Clark.

While the majority of my interviewees felt they had lacked a specific role beyond supporting their partners, and even at that felt somewhat useless, some men felt they did play a prominent part in their children's birth and shared fully in the experience. Pat, above, did not feel 'surplus to requirements' and recalled his 'wee role' in the birth of his second son: 'he kept turning blue, so they had a wee kind of heater, and they says, "Right, we'll deal with your wife. You just give us a shout if he changes colour"...So that was my job.'<sup>306</sup> Jake, who became a father in 1989 at the age of twenty-one, also noted that during his partner's difficult birth, he felt he played a significant role in not only supporting her but also communicating with hospital staff: 'I think I played quite an involved part, making sure she was all right, but also having that conversation with the people that were involved...I knew they knew what they were doing, but I wanted to know what they were doing and what was happening and if there was any issues, I wanted to know all that.'<sup>307</sup>

Regardless of whether they were present or not, all men recalled seeing or holding their child for the first time as highly significant and emotional, and recollected extreme relief upon seeing that the baby was healthy. Fatherhood was remembered as a truly life-changing event. For Charlie, it was 'just amazing, one of the best days of ma life', 'it was fantastic to see this living being that you created', while Gerry noted 'I still vividly remember the feeling I had when he was born. It's the best feeling I've ever had in my life [...] just total elation. I'm no shy tae say I greet ma eyes oot. Absolutely loved it because it's just...just overwhelming joy.'<sup>308</sup> Ian emphasised the 'euphoria': 'it's definitely a huge moment in your life', Joseph remarked on a feeling of 'wonderment' following the birth of his first child, and Joe recalls feeling 'tearful' and 'emotional': 'I just welled up...You want to cry and you want to laugh at the same time.'<sup>309</sup> For David, becoming a father was 'quite remarkable': 'that's you, you've made this thing, and it's quite amazing [...] even now if I think about, it's very, very emotional. Very unique moment and I was really, really touched.' When his first daughter was born in 1979, he recalls 'bubbling away' and 'wondering over this wee thing that was lying there', and also being 'so desperate to tell somebody' that he announced it on the underground: 'I was ganting to tell everybody so I eventually just said "I've just had a wee girl" [laughs]. I just blurted this out...so folk sort of smiled

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<sup>306</sup> [SOHCA/054/11] Clark.

<sup>307</sup> SOHCA/054/24 Interview with 'Jake' (pseud.), 12<sup>th</sup> March 2015.

<sup>308</sup> [SOHCA/054/18] McKay; [SOHCA/054/22] Farrell.

<sup>309</sup> [SOHCA/054/04] Robb; [SOHCA/054/02] 'Joseph'; [SOHCA/054/23] Farrell.

and stepped back a few paces [laughs].<sup>310</sup> Many fathers recalled feeling disbelief, with the phrase ‘did I help make that?’ repeated often.

Some fathers vividly remembered how their new-born looked and felt. Anthony recalled feeling ‘ecstatic’ on the birth of his first child: ‘can still see that, another wee picture in ma mind, a wee squashed nose.’<sup>311</sup> John recalls that his immediate thought, having never held a baby before, was that his daughter was ‘so light’, while James commented his first child was ‘just fragile tininess’: ‘I felt lots of emotions from just amazement to “oh, I hope I don't drop her!”’<sup>312</sup> Tam described the experience as ‘amazing’, ‘fantastic’ and ‘out of this world’: ‘it was just fascinating to see this wee dark headed thing appearing and then holding this beautiful...it was perfect, a perfect wee wean...just the joy you feel, seriously, nothing is...’<sup>313</sup> His memories of holding each of his children for the first time emphasise instantaneous love and affection, ‘once ye actually hold that wee soul...that was me, right away’:

I remember so vividly when the weans were born, it's just a feeling of immense pride. It's fantastic, it's like “wow, I've actually made this.” If I've done nothing else wae ma life, I've made this beautiful wee wean...you have created this perfect wee thing that's gonnae rely on you and it's lying there wae its wee crumbled up hands and you're like “Oh my god, I'm gonnae have to look after you forever.” It's just...it's very difficult to put into words because it's quite emotional.<sup>314</sup>

Some fathers therefore described an immediate and powerful bond with their children. While Tam, above, reflects that he ‘bonded wae them when we were watching the wee bump and we'd be lying listening and feeling it kick’, David L ‘felt an immediate bond’ with this adoptive daughter. He described it as ‘instant’: ‘that wee thing just came in the door, and she was yours. The minute you saw her, I mean, I still never think of my children as adopted...You love them and that's everything [...] You see wee ones cry, and your heart melts.’<sup>315</sup> Physical interaction such as smiling and eye contact were remembered as significant in developing a relationship and attachment with babies and young infants following the birth. John reflected that he enjoyed it when his daughter and son cried because he would hold them and sing: ‘you felt you were close

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<sup>310</sup> SOHCA/054/01 Interview with David Walker, 14<sup>th</sup> May 2014.

<sup>311</sup> [SOHCA/054/14] ‘Anthony’; [SOHCA/054/11] Clark.

<sup>312</sup> [SOHCA/054/21] McSherry; [SOHCA/054/15] Oakes.

<sup>313</sup> [SOHCA/054/10] McGrail.

<sup>314</sup> [SOHCA/054/10] McGrail.

<sup>315</sup> SOHCA/054/20 Interview with David Littlejohn, 16<sup>th</sup> February 2015.

to them.<sup>316</sup> David also recollected picking up his crying daughter in the middle of the night as a ‘very beautiful moment’: ‘you’d pick her up and you’d put her on your shoulder and you were patting her back, and it was just you and her, it was really quite lovely.’<sup>317</sup>

In the last decades of the twentieth century then, shifting relationships between men and women, changing hospital practice and fluid notions of masculinity established fathers attending the birth of their children from being the exception to the expectation. The oral testimonies above highlight the variety of emotions that men experienced during childbirth and when becoming fathers for the first time. For all, welcoming a child to the family was an equally joyous and worrying occasion. Such emotions were not limited to the event; recollecting the birth of their children continued to produce a strong emotional response from men. The following section explores the continuing impact of fatherhood on men’s sense of self and their memories of early parenthood, as well as the way fathers’ roles during this period have been presented in policy discussions with regards to paternity and parental leave.

### ***‘A tidal wave’: Becoming a Father***

Though fatherhood and father-child relationships, as well as domestic divisions of labour, can change significantly over time, early parenthood is a period in which parenting patterns, practices, roles and responsibilities become established in heterosexual partnerships, particularly along gender lines.<sup>318</sup> Fathering occurs in dialogue and interaction with mothering, and couples must make decisions regarding how work and caring responsibilities will be shared or divided, within the context of a complex interplay of structural, economic and cultural factors. As Oakley noted, it is in early parenthood that the ‘demarcation lines are re-negotiated; the map of domesticity is redrawn.’<sup>319</sup> The late twentieth century was, as indicated above, a period in which expectations surrounding fatherhood were changing, particularly at and around the time of childbirth. While the 1957 edition of Spock’s *Baby and Childcare* noted that in the early weeks at home with a baby, ‘most women need a great deal of

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<sup>316</sup> [SOHCA/054/21] McSherry.

<sup>317</sup> [SOHCA/054/01] Walker.

<sup>318</sup> T. Miller, ‘Falling Back into Gender? Men’s Narratives and Practices around First-time Fatherhood’, *Sociology*, 45(6), (2011), pp. 1094-1109.

<sup>319</sup> Oakley, *From Here to Maternity*, p. 224.



support and comfort from their husbands...partly its practical *help* – with the care of the baby, with the housework’, the 1979 edition stated ‘the need of the father’s *full participation*.’<sup>320</sup>

Despite the growing expectation that fathers should be ‘involved’ in baby care, nurturing and housework, a belief in the ‘natural’, ‘instinctive’ and ‘superior’ care by mothers, particularly in relation to infants, also remained pervasive. A division of labour along male breadwinner and female carer lines in early parenthood was also largely taken for granted.<sup>321</sup> Fathers returned to work, often as the sole financial provider. Mothers, through temporary or permanent withdrawal from paid work, develop skills and competency in caring for children, reinforcing the belief in their ‘expert’ care, and positioning fathers as ‘lower status, secondary’ ‘helpers.’<sup>322</sup> As Chapter Four will demonstrate, an important difference between mothers’ and fathers’ care of children remained that of responsibility.

During this period, there was little serious recognition or structural support in Britain to develop a caring role for fathers independently from mothers or from the provider role.<sup>323</sup> Nowhere is this more apparent than the British Government’s approach to parental and paternity leave. When a Private Member’s bill for paternity leave (leave at or near the time of birth) was raised in the House of Commons in 1979, the proposal was described by most Conservative politicians as ‘grotesque’, ‘objectionable’ and ‘one which has only to be examined to see its absurdity.’<sup>324</sup> While advocates argued that such provision would be significant for *mothers*, enabling fathers to look after older children and the home following birth, opposition MPs argued paternity leave would be a direct incitement to ‘population explosion’ and ‘moonlighting.’<sup>325</sup> Further proposals for modest and unpaid paternity and parental leave throughout the late twentieth century were considered to be both ‘unnecessary’ and ‘damaging’, and dismissed by the Conservative Government.<sup>326</sup> In 1983, it vetoed the European Commission for a Directive on Parental Leave, defined as sustained

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<sup>320</sup> Spock, *Book of Baby and Child Care* (1957), p. 17; (1979), p. 52.

<sup>321</sup> K. Backett, *Mothers and Fathers: A Study of the Development and Negotiation of Parental Behaviour* (London, 1982).

<sup>322</sup> Lewis, *Becoming a Father*, p. 86.

<sup>323</sup> A. Burgess and S. Buxton, *Men and their Children: Proposals for Public Policy* (London, 1996), p. 48; Moss, *Father Figures*; Lewis, ‘The Problem of Fathers.’

<sup>324</sup> Hansard, Equal Opportunities for Men (HC 31 January 1979 vol 961 cc1493-5001493).

<sup>325</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>326</sup> Hansard, Parental and Family Leave (HC 26 November 1985 vol 87 cc829-54 829); Sex Equality Bill (HC 09 December 1983 vol 50 cc607-44 607); Barriers to Women at Work and at Home (HL 07 March 1984 vol 449 cc274-308 274).

childcare leave, branding it 'silly', 'pure nonsense', 'extravagant, unrealistic and destructive', and a 'load of rubbish that should be thrown out.'<sup>327</sup> Britain was the last country in the EU to introduce parental leave, fifteen years after it was first proposed.

While the Government did not take paternity leave seriously, most fathers did take leave around the birth of their children. Colin Bell et al's study of *Fathers, Childbirth and Work* in 1983 for the Equal Opportunities Commission found that only thirteen fathers from an employed sample of 230 took no time off at any stage.<sup>328</sup> Though the Conservative Government fundamentally held that such matters were best negotiated individually between employers and employees, the study also found employer practices did not readily accommodate this. A combination of factors determined whether fathers were able to take leave, as well as the nature of this leave; including whether they could leave work early or without permission, relationship with superiors, season/volume of work, availability of cover, job security, the father's level of attachment to the job, employment status and stage in career. Those fortunate were able to use holiday leave, while other fathers were forced to use measures such as sick and unpaid leave, which could result in employer hostility, loss of pay and in extreme cases, job loss.

Although leave-taking behaviours (in terms of length) were similar between those earning the most and the least, the penalties for taking time off were typically greatest for working-class families. While one in four of all fathers were found to lose some income, this was twice as likely to be true of manual workers than non-manual workers. As Bell et al concluded, working-class fathers 'seem to represent an especially vulnerable group where the commitment to and cost of fatherhood is high.'<sup>329</sup> 91% of fathers in the study favoured the introduction of a paternity leave scheme, with 76% favouring some form of paid leave.<sup>330</sup> Fathers stressed the importance of time off to support the mother practically and emotionally, care for older children and to build a relationship with the new baby; for many it demonstrated a commitment to fatherhood.<sup>331</sup> Like attendance at childbirth, leave in early parenthood was therefore

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<sup>327</sup> Hansard, Parental and Family Leave (1985).

<sup>328</sup> C. Bell, L. McKee and K. Priestly, *Fathers, Childbirth and Work: A Report of a Study* (Manchester, 1983), p. 7.

<sup>329</sup> Ibid, p. 6.

<sup>330</sup> Ibid, p. 63.

<sup>331</sup> Ibid, p. 38.

increasingly perceived to be significant for fathers in their own right, as a positive means to foster father-child relationships.<sup>332</sup>

The Conservative Government's flippant and persistent rejection of paternity and parental leave is particularly significant not only because it denied men's caring role as fathers but because such issues were increasingly situated in debates surrounding gender equality. Whilst provision was not initially about establishing an equal caring status with the mother, there was growing recognition that leave would enable an equal division of labour between men and women, within and outside the home. As Labour politician Jo Richardson argued in 1981, provision would 'bring about a radical shift in attitudes': 'it would establish in employers' minds the idea that all their employees, men and women, are equally responsible for their children [and] show that a man's place is not necessarily just at work.'<sup>333</sup> Provision would also, as argued by advocates, reflect the significant changes that had occurred in the nature and organisation of the family and labour market, explored in Chapter Three. In 1993, Liberal Democrat MP Alex Carlile noted that although most Conservatives found paternity leave 'a faintly hilarious subject', its provision recognised the 'changing times...the realities of modern life':

Fathers play an active and significant role in the upbringing of babies, and it is right that they should...for many families now it cannot possibly be taken for granted that the father is the breadwinner...If, as in an increasing number of families, he is to...spend a considerable time at home looking after the child, it is desirable and sensible that the father should form a bond with the baby as quickly as the mother.<sup>334</sup>

In 1986, the European Commission of a Network on Childcare and Other Measures to Reconcile Employment and Family Responsibilities was established, Article Six of which in 1992 asserted that 'as regards responsibilities arising from the care and upbringing of children, it is recommended that member states should promote and encourage...increased participation by men.'<sup>335</sup> In 1994, the UK, despite adopting the recommendation, refused to accept a further European Directive on parental leave. The Conservative Government asserted that their opposition had 'been clear since 1983 when the European Commission first proposed the directive', and those in

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<sup>332</sup> Hansard, Parental Leave (HC 11 February 1987 vol 110 cc317-9 317).

<sup>333</sup> Hansard, Women's Rights (HC 11 June 1981 vol 6 cc565-636 565).

<sup>334</sup> Hansard, Paternity Rights (HC 16 February 1993 vol 219 cc222-38).

<sup>335</sup> Quoted in Moss, *Father Figures*, p. xvii.

favour were encouraged to 'bear in mind that the mother has a maternal duty and instincts towards the baby and has a different role from that of the father.'<sup>336</sup>

Unlike the dramatic shift in fathers attending the birth of their children, the pace of change in providing effective provision for them to take time off near the birth, assume the role of carer, or allow them to negotiate their work and family responsibilities, has been slow. The EOC Report by Bell et al had defined the provision of official paid paternity leave as 'a matter of urgency' and recommended that 'moves should be made immediately.'<sup>337</sup> Twenty years later under the New Labour Government, fathers finally gained the long overdue rights to unpaid Parental Leave for family responsibilities in 1999 and to two weeks paid Paternity Leave in 2003.<sup>338</sup>

Welfare and employment policies during the late twentieth century, then, enforced traditional male and female parenting roles. Almost all of the men I interviewed did, however, take some form of leave, often for a couple of days or a week, following the birth of children. While politicians, researchers and social commentators during this period increasingly discussed men's participation in infant care, and principally what the role of father should be, the following section explores how fathers themselves remembered this time of early parenthood. The majority reflected back on the early days of becoming a father as being one of emotional and personal adjustment. As Oakley notes, 'it would be naïve to measure the impact of parenthood entirely in terms of how many nappies are changed and by whom.'<sup>339</sup>

Whilst having children was remembered as a period of elation, it was also one of reframing identities and relationships, as well as determining parental roles and responsibilities. Narratives of doubt, worry and anxiety featured as strongly as those of happiness and euphoria, and men experienced both personal and practical life changes. The memories of Tam are particularly poignant in highlighting the significant shifts that resulted from becoming a father, particularly upon personal identity. For him, the change was immediate: 'as soon as ye actually tangibly hold your wean it changes your life', and he reflected that this change is immense regardless

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<sup>336</sup> Hansard, Parental Leave (1987).

<sup>337</sup> Bell et al, *Fathers, Childbirth and Work*, p. 76.

<sup>338</sup> J. Lewis, 'The Decline of the Male Breadwinner Model: Implications for Work and Care', *Social Policy*, 8(2), (2001), p. 163.

<sup>339</sup> Oakley, *From Here to Maternity*, p. 224.

of how much preparation and anticipation is made: ‘nothing prepares you for it’, ‘your whole life just goes topsy turvy, well to me it did’:

There’s nothing...ye can read books, ye can watch videos, ye can talk to folk but the experience is just...it’s like a tidal wave, everything is upside down, in a good way. Suddenly there’s nae selfish Tam or me and you...it’s everything is on this wean. This wee soul that just [gestures coughing] “oh, what’s wrong darling? Are you okay?” And then you’ve done her room up...and aw the boring things that I used to think “I’m never gonnae dae that” and aye, totally changed ma life. It makes you dead proud, I used to walk into Mothercare and feel [gestures] Daddy. It’s a funny thing, you feel like a man. I did anyway... it totally changes you [...] your whole life changes, everything changes...everything relates to this wean and revolves roon this wean and I was over the moon. Couldnae wait to tell everybody...I don’t think you’re any less of a man if you don’t have any weans but I just felt like a complete person then [...] Probably the biggest change of becoming a daddy was A) I had to grow up and become mature. Suddenly I wisnae just a boy. ‘Cause I always remember being twenty-nine and thinking I’m just a boy and then turning thirty and having [daughter] and you’ve got a mortgage and...suddenly I had to be a man, you need to man up...As soon as our [daughter] was born I realised my god, I’m a man, I’ve got real responsibilities.<sup>340</sup>

Fatherhood, then, could, and very often did, result in a significant shift in a man’s sense of self. While it was no longer deemed a necessary or taken-for-granted element of masculine or adult status, having children could be seen to considerably enhance or contribute to the feeling of manhood. Tam’s memories that fatherhood made him a ‘proper’ adult or man, completed and fulfilled him, and gave him an immense sense of responsibility, is representative of other interviewees’ recollections of the significant changes they felt were associated with becoming a parent. A number of interviewees, for example, similarly commented upon a feeling of pride and accomplishment, as well as increased sense of awareness or sensitivity to others. For Charlie, becoming a father made him feel ‘proud’ and ‘confident’: ‘it was a changing point in my life, made it complete.’<sup>341</sup> Ian remarked that fatherhood, ‘makes you a more rounded person’, Jim recalled ‘a feeling of fulfilment’ and Robert commented on feeling ‘more of person’ when he became a father: ‘you had somebody else to consider...it’s not all me, me, me...so it makes you less selfish.’<sup>342</sup> For others, fatherhood similarly conferred not

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<sup>340</sup> [SOHCA/054/10] McGrail.

<sup>341</sup> [SOHCA/054/18] McKay.

<sup>342</sup> [SOHCA/054/04] Robb; [SOHCA/054/12] Burns; [SOHCA/054/05] Speedie.

only adult status but also masculine status. They were no longer boys, but men, with ‘real responsibilities.’<sup>343</sup> Alistair, for example, reflected on whether becoming a father made him ‘feel more grown up’: ‘was I now a family man?...the idea that you had a wife, children, a house, so was that me finally joining the club?’<sup>344</sup> Fatherhood was seen to offer men fulfilment, as well as a route to adult maturity and masculinity.

The single most significant change in becoming a father, recalled by all interviewees, was the enhanced sense of responsibility. While Alistair, above, noted that this was instantaneous, ‘nobody tells you but immediately you’re aware of it’, Frank F, commented that it ‘hit him in the face’: ‘I thought, "god almighty, you're a father!" Human flesh, you know, and it really dawned on me then, I got quite emotional.’<sup>345</sup> Ian reflected that early parenthood was ‘all consuming’: ‘it doesnae matter what anybody tells you, it’s no’ the same as you expect, it definitely isn’t. And you realise this little bundle takes over the world, and it does, it completely takes over the world.’ As he recalls, ‘once you get by the initial absolute euphoria, your practical head kicks in and you go, ‘how will we deal with this? Will the house be warm enough? Will we cope wae everything?...all of sudden you’ve got responsibilities and that’s quite a levelling thing, or I found it was anyway.’<sup>346</sup> Joseph recalls holding his child for the first time as tangibly emphasising the responsibilities which he now had as a father: ‘the sudden weight of, literally, responsibility, you were aware eh that [...] you suddenly realised that life was never gonnae be the same again and this all sounds aw very cliché and trite and aw the rest of it but it’s true, this is exactly how you felt, life was gonnae go on differently.’<sup>347</sup> Fatherhood was conceived as being a lifetime responsibility and commitment.

As Chapter Three will explore, this feeling of responsibility among men often reinforced their engagement in paid work, particularly during the period of early parenthood when mothers temporarily or permanently left the labour market. Their focus on work could take on a new perspective with fatherhood; interviewees wanted to be good providers because of the aspirations they held for their children’s welfare and future. A feeling of being responsible for children, however, was not merely associated with providing financially but also concerned protecting children, guiding

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<sup>343</sup> [SOHCA/054/10] McGrail.

<sup>344</sup> [SOHCA/054/06] ‘Alistair.’

<sup>345</sup> [SOHCA/054/06] ‘Alistair’; [SOHCA/054/25] Fleming.

<sup>346</sup> [SOHCA/054/04] Robb.

<sup>347</sup> [SOHCA/054/02] ‘Joseph.’

and developing them, and being ‘good’ fathers; of having strong, positive and close relationships. It is within these narratives that feelings of doubt and anxiety are recalled, fears that they would not measure up. Charlie, for example, described the ‘shock’ then ‘terror’ of the responsibility, particularly in relation to the problematic relationship he had with his own father: “‘I’ve gotta make sure this works out’ but it was terror really to me at the time but it was good kind of terror, it was something that I was looking forward to but just the worry of not being able tae carry it through was the panic.”<sup>348</sup> Frank, though delighted by the birth of his first son, was ‘also worried about how things would turn out, how they are gonnae perceive you’: ‘there’s no guarantee because you’ve produced a baby and you’re good to it that everything is going to be hunky dory as I suppose there is an element of apprehension as well.’<sup>349</sup> David’s memories in particular, highlight the significant range of emotions experienced in early fatherhood and beyond:

You’ve brought a child into the world and you feel an enormous sense of responsibility, I remember feeling that...I used to lie awake at night sometimes, worried about it, you know, “what have we done? We’ve created a human being” and you know, “how is this going to work out?” ‘cause you just can’t tell, you’re not quite sure if you’re gonnae do the right thing or not. It’s a very, very worrying time although you’re very happy and elated, I felt quite worried...but then you move into automatic mode, you know it’s...the baby cries, you get up [...] It’s just this responsibility that you’ve got to tell them the right things and you’re not quite sure whether you’ve told them the right things, you think you have and you hope you have but you always doubt yourself, you always think is that right? Have I responded properly, should I have not shouted at them? Should I have been much more calm? Should I have spoken to them more? Should I have taught them something sooner? Constantly you’re measuring yourself and constantly you’re criticising yourself, you don’t think you’ve done it right, constantly worried about it all the time.<sup>350</sup>

Many interviewees recalled that fatherhood, and its subsequent weight of responsibility, resulted in a change in outlook and priorities. It not only changed how they viewed themselves but how they viewed the world around them. John, for example, commented that after the birth of his daughter, ‘your whole rationale changed’: ‘you start thinking more of the future...all of a sudden you’ve got a brand new baby and you know that you’re gonnae be responsible for the upbringing of that

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<sup>348</sup> [SOHCA/054/18] McKay.

<sup>349</sup> [SOHCA/054/16] McGeoghegan.

<sup>350</sup> [SOHCA/054/01] Walker.

child and setting the baby as much as you can on the right path for his or her future. So you think I've got a responsibility here...this is a whole new chapter in our life.'<sup>351</sup> Pat similarly recalled 'you began to look at things differently in a sense that you had to think not just what's good for me, what's good for us, it's what's good for the kids as well', while Jake recalls the vicarious nature of living brought about by having children: 'your life became your child almost...you talk a lot about your child, what you're going to do and what's happening and that was the first thought in your mind before you would do anything...I suppose our life became them.'<sup>352</sup> Fatherhood and family life therefore featured significantly in interviewees' narratives of adulthood, challenging the notion that they were disinterested or contributed remarkably little.

Parenthood also resulted in a number of practical changes for mothers and fathers and the changed rationale and identities among men impacted upon their behaviours. While men perceived that they 'gained' from fatherhood, which was seen to offer them fulfilment, adult maturity and masculinity, make them better rounded and less selfish individuals, it could also mean the 'loss' of a past life. Time and financial commitments and responsibilities to the family could mean an immediate restriction on leisure pursuits and socialising, and a loss of spontaneity. Tam, again, spoke for many of my interviewees when he highlighted some of these practical changes, and in particular the reduced leisure or contact time with friends, both individually and as a couple. As he recalls, 'before we would go at the drop of a hat, "aye we'll go on holiday with ye, we'll do this, we'll do that" and then it was like "naw, eh naw, we cannae dae that" and "we cannae go oot cause that's the time the wean gets fed and we're doing this wae the wean."' Having children could be physically restrictive: 'just the whole thing ae moving them about is, the logistics ae it is just "we'll just stay at hame." We'll go to the park, have a wee run, a picnic' as well as financially restrictive, 'ye just cannae go out anywhere. It's like "I would love to go out for a beer mate, but I havnae got the money or I've got the wean to watch the night."<sup>353</sup>

Many interviewees similarly noted the inability to plan activities, and the need to factor in 'this wee one who was totally reliable on you for all things' in everyday activities.<sup>354</sup> They reflected on more family and home-based leisure and recreation in early parenthood. David noted, 'we didn't really go out, we were quite happy having

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<sup>351</sup> [SOHCA/054/21] McSherry.

<sup>352</sup> [SOHCA/054/11] Clark; [SOHCA/054/24] 'Jake.'

<sup>353</sup> [SOHCA/054/10] McGrail.

<sup>354</sup> [SOHCA/054/20] Littlejohn.



the kids' while Frank commented 'their earlier part of life you were hardly out at all.'<sup>355</sup> As King has demonstrated, rising standards of living, decreased working hours and more leisure time in the post-war period, enabled men to spend more time at home and contributed to shifting ideas and behaviours around fatherhood.<sup>356</sup> These trends continued into the last decades of twentieth century with an increase in home and car ownership, overseas holidays and 'recreation for all', including family pubs.<sup>357</sup> McKee's study of around 350 young working-class fathers, for example, found that 15% never went out at all and 20% went out once a week or less after the baby arrived, three quarters of those who went out less often were highly satisfied and preoccupied with domestic and family life.<sup>358</sup> Lewis similarly found a 'home-centred family' among the 100 couples he interviewed, in which fathers spent most of their leisure time at home, or included their families in their leisure pursuits.<sup>359</sup>

A number of fathers also commented upon the sense of uncertainty in the early days of parenthood, particularly in relation to the physical care of children. While a couple of men noted that they wished relatives and visitors would 'go away' to leave the family to recuperate and bond, others recalled the overwhelming feeling of doubt when they did.<sup>360</sup> Gerry, in particular, vividly recalls the moment of being 'left wae this wee bundle of joy':

I can remember the first night having him home and thinking "right what do we do noo?", "is he still breathing? Is he wakened? What do we do?" and many a night I can remember going "right hold on, I'll need to phone ma mam, mam what do I do wae this?" and she would tell ye. So you rely on your parents for a lot...a lot of guidance into telling us what was wrong wae the kid or it was nothing wrong wae the kid, it was us [laughs] I was fortunate in the aspect, I was never really worried about the midwife or the district nurses coming in saying "oh ye shouldnae be doing, ye shouldnae be gieing your wean that" because I can still remember having babies in the house when I was a boy [...] so I was never feart ae liquidising their food and just starting to spoon feed them.<sup>361</sup>

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<sup>355</sup> [SOHCA/054/01] Walker; [SOHCA/054/16] McGeoghegan.

<sup>356</sup> L. King, 'Now You See a Great Many Men Pushing Their Pram Proudly': Family-Orientated Masculinity Represented and Experienced in Mid-Twentieth-Century Britain', *Cultural and Social History*, 10(4), (2013), pp. 599-617.

<sup>357</sup> R. Lambert, 'Leisure and Recreation' in A. Cooke, I. Donnachie, A. MacSween and C. A. Whatley (eds.), *Modern Scottish History: 1707 to the Present* (Edinburgh, 1998), pp. 257-276.

<sup>358</sup> Simms and Smith, 'Young Fathers', p. 147.

<sup>359</sup> Lewis, *Becoming a Father*, p. 142.

<sup>360</sup> [SOHCA/054/20] Littlejohn; [SOHCA/054/17] Duffy.

<sup>361</sup> [SOHCA/054/22] Farrell.

His narrative highlights a number of themes. Firstly, it demonstrates the way in which men were significantly involved in baby care and nurturing by the early 1990s, and could draw upon their own childhood experiences and family advice in favour of 'official' guidance. It also highlights the significant confidence fathers felt in doing so over time. According to Gerry: 'there was nothing [wife] could do for the kids that I couldnae do. I was just as capable of bathing them and changing them and watching them.'<sup>362</sup> Finally, it demonstrates the significant support often given by grandparents. A number of interviewees similarly highlighted parenthood as a turning point in which they became more aware of their own parents, and also experienced a shift in relationships with them.

For the majority of those I interviewed, however, the 'involved' fathering they identified with did not necessarily challenge the prioritisation of motherhood. This included the notion that mothers are 'naturally' more nurturing, emotionally connected and competent carers as a result of the physical connections associated with pregnancy, birth and breastfeeding. Alistair, for example, recalled that the full-time care of children was his 'wife's job', but that he too did these activities: 'fed them, changed them, bathed them, it was necessity, who happened to be there at the time.'<sup>363</sup> According to Alistair, however, he was not able to do so with the 'same familiarity' or efficiency as his wife. He perceived this to be inbuilt and instinctive; a 'natural' maternal 'instinct', rather than as a result of the disproportionate time spent by his wife carrying out these tasks:

I felt that she was more comfortable doing a lot of these things, I can do them...but she could that with sorta one hand basically, I needed two hands...It's not very popular, I know, but I still cleave to the idea that there's a maternal instinct in every female [laughs] That just comes from watching, experience, things like I picked my daughter up for the first time and I can remember holding her like that over the bed, there was no way on gods earth she was going anywhere [laughs] but my wife said "for god's sake, let her go, you're gonnae choke her", but instinctively they pick her up with one hand. And even [daughter], I saw her just after [granddaughter] was born and she picked her up with one hand, so I think there is a facility in built, it's just instinctive. But I could do all these things...there was not the same familiarity that [wife] seemed to have with it. So feeding, heat the bottles up, change them, bath them, feed them, in

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<sup>362</sup> [SOHCA/054/22] Farrell.

<sup>363</sup> [SOHCA/054/06] 'Alistair.'

their bed. She might be able to do that in, I don't know, half an hour. Me, I'm still flapping about and trying to get them in sequence [laughs].<sup>364</sup>

As Chapter Four will show, a belief in the 'naturalness' of mothering continued to justify gendered divisions of labour both within and outside the home and, as demonstrated in Chapter Seven, impact on the experiences of men with primary care.

Primary care of children and parental leave could, however, have a significant impact on attitudes towards gendered parenting roles. Charlie, for example, reflected on the potentially transformative impact of leave, arguing that 'apart from giving birth a man can give a child all the love and care a mum can.'<sup>365</sup> When Charlie's wife was required to remain in hospital for a further three weeks due to an infection on the birth of their second daughter in 1978, he requested additional leave at the Scott Lithgow shipyard in Port Glasgow where he worked. Charlie recalls being 'surprised' at the time that they were 'really quite understanding': 'it was frowned upon having time off. If ma wife would have been at home there would have been the expectation that I would have been at work.'<sup>366</sup> Charlie, now a family support worker, remembers this three-week period, in which he cared for his eighteen month old daughter and newborn, as being highly significant, not only for gaining practical parenting experience but also because of the impact he felt it had on their relationship: 'Every dad should do it. You just learn so much about being a parent and how hard it is [...] it was one of the hardest things I've ever done in ma life.' Charlie believes that this time has resulted in a stronger bond and 'different' closeness with his youngest daughter:

There is a closeness with me and Claire...and I think that's just through that time [...] cause I was there for her at that time when for she was a baby and I done all the changing and feeding and bathing...I think just that early bond is...it's definitely...that's why the first few months of their life are so important to children and I can see that now looking back, that bond is definitely there wae me and Claire [...] still have a great relationship wae Kerri but there is something special wae me and Claire. She's got the same kind of sense of humour as me, she's same kind of nature as me as well.<sup>367</sup>

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<sup>364</sup> [SOHCA/054/06] 'Alistair.'

<sup>365</sup> [SOHCA/054/18] McKay.

<sup>366</sup> [SOHCA/054/18] McKay.

<sup>367</sup> [SOHCA/054/18] McKay.

## ***Conclusions***

Over the course of the twentieth century, there were significant shifts in the ways in which men became fathers. With the growing availability of contraception as well as important changes in the lives of both men and women, parenthood increasingly became an active choice, rather than an inevitable element of adulthood or of heterosexual marriage. Increasingly, men became fathers later in life, outside of marriage and to fewer children. Alongside the growth of hospital deliveries, and within the context of psychological research on paternal involvement, fathers were increasingly there to welcome their child into the world. Men's changing relationship to childbirth was not a gradual trend; the greatest rise in numbers attending occurred over the course of just one decade and the meanings associated with attendance shifted from being the 'unmanly' to the 'manly' thing to do, 'not the done thing' to the 'done thing.' Expectant fathers became increasingly considered an important part of childbirth, not only as a support for mothers, but as something significant for men themselves. It was a central element in the redefinition of men's roles within the family, of 'new fatherhood', and of shifting notions of masculinity. The trend highlights the increasing centrality of emotional openness and 'involvement' to ideals of fatherhood, and men's own accounts highlight that the experience of childbirth could be highly emotional, in positive and negative ways.

Fatherhood was remembered as a life-changing event and period of personal transformation, one that resulted in a change in outlook, relationships, lifestyles and most importantly, in a changed sense of self. Becoming a father made men feel proud, fulfilled and complete, less selfish and more sensitive to others. They perceived themselves differently and perceived the world differently. It continued to be a strong marker of masculinity, making them feel like real 'men', with 'real' responsibilities to provide, both financially as well as in other ways. Early parenthood was a period in which parental roles and responsibilities, negotiated with mothers, became established, particularly along gender lines. Despite the significant social and economic changes of the post-war period, namely second-wave feminism, the increasing numbers of mothers in paid employment, and the decline in men's ability to provide solely for the family, cultural attitudes and structures, including welfare and employment policies, continued to reinforce a gendered division of labour. The Conservative Government's

opposition to policies such as paternity or parental leave, for example, failed to recognise or enable fathers as equally responsible carers.

The 'new father' was popularly defined as the man who was highly emotionally involved in and nurturing towards his children and equally involved in their care and housework. Men were not always equally involved in unpaid care and housework within the home. This chapter has shown, however, a significant move to intimate and nurturing fatherhood. The oral testimonies collected evidence the strong feelings and love, affection, and commitment men felt and continue to feel towards their children. Fatherhood was, and is, a central part of interviewees' lives. The following chapter will explore these men's experiences of being fathered, and its impact on their understandings, expectations and behaviours as fathers.

## CHAPER TWO ‘Typical of his generation’: Fathers, Sons and Generations

It is often popularly assumed that there was a significant change in fathers’ involvement with their children in the last decades of the twentieth century. As historian Ralph LaRossa noted, ‘new’ fatherhood ‘started in the 1970s’: ‘so the story goes.’<sup>368</sup> During this period, many researchers, politicians and other social commentators suggested that the role of the father was limited in previous generations, and that contemporary men were, instead, increasingly ‘involved’ in family life; their attitudes, behaviours, roles and responsibilities differing significantly from their own fathers. Lynne Segal, for example, maintained that ‘before the 1970s, there was very little attention paid to fatherhood by anyone’, while Robert Fein wrote that the decade was provoking ‘a series of reconsiderations’: ‘many men, feeling burdened by the too-restrictive definitions of masculinity and manliness are seeking to blend work life and family life...learning more about the frustrations and the joys of deep and regular participation in the lives of their children.’<sup>369</sup> By the early 1980s, Jackson similarly noted that ‘fatherhood is changing as never before.’<sup>370</sup> Perceived changes in fatherhood included a move towards practical caring, as well as emotional expression by men, and were associated with shifting masculine norms. ‘Involvement’ was often positioned in opposition to ‘breadwinner’, despite the continued importance of this role for fathers, with the ‘new’, intimate and hands-on father, contrasted with the ‘traditional’, emotionally distant economic provider.<sup>371</sup>

Ideas and practices around fathering have always been subject to change, and generational shifts in how men conceive of and ‘do’ fatherhood are evident during this period.<sup>372</sup> As the previous chapter demonstrated, a dramatic shift occurred in the role of fathers during childbirth, with the numbers of men attending increasing significantly over just one decade. British fathers’ involvement in childcare during the week also increased from less than fifteen minutes a day in the mid-1970s to three hours a day by the late 1990s, with more at the weekend.<sup>373</sup> The idea that men were becoming

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<sup>368</sup> LaRossa, *The Modernisation of Fatherhood*, p 5.

<sup>369</sup> L. Segal, ‘Feminism and the Family’ in C. Burck and B. Speed (eds.), *Gender, Power and Relationships* (London, 1995), p. 257; Fein quoted in Lewis, *Becoming a Father*, p. 2.

<sup>370</sup> Jackson, *Fatherhood*, p. 27.

<sup>371</sup> M. Bosoni and S. Baker, ‘The Intergenerational Transmission of Fatherhood: Perspectives from the UK and Italy’, *Families, Relationships and Societies*, 4(2), (2005), pp. 248-251.

<sup>372</sup> J. Brannen, P. Moss and A. Mooney, *Working and Caring over the Twentieth Century: Change and Continuity in Four-Generation Families* (Basingstoke, 2004).

<sup>373</sup> M. O’Brien and I. Shemilt, *Working Fathers: Earning and Caring* (Manchester, 2003), p. 21.

‘more’ involved in family life, however, is a long running theme (figure 2.1).<sup>374</sup> As Lewis observed in the 1980s, discourses stressing the novelty of fatherhood practices are ‘as old and perhaps as prominent as patriarchy.’<sup>375</sup> King has recently demonstrated, for example, that the Victorian father was frequently contrasted with the ‘playful’ family-oriented dad of the 1940s and 1950s.<sup>376</sup> During this period, it was frequently asserted that fathers were taking on a more active role in family life following rising standards of living, shorter working hours and moves to privatised family leisure in the aftermath of the Second World War. Classic post-war sociological studies of the family reflect the repetitiveness of the notion that fatherhood was changing, and for the better. Michel Young and Peter Willmott’s *Family and Kinship in East London* (1957) argued, for example, that ‘nowadays a father as well as the mother takes a hand in the care of children. It used to be thought very undignified for men to have anything to do with children, you’d never see a man wheeling a pram or holding a baby. Of course all that’s changing now.’<sup>377</sup> As noted in the introduction, fathers have been much more engaged in family life than has been historically and popularly assumed, and historians have uncovered ‘involved’ fathers in all eras.

Studies reveal, nevertheless, that fathers, and successive generations of parents, often define themselves in relation to the previous generation; it is a ‘crucial, internalised model.’<sup>378</sup> Intergenerational transmission between one generation and the next is a complex process, however, and rarely linear. It involves an exchange between generations rather than a ‘direct handing down’ of values, norms and behaviours. Younger generations may set out to do the reverse of the older; men may seek to become the fathers they wish they had.<sup>379</sup> Generational family transmissions can also be unconscious, and oral history is a particularly useful methodology in which to explore these subtle intergenerational exchanges.<sup>380</sup> As Thompson notes:

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<sup>374</sup> E. Long, J. Fish, A. Scheffler and B. Hanert, ‘Memorable Experiences between Fathers and Sons: Stories that shape a Son’s Identity and Perspective of His Father’, *Journal of Men’s Studies*, 22(2), (2014), pp. 122-139; Miller, *Making Sense of Fatherhood*; Daly, ‘Reshaping Fatherhood: Finding the Models’; Dermott, *Intimate Fatherhood*.

<sup>375</sup> Lewis, *Becoming a Father*, p. 5.

<sup>376</sup> King, *Family Men*.

<sup>377</sup> Young and Willmott, *Family and Kinship*, p. 13.

<sup>378</sup> Bosoni and Baker, ‘The Intergenerational Transmission of Fatherhood’, p. 247; Brannen, *Fathers and Sons*; J. Brannen, ‘Childhood Across the Generations: Stories from Women in Four-Generation English families’, *Childhood*, 11(4), (2004), pp. 409-428; S. Williams, ‘What is Fatherhood?: Searching for the Reflexive Father’, *Sociology*, 42(3), (2008), pp. 487-501.

<sup>379</sup> D. Bertaux and P. Thompson (eds.), *Between Generations: Family Models, Myths and Memories* (Oxford, 1993).

<sup>380</sup> Abrams, ‘Liberating the Female Self.’

For most of us it is commonplace that who we are, who we have become both socially and personally, is rooted in our families and yet also – for some much more decisively, for some much less – distinct from them. Telling one's life story requires not only recounting directly remembered experience, but also drawing on information and stories transmitted across the generations, both about the years too early in childhood to remember, but also further back in time beyond one's own birth. Life stories are thus, in themselves, a form of transmission; but...they often indicate in a broader sense what is passed down in families.<sup>381</sup>

While the family remains a significant means by which many fundamental aspects of culture and identity, including models of masculinity and parenting, can be transmitted, individuals negotiate these across shifting social, political and economic contexts. 'Generation' refers to both 'membership of different family generations' as well as 'the location of each in historical time.'<sup>382</sup> Men's experiences of fatherhood are therefore shaped by the period through which they have lived, and are further mediated by a variety of factors such as age, class and geographical location. Perceptions of one's own father and cultural discourses surrounding the 'good' father are both important intersecting reference points.<sup>383</sup>

Though fatherhood is often popularly characterised by a transition from 'distant' to 'involved' fathering across the twentieth century, and more recently since the 1970s, the notion of a neat and linear transition across generations is problematic.<sup>384</sup> Simple dichotomies between men as 'carers' or 'providers', as 'new' or 'traditional', 'good' or 'bad' fathers, overlooks the considerable complexity and diversity which existed within constructions and lived experiences of fatherhood during this period. Julia Brannen and Ann Nilsen's intergenerational study of fathering across the twentieth century, for example, found significant variation across family generations, with both discontinuities and continuities in the ways in which men balanced their work and family commitments, as the social and economic landscape shifted. In some instances, contemporary fathers were more 'work-focused' than their

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<sup>381</sup> P. Thompson, 'Family Myth, Models and Denials in the shaping of Individual Life Paths' in D. Bertaux and P. Thompson (eds.), *Between Generations: Family Models, Myths and Memories* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 13.

<sup>382</sup> Brannen, *Fathers and Sons*, p. 168.

<sup>383</sup> N. R. White, 'About Fathers: Masculinity and the Social Construction of Fatherhood', *Journal of Sociology*, 30(2), (1994), p. 125.

<sup>384</sup> Dermott, *Intimate Fatherhood*, p. 28; LaRossa, *The Modernisation of Fatherhood*.



own fathers, who were classified as ‘family men.’<sup>385</sup> Father-child relationships are similarly ambiguous, particularly over time. Strange has demonstrated that during the late Victorian and Edwardian period, dynamics between working-class fathers and their children can be characterised by ‘conflicting, changeable, manifold feelings’, which highlight the ‘kaleidoscopic, situational ambivalences of human relationships.’<sup>386</sup> As Strange concludes, ‘fathers were rarely simply either good or bad, but, rather, very human.’<sup>387</sup>

The process of narrating such ambiguous father-child relationships can produce conflicting emotions within life stories. Sue Sharpe’s 1980s research with fathers and daughters found those relationships to be characterised by ‘unresolved contradictions and ambivalence’, ‘where positive and negative characteristics can sometimes have an uncomfortable co-existence.’<sup>388</sup> Brannen’s research similarly ‘pointed to intergenerational ambivalences’ between fathers and sons, whereby ‘contradictory feelings, behaviours and attitudes’ were held simultaneously.<sup>389</sup> The positive and negative emotions which infuse these father-child relationships can endure for long periods over the life-course, meaning oral history is a particularly useful methodology for exploring them.

This chapter examines collective and popular memories about fatherhood in the past, alongside men’s personal narratives of being fathered.<sup>390</sup> Not only does it provide insights into how interviewees view and remember their fathers, it explores the way in which these recollections were used by men to compose narratives of their own fathering identities and practices. From their positions as sons, fathers and often grandfathers, they reflected on the ways in which they were similar to, and different from, their fathers, as well as upon the distinct historical contexts in which they found themselves parenting. By exploring father-son relationships and interactions in the mid-twentieth century, it challenges some of the more negative discourses surrounding male parenting among the working-classes in Scotland, as well as the assumption that ‘involved’ fatherhood is a late twentieth century phenomenon. It also points to

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<sup>385</sup> J. Brannen and A. Nilsen, ‘From Fatherhood to Fathering: Transmission and Change among British Fathers in Four-generation families’, *Sociology*, 40(2), (2006), p. 341.

<sup>386</sup> Strange, *Fatherhood and the British Working Class*, p. 215.

<sup>387</sup> J.M. Strange, ‘Speechless with Grief’: Bereavement and the Working-Class Father, c. 1880-1914’ in T. Broughton and H. Rogers (eds.), *Gender and Fatherhood in the Nineteenth century* (Basingstoke, 2007), p. 30.

<sup>388</sup> Sharpe, *Fathers and Daughters*, p. 4.

<sup>389</sup> Brannen, *Fathers and Sons*, p. 42; 100.

<sup>390</sup> These interviews only provide insight into the *male* experience of being fathered.

generational ambivalences in fathering practices, identities and relationships, and their construction within oral testimonies. The popular assumption that fathers in the past were less involved in family life, for example, was powerful, even when personal memories directly contradicted it.

**Figure 2.1. Cartoon: generational change**



Source: R. Seel, *The Uncertain Father: Exploring Modern Fatherhood* (Bath, 1987), p. 157.

### ***‘Typical old image of Glasgow Fathers’?***

Cultural and historical assumptions that fathers have only recently become active parents have, in Scotland, a distinctive regional and classed dimension. As Abrams succinctly put in her analysis of fatherhood in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, ‘Scottish working-class fathers do not have a good reputation.’<sup>391</sup> As noted, they have been seen as distant figures, defined largely in terms of financial provision, authority and discipline (over women and children) rather than emotional involvement or day-to-day care. Fatherhood has also been overlooked in conceptions of working-class masculinities, which have been popularly associated with manual labour as well as physical and emotional strength. In West-Central Scotland in particular, the ‘hard man’ is a powerful construction of masculinity. According to popular stereotypes, for much of the twentieth century, working-class men spent long hours at work, were limited in their involvement in family and home life, and were, more often than not, disruptive and deviant figures. These discourses continue to linger in contemporary Scottish society. Gary Clapton’s recent analysis of the publicity materials of Scottish child welfare organisations, for example, found that images and language, overwhelmingly of mothers and children, conveyed the message that fathers are marginal to family life. Where fathers are included in imagery or text, they are largely depicted as useless and/or abusive, particularly within social work resources.<sup>392</sup>

Interviewees readily articulated such popular myths surrounding Scottish masculinity, and its associated representations of the hard drinking-hard working father.<sup>393</sup> Alistair identified the father as the ultimate authority figure: ‘go to work, go to the pub, have his dinner ready and god help anybody that didn’t...he didn’t have to explain himself to anybody.’<sup>394</sup> Jake highlighted the ‘man’s man’ who avoids emotion and prioritises personal interests over time spent with family: ‘bravado, not in touch with their feelings, likes to drink and socialise with their friends.’<sup>395</sup> David L commented on alcohol abuse and male violence, men ‘being drunk and...beating their wife after football results don’t go right’, while Frank reflected upon male control of

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<sup>391</sup> Abrams, ‘There was Nobody’, p. 1.

<sup>392</sup> C. Clapton, ‘Where’s Dad: Father-Proofing Your Work’ (2013) Fathers Network Scotland, [www.fathersnetworkscotland.org.uk](http://www.fathersnetworkscotland.org.uk), accessed 29 Aug 2016.

<sup>393</sup> Both unprompted and when explicitly asked.

<sup>394</sup> [SOHCA/054/06] ‘Alistair.’

<sup>395</sup> [SOHCA/054/24] ‘Jake.’

finances and resources: ‘stories about down in the shipyards, this notion of going home with a burst pay poke.’<sup>396</sup> Gerry spoke about a lack of involvement in childcare and housework: ‘the wife does everything while he sits there wae the pipe and the slippers watching the racing’, while Ian commented on the father disinterested in family life: ‘I’ll work hard and the home life is somebody else’s problem and I’m going to the football on a Saturday, I’ll go to the pub on a Saturday night.’<sup>397</sup> Tam spoke of the ‘stereotypical’ father ‘back in the day’: ‘these guys that are like “that’s her job”, ‘hard working, hard drinking men.... just came in, sat doon and never spoke to ye.’<sup>398</sup> Leslie noted the continued prevalence of these cultural stereotypes: ‘films and TV programmes would make Scottish men oot tae be a certain type [...] as being a bit rough and ready.’<sup>399</sup>

These narratives highlight the pervasiveness, and overwhelming negativity, of popular discourses surrounding Scottish working-class fatherhood and masculinity. Interviewees situated themselves, their fathers, and often their grandfathers with these collective memories when constructing and composing their narratives of both having a father and being a father. John, born in 1947 in Glasgow, reflected on fatherhood across his family generations, and, as Thompson noted, to a time beyond his own birth:

If you go back another generation, my father’s father, he was a drunk. He was a docker but he was more of your typical old image of Glasgow fathers [...] the old footage of shipyards black and white, you see all these hundreds of men rushing out on a Friday night and it wasn’t to rush home to your wife’s loving arms or pat their kids heads, it was to the pub...it was hard life in those days and that’s the way people reacted to it. I think if you go back to maybe the twenties and thirties in Glasgow, maybe even the forties, more of a stereotype was the hard drinking, working Glasgow guy that didnae bother about his family. I think that was certainly in the working-classes [...] I wouldnae say it was the majority because there’s a lot of people who didnae do that, who actually went home, drank in moderation and looked after their family very well.<sup>400</sup>

Though absent and tyrannical fathers (and mothers) undoubtedly existed during this period, as they do today, they were in no way typical of the majority.<sup>401</sup> Instead, the

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<sup>396</sup> [SOHCA/054/20] Littlejohn; [SOHCA/054/16] McGeoghegan.

<sup>397</sup> [SOHCA/054/22] Farrell; [SOHCA/054/04] Robb.

<sup>398</sup> [SOHCA/054/10] McGrail.

<sup>399</sup> [SOHCA/054/08] Watson.

<sup>400</sup> [SOHCA/054/21] McSherry.

<sup>401</sup> See e.g. A. Hughes, ‘Representations and Counter-Representations of Domestic Violence on Clydeside between the Two World Wars’, *Labour History Review*, 69(2), (2004), pp. 169-182; A. Hughes,

one-dimensional depictions of fathers identified above were largely deemed by interviewees to be the material of ‘pantomime’ and ‘caricatures.’<sup>402</sup> Many critiqued this popular memory of Scottish fatherhood by directly distancing their own father from such characterisations. Though Jim, born in 1942, spoke of his father’s ‘typical West of Scotland diet’ and ‘hard physical work’, he was keen to note his father, a steelworker, ‘wasn’t a pub man’ or ‘wasn’t that type of [father].’<sup>403</sup> Donald recalled that growing up in late 1940s and 1950s, his father who worked in the local paper mill ‘never left us short’: ‘some of the stories about wives trying to get the money...he didn’t go and drink. He wasn’t a drinker [...] he did concentrate on the family and not on himself.’<sup>404</sup>

John’s comments above, that such fathers were perhaps more prevalent during the 1920s and 1930s, parallel a growing historiography which suggests there were significant shifts in ideals and practices surrounding fatherhood in Britain from the inter-war to post-war periods.<sup>405</sup> During the 1940s and 1950s, when the majority of my interviewees were born, domesticity, companionate marriage and the ‘nuclear family’ were promoted in post-war social reconstruction.<sup>406</sup> The sole ‘breadwinner’ became the dominant construction of fatherhood for men, and was briefly achievable for families, while discourses surrounding the role of women as wives, mothers and ‘homemakers’ were pervasive.<sup>407</sup> King has argued that fatherhood intensified alongside motherhood during this period, resulting in the establishment of a ‘family-oriented masculinity’, which crossed class boundaries.<sup>408</sup> Though considerable diversity continued to exist, rising standards of living and improvements in working-class housing, reduced family size and working hours, as well as increased leisure time and consumerism, meant men were spending more time at home. This included the expansion of new forms of domestic labour and ‘home-making’ for men, such as allotments, gardens and DIY.<sup>409</sup>

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‘The ‘Non-Criminal’ Class: Wife-Beating in Scotland (c.1800-1949), *Crime, History, Societies*, 14(2), (2010), pp. 31-54; R. E. Dobash and R.P. Dobash, *Violence Against Wives: A Case Against Patriarchy* (London, 1980); Donaldson, ‘An Oral History of Domestic Abuse in Scotland 1979-1992.’

<sup>402</sup> [SOHCA/054/06] ‘Alistair’; [SOHCA/054/20] Littlejohn.

<sup>403</sup> [SOHCA/054/12] Burns.

<sup>404</sup> [SOHCA/054/27] ‘Donald.’

<sup>405</sup> Abrams, ‘There was Nobody’; King, *Family Men*; Fisher, ‘Fatherhood and the Experience of Working-Class Fathers.’

<sup>406</sup> Clark, *Marriage, Domestic Life and Social Change*; Peplar, *Family Matters*.

<sup>407</sup> Davis, *Modern Motherhood*.

<sup>408</sup> King, ‘Hidden Fathers?’; King, ‘A Great Many Men.’

<sup>409</sup> Bourke, *Working Class Cultures*, p. 84; Langhamer, ‘The Meanings of Home in Post-war Britain’, p. 354.

Fathers were present in the home, and active in parenting beyond simply breadwinning. In the inter-war period, they were significantly associated with play and entertainment, which by mid-century, was increasingly emphasised as an important aspect of child development.<sup>410</sup> Roberts, for example, argues that in the period 1940-1970, there were widespread changes in attitudes to the care and nurturing of children, working-class families became more ‘child-centred’, and parents developed an awareness of their children’s emotional, psychological and intellectual needs.<sup>411</sup> Men could therefore embrace family life without necessarily taking on any of the practical, labouring aspects of childrearing and housework, although most men did ‘help’ with both. Bourke’s research, using over 250 working-class autobiographies, found that for every writer noting that a father did not do domestic and childcare tasks, fourteen declared that he did.<sup>412</sup>

My own interviewees’ memories of being fathered during this period confirm the arguments of Abrams, King and Fisher, that men were important to family life and their children. Many men recalled their fathers fondly. James, born in 1957, reflected that his dad, a book keeper, ‘was a lovely man’: ‘he was always very gentle and kind ...[pause] I think I learned a lot from him [...] I loved him very much.’<sup>413</sup> John described his father, a docker, as a ‘loving father’: ‘a very kind, very thoughtful person’, ‘a great individual, a big influence in my life.’<sup>414</sup> The narrative below highlights the reciprocal way in which both father and son displayed an active interest in each other’s lives, and interacted through their shared interests. John, for example, made toys for his own children:

He used to make things for me...lots of things for me, and he was quite a patient person...I was terrible for asking questions [laughs] but my father was always patient and I loved watching him making things. So he would be on the treadle and I would just get a seat and sit beside, “why you doing this? Why you no doing that?” [laughs] [...] But my father in terms of doing things with me, apart from kinda being there, and listening, he always took an interest...he was always interested in what I was doing at Rolls Royce. I used to make metal things and bring them home, “how did you make that? And how did you achieve this?” So he took an interest in what I was doing.<sup>415</sup>

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<sup>410</sup> Fisher, ‘Fatherhood and the Experience of Working-Class Fathers.’

<sup>411</sup> Roberts, *Women and Families*, p. 140.

<sup>412</sup> Bourke, *Working Class Cultures*, p. 83.

<sup>413</sup> [SOHCA/054/15] Oakes.

<sup>414</sup> [SOHCA/054/21] McSherry.

<sup>415</sup> [SOHCA/054/21] McSherry.

Most interviewees similarly recalled their fathers' distinctive role in leisure, play and entertainment. Walking, making toys and learning about nature were all notable instances of father-child interaction, which men could also emulate when they had their own children.<sup>416</sup> Pat described his father, a plater in the shipyards, as 'a great guy' and 'hands-on dad': 'my father always did things with us, took us swimming, took us to football, took us on walks [...] It was a good relationship.'<sup>417</sup> When Pat, born in 1956 in Greenock, became a father himself in the 1980s, he did similar activities: 'it's more than just a walk you're learning something. And my dad used to do the same thing...if he was taking you out a walk, he had to explain what this is, what that is.'<sup>418</sup> David, born in 1956 in Glasgow, likewise recalls his father, an engineer, was 'very good that way':

My father used to play with us...he used to tell me loads of things and I think I've passed that onto my kids...and he'd talk about nature and I picked all that up. So he was very good, and he used to draw wee bits and I used to copy what he'd draw so I draw and paint now.<sup>419</sup>

Alistair, born in 1949, reflected upon his 'involved' father growing up in Glasgow. His narrative places emphasis on companionship and activities outside the home, whilst also highlighting the gendered, public and private roles and responsibilities of his parents during this period:

He was involved...he would take us across the park and play football with us, he would take me to places that I would find interesting that my mother wouldn't take me cause that wasn't her role. Her role was to look after the house, not to look after me outside the house per se, and it was my father's role to make things exciting...We went to the street that used to have a big high wall where all the trains went through, and I could have sat there for hours watching them cause all the trains had individual characteristics, names and we used to sit and watch them and they were very happy times, sitting there.<sup>420</sup>

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<sup>416</sup> Abrams found this trend in Scotland the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Abrams, 'There was Nobody', p. 222.

<sup>417</sup> [SOHCA/054/11] Clark.

<sup>418</sup> [SOHCA/054/11] Clark.

<sup>419</sup> [SOHCA/054/01] Walker.

<sup>420</sup> [SOHCA/054/06] 'Alistair.'

These oral testimonies provide some insight into the importance of father-son interactions and relationships during the 1940s and 1950s. Where fathers were remembered fondly, interviewees could, as indicated, emulate them upon becoming parents themselves. Kenneth, born in 1954, described his father as a 'guiding light', and upon becoming a father in 1975, 'hoped that I could be as good a father as what my father was to me': 'I was trying tae remember the things that my dad taught me, and hoping that I could put them across to my children the same way...just trying tae teach them good manners...how to respect [...] and being honest wae things.'<sup>421</sup> David's largely positive relationship with his parents was also used to inform his own parenting approach in the 1970s. As he reflects, 'a sort of being there was a feeling I always had from my parents':

My father never drank alcohol very often, very, very rarely, maybe New Year he would have a drink and a cigar and make a joke about it, you know he was a millionaire, but he never ever did that throughout the year. So all the money and resources were going into us, it was all about us, it was making sure we had good clothes, warm clothes [...] At night when we were going to bed if it was cold...I always remember my father, he had a big grey coat from the RAF, it weighed a ton, and he used to come through and he put that onto the bed...it was like concrete getting poured on you...and he used to make sure you were warm at night, hot water bottles so they were always caring for us [...] So all of that was done for us and I think when I became a father I thought well that's what I'm gonna do for my children, I'm gonna be there for them, I'm gonna be supportive for them, I'm gonna make sure they've got stuff, it doesn't matter if I've not got it.<sup>422</sup>

Fathers not only had a significant place in their children's interests and hobbies and featured prominently in their leisure time; they therefore played an important role in guiding and shaping child development. They also aspired for their children. Fathers were noted to have encouraged various activities such as football, Boys Brigade, and music lessons, to have attended job fairs and open days, and many displayed an active interest in their son's employment. When serving his apprenticeship in the shipyards, Pat's father 'always took an interest...people say, "What did you do at school?" He used to say, "What did you do at work?"'<sup>423</sup> Robert's father, a ships plumber, was 'proud as punch' of his son's job in the Navy: 'I came up the Clyde on a ship and it

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<sup>421</sup> [SOHCA/054/26] Paul.

<sup>422</sup> [SOHCA/054/01] Walker.

<sup>423</sup> [SOHCA/054/11] Clark.



was my father standing waving [laughs]. It was good, he was really proud, he thought it was great. His son was an officer in the Merchant Navy.’<sup>424</sup> While Kenneth’s father felt his son was ‘too bloody young’ to get married at the age of seventeen, he relented but only on three conditions: “‘One, you will finish your apprenticeship before you get married. Two, you will buy your own house. Three, if it doesnae work out, you’ll no come back here.’” Kenneth and his wife got married in 1973, just before his apprenticeship finished.<sup>425</sup> Though Anthony, born in 1949, asserted that his older father ‘didn’t really take a lot to do with us being brought up’, he nevertheless indicated the various ways in which he had been influential.<sup>426</sup> He noted, for example, that his father had shaped his values: ‘he always taught me to have empathy with the other person’s point of view, no matter what it was, whether it was religion or politics or football, whatever, it was something which he instilled in me, not by direction but by example.’<sup>427</sup>

These narratives indicate that men embraced fatherhood beyond their roles as providers. Mothers, however, were primarily responsible for childcare and housework, regardless of whether they had employment of their own.<sup>428</sup> Men were not excluded from these activities but ‘helped’, and interviewees recalled that their fathers undertook specific domestic duties, including DIY and gardening. There were also certain circumstances, including ill health and unemployment, in which men increased their domestic contributions. Pat’s mother experienced ill-health and so his father carried out domestic chores: ‘he would make sure the fire was kindled before he went out to his work [...] weekends he would do a big cleaning...stuff that my mother just wisnae fit for.’<sup>429</sup> Jake and Frank, who both had fraught relationships with their fathers growing up in Glasgow during the 1960s, noted that their fathers did significant amounts of domestic labour. Jake claimed that as his dad, an ambulance driver, ‘was out of work’: ‘90% of the cooking and cleaning...was him.’<sup>430</sup> Frank, born in 1957, also positioned his father as ‘quite unusual for his age’ in that he would cook, iron and

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<sup>424</sup> [SOHCA/054/05] Speedie.

<sup>425</sup> [SOHCA/054/26] Paul.

<sup>426</sup> [SOHCA/054/14] ‘Anthony.’

<sup>427</sup> [SOHCA/054/14] ‘Anthony.’

<sup>428</sup> While half of my interviewees’ mothers were full-time housewives, the other half had mothers who worked throughout their childhood, or returned to work when they were older.

<sup>429</sup> [SOHCA/054/11] Clark.

<sup>430</sup> [SOHCA/054/24] ‘Jake.’

clean. His mother was the sole breadwinner ‘most of time’, while his father, a joiner, was unemployed.<sup>431</sup>

Outside of the home, nevertheless, there remained distinctions regarding the ‘appropriateness’ of gendered tasks, particularly within working-class communities. Although becoming more prevalent during this period, both men and women may have ridiculed the man ‘brave enough’ to be seen out in public pushing the pram, for example.<sup>432</sup> Tom Brennan’s 1959 area study of Govan in Glasgow noted that with a few exceptions, ‘men are very rarely seen in food shops, are never seen wheeling a pram, and would feel ridiculous if they had to carry home a bunch of flowers.’<sup>433</sup> Though John, for example, had recalled his father used to go to great lengths to get materials for gardening, ‘he would get an old pram and walk maybe five, six miles to put some soil in it’, his wife Louisa recalls that with his grandchildren, John’s ‘daddy’ would push ‘the pram one handed.’<sup>434</sup> As Abrams notes of this period, ‘working-class fathers who made their affection for their children public were in a minority.’<sup>435</sup>

Fulfilling the role of breadwinner, and often sole provider, could also place constraints on men’s time with the family. A number of interviewees reflected on their fathers’ long working hours. Robert, for example, born in 1945, described his father as ‘a nose to the grindstone type of guy’: ‘he wasn’t there a lot, but he was around and he was good, he was good fun.’<sup>436</sup> David L, born in 1941, was mostly positive about his father, a career soldier, noting that ‘he was a good guy.’ When asked how he would spend time with him, his response indicated a *lack* of time spent together. David reflected: ‘my dad...he worked hard to provide for the family. He worked all sorts of hours, all sorts of shifts, and I think it was hard to make ends meet.’<sup>437</sup> While many interviewees appreciated that their fathers had little option but to work long hours, most wanted to avoid missing time with their own children due to such commitments. Leslie, born in 1959, recalled that though he was ‘always aware’ his dad was there, he worked long hours as a lorry driver to provide for a family of five children. During summer months in particular, his father would be ‘out from first light tae last light’ and there were periods when Leslie did not see his father for two or three days:

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<sup>431</sup> [SOHCA/054/16] McGeoghegan.

<sup>432</sup> King, ‘A Great Many Men.’

<sup>433</sup> T. Brennan, *Reshaping a City* (Glasgow, 1959), p. 101.

<sup>434</sup> [SOHCA/054/21] McSherry.

<sup>435</sup> Abrams, ‘There was nobody’, p. 241.

<sup>436</sup> [SOHCA/054/05] Speedie.

<sup>437</sup> [SOHCA/054/20] Littlejohn.

Ma father worked long hours, and probably he didnae have as big an input in ma young life as he coulda had because he wisnae there, that wisnae his fault that was the circumstances they were in at the time, so I felt when it was ma turn tae do it, I wanted to be more involved than ma dad was...and that was a deliberate thing on ma part, I wanted tae be there for them [...] I would certainly say I was a much more hands-on, did more things wae ma sons than ma dad did with me which was the way I wanted it. <sup>438</sup>

Leslie's narrative above highlights the way in which notions of 'traditional' and 'new' fathering often supplant 'breadwinning' with 'involvement.' As the next chapter will show, however, providing for the family remained a key component of fathering and masculinity, and as a means by which to express 'involvement.' As a result, their fathers' role and their own role in providing for the family could be remembered in complex ways by interviewees. Patrick, for example, became a dad in 1974 and claimed it 'almost goes without saying' that he had wanted to be more involved with his children.<sup>439</sup> Born in 1949, he described the relationship with his father, a steelworker, as being 'quite removed, we didn't have a close relationship' and cited the main reason being that he spent all of his time working, 'he didn't have a *lot of time* to spend with me.' Patrick concedes his father worked 'all the hours that god sent simply because he had to, he had a big family to look after.' Tensions emerged in Patrick's narrative, however, as he sought to distance himself from his father: 'I did lots of things with the children, *much more than my own dad did*. I wouldn't say I had a *lot of time* because I used to work seven days a week, *just like my dad did*.'<sup>440</sup> Moreover, though Donald's father was 'family oriented', when he became a father himself in 1983, he too wanted to 'try and avoid spending so much time working, because my dad spent so much time working.' His expectations were not realised, however: 'it didnae work out. With my wife not working, I figured I just had to.'<sup>441</sup> These narratives indicate that while some men sought to move away from what they perceived to be the inadequate aspects of the fathering they received, namely long working hours, they could also reproduce the very behaviours they found unsatisfactory.

A few interviewees characterised their fathers as being 'distant' figures, as a result of their long hours at work, or because they prioritised their own leisure. They did not

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<sup>438</sup> [SOHCA/054/08] Watson.

<sup>439</sup> SOHCA/054/09 Interview with Patrick Corrigan, 17<sup>th</sup> December 2014.

<sup>440</sup> [SOHCA/054/09] Corrigan. Emphasis added.

<sup>441</sup> [SOHCA/054/27] 'Donald.'

feel like they ‘knew’ their fathers in any great sense. Patrick recalls his father was ‘quite drawn in on himself, he wasn’t an open person, because he was older when he got married, it meant that his interaction with me was as an older man [...] he was a busy man and he was involved in what he did rather than what I was involved in.’<sup>442</sup> Alongside men’s focus on work, the age at which men became fathers, and also the age of children, could also therefore be a significant factor in determining both father-child relationships and interactions.<sup>443</sup> Joe’s father was fifty-three when he was born in 1938 and when his father died at the age of seventy in 1955, Joe, the youngest of five, was seventeen years old. Having been invalided through an accident at his steelworks employment shortly after he was born, Joseph’s memories of his father are of distance:

I really didnae know much about him. He didnae speak much and he never showed any interest really. That I can remember. Then at seventeen I was out and about and going tae dancing and all the rest of it [...] He wasn't ill-tempered or anything like that. He just didnae say much and I think his life kinda got him down.<sup>444</sup>

Like Joe, many interviewees noted a change in the interactions with their fathers during their teenage years, when father’s significant role in play and leisure could diminish over time as these activities were increasingly carried out independently and with friends.

Finally, one of the most enduring stereotypes surrounding the role of father is that of the disciplinarian. In Scottish historical narratives in particular, the archetypal construction of masculinity in the form of the ‘hard man’ has meant that working-class fathers have been stereotyped as being a threatening influence on family life, dominating their homes with brutality and violence. Historians have shown, however, that it was often mothers, not fathers, who tended to discipline children. Abrams for example, argued that in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries ‘men frequently shied away from meting out punishment to their children.’<sup>445</sup> While both World Wars were important in reasserting the father’s role as a disciplinary figure, hierarchical family relationships were also increasingly challenged as the ‘companionate’ marriage was celebrated, and there was increased emphasis on softer

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<sup>442</sup> [SOHCA/054/09] Corrigan.

<sup>443</sup> Also evident in [SOHCA/054/14] ‘Anthony’; [SOHCA/054/23] Farrell.

<sup>444</sup> [SOHCA/054/23] Farrell.

<sup>445</sup> Abrams, ‘There was Nobody’, p. 229; Lummis, ‘The Historical Dimension of Fatherhood’; Fisher, ‘Fatherhood and the Experience of Working-Class Fathers.’

disciplinary methods in the post-war period.<sup>446</sup> The vast majority of my interviewees similarly indicated their mothers were the main disciplinarians. John D, born in 1959, for example, recalled of his father, a miner: ‘you very rarely heard him raising his voice, very, very rarely. We were aw terrified of oor maw, we werenae feart of our da, cause we knew our da wouldnae dae nothing.’<sup>447</sup> The youngest of a family of six, John recalls that he would meet his father each day at the bus stop: ‘he’d go in [to the shop] and get me a Beano or a Dandy, it was a different comic every day.’<sup>448</sup>

Overall, interviewees’ reflections of their fathers suggest that many working-class men during the post-war period took their fathering role seriously, and developed close relationships with their children. The ‘hard men’ uncovered in historical studies of men’s working lives and work cultures were not readily evident within this group of men’s memories of their father’s home and family lives, a feature significantly neglected in Scottish historiography. Though some men noted that their fathers were perhaps aloof or unavailable, only three of the twenty-seven men I interviewed emphasised overtly negative experiences of being fathered. More often than not, both positive and negative aspects of father-child interactions and relations were evident. The following section explores a number of these father-son relationships in more depth, including two interviewees from the same family. It focuses on how the ambivalent feelings some men held towards their fathers were constructed and composed within the oral history interview, as well as further examines the ways in which interviewees sought to father differently in changing historical and social circumstances. In doing so, it examines the intergenerational transmission of fathering, how practices and behaviours are passed between fathers and sons.

### ***Fathers and Sons***

Interviewees had a tendency to reflect on being fathered when narrating their own experiences of being a father. Most noted (or were keen to note) having had greater involvement with their children, both practically and emotionally, than their own fathers. They engaged with discourses that fatherhood had changed significantly during the late twentieth century, the period in which they had children. Ken, born

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<sup>446</sup> King, *Family Men*.

<sup>447</sup> [SOHCA/054/17] Duffy.

<sup>448</sup> [SOHCA/054/17] Duffy.

in 1940 in Glasgow, claimed his father had been both ‘typical of his generation’ and a product of his ‘environment.’ This included the arduous employment conditions of the welding yard where he worked, as well as the masculine norms which prohibited him from expressing emotion:

He was very traditional, he was bringing in the pay-packet, he had taken his take from it and *the wife* would get whatever was left to run the household...I think at the time the men were much more prone to the drinking aspect of it. I’m not saying he was an alcoholic, I think he was very typical of his generation, they sought solace in it because the variety of life that you had was much more restricted than what we have today, certainly in my life [...] I think he was very typical of his generation, he kept everything tae himself, there was no openness, he didn’t...you don’t have too many fond memories, you don’t have bad memories but it was...your mother and you were more the family, and *the dad* was there when he had to be.<sup>449</sup>

Ken’s use of the phrase ‘the wife’ rather than ‘my mother’, and ‘the dad’ rather than ‘my dad’ highlights the way in which collective and individual memories about gender and family life interlink. To account for what he perceived to be his shifting experience of fatherhood and masculinity when he had twin boys in 1972, Ken referred to his ‘liberal views’ and decision not to emulate his father, as well as wider societal shifts. Existing in a ‘more open, much more forgiving’ society provided Ken with the opportunity to be more emotionally expressive and develop what he perceived to be deeper relationships with his children:

He was very stoic you know and non-committal. You wouldn’t have personal conversations with your father, it wasn’t the macho thing to do, you know, you just didn’t do it. I’m sure he had his vulnerabilities like everybody else but they were never displayed [...] As a child, I can’t say...unlike my relationship with my own sons, I cannot think of significant moments [...] I think of conversations I have with my own sons, it’s like night and day. And I think part of what made me the way I am is based on that experience, no to go down the same road again but again I think the society they [the children] were brought up was much more open, much more forgiving.<sup>450</sup>

Ken was unable to recall any significant memories of his father or anything that he might have ‘inherited’ from him when prompted. As noted, however, father-child

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<sup>449</sup> SOHCA/054/07 Interview with Kenneth Doran, 10<sup>th</sup> December 2014. Emphasis added.

<sup>450</sup> [SOHCA/054/07] Doran.

relationships can be complicated, as is the process of narrating those relationships. Latterly Ken highlighted one of the ways in which his father influenced not only his own childhood but also the way he himself fathered. Originally a cabinet-maker, Ken's father would often make outfits and toys using scrap material, and passed on the skills which enabled Ken to do this for his own sons: 'I was always making swords for them and things like this, DIY skills, which I got from my father. He used to make me cowboy outfits [...] Well I could do similar things.'<sup>451</sup> The fact that his father could make these was described by Ken in a previous oral history project as 'a cherished childhood memory': 'I felt special and proud because nobody else had anything as authentic [...] overall it made me feel good.'<sup>452</sup> Within my own interview with Ken, his overall recollections of his father as largely uninvolved and emotionally distant also overlook the fact that he had a 'very good family life' and a 'happy, established childhood.' He recalled that his parents worked hard to give him 'a better standard of living', and that his father also undertook specific aspects of practical care and leisure: 'I remember my father used to take me to the Townhead baths [...] that's where ye went to get a weekly bath.'<sup>453</sup> Through these memories, Ken's father's practical involvement in family life becomes more apparent.

Complexities and tensions were evident not only in the way interviewees remembered their fathers, but also their own fathering. Frank F, born in 1944, recalled that his father had been aloof, he 'didn't really get to know him as a person.'<sup>454</sup> For Frank, this was common to the generation and mining community which his father was a part of: 'most fathers of that era and that background were very similar [...] so fathers were very [pause] werenae very good around the home. If they worked and got their pint at the weekend that was them quite happy.' Though his father would spend time walking with him, helped him occasionally with homework, and always attended his football games, mostly he remembers him as 'aloof' and 'distant': 'he kept his distance...there was a father figure then there was kids and he very seldom bridged the gap to get to us.' Throughout the interview, Frank explicitly and continually contrasted the fathering he received to his own. Reflecting on housework he noted, it 'wasn't a done thing for men of that era but that, that didnae affect me, I did the very opposite...I did housework...never gave it a thought. But for their era, it wasn't a

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<sup>451</sup> [SOHCA/054/07] Doran.

<sup>452</sup> Correspondence: Kenneth Doran and Hilary Young, 8<sup>th</sup> June 2005 (provided by Ken).

<sup>453</sup> [SOHCA/054/07] Doran.

<sup>454</sup> [SOHCA/054/25] Fleming.

manly thing to do.’ Frank described how he ‘wanted to be more active, definitely more involved...always taking them to clubs and all sorts of things [...] my father would never have done that.’ Like Ken, he also believed the relationships he had with his children were closer than that he experienced with his own father, but that this had been normal of the time: ‘when I think about my relationship with my own kids, I didn’t have a relationship at all with my father [...] I didn’t have a close relationship with my dad. Having said that, all the dads round about us were very similar.’<sup>455</sup>

Although Frank was keen to note that he expected to be more ‘involved’ than his father, he was also concerned whether or not he had achieved the levels of intimacy with his children he had desired. His narrative below further highlights some of the tensions that could emerge when interviewees sought to construct their fathering identity as distinct from their fathers. When asked what he felt his main role or duty was to his children, Frank reflected:

Just to be there. To be there for them, for anything related to school or anything at all in their life. They would probably tell you that [pause] they would probably tell you that I wasn’t that close to them. But when I compare myself, to my father it’s totally different. But they don’t say that now; they always say that they were well brought up and well-disciplined and they knew right from wrong and all the basic things of growing up and being a family. You know? [...] So was the main function of parents...try and... give them a bit of space as well, you can’t start dominating and say do this and do that with them, allow them a certain amount of freedoms and so on. You know, but always be there to support if needed.

Aimee: And why do you think that they would say that you weren’t that close to them?

Frank: Well, that’s my impression. I don’t know where I’m getting it from either cause I [pause], I would hope they wouldn’t say that...well whenever we get together they have roared and laughed and so on but they’ve never ever said it but it’s just a wee feeling you get, maybe I should’ve done more you know? Maybe it’s just a feeling you get being a parent...I hope I’ve done everything I’ve thought I would do. So there’s a wee niggly thing there at the back saying maybe I didnae do this, maybe I should have done.<sup>456</sup>

The relationship between expectations and lived reality could therefore be ambiguous. Frank, for example, reflected that he had earned ‘a reputation for not being touchy, cuddly’ or for rarely displaying his emotions: ‘I tend to walk away when...and maybe that all goes back to my father’s doing or some of him rubbing off in me.’ He was keen

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<sup>455</sup> [SOHCA/054/25] Fleming.

<sup>456</sup> [SOHCA/054/25] Fleming.



to qualify, however, 'I was never distant or standoffish the way my father would have been in his day, I tended to be a bit warmer.'<sup>457</sup>

As is evident in both Ken and Frank's narratives, there was a significant shift in the desire among men to be more emotionally open and dedicate more time towards their children than they remember their own fathers doing. Even those men who had very positive and warm relationships with their fathers, nevertheless noted a generational shift had occurred in men's emotional expressiveness in the family, and in associated masculine norms. John, for example, reflected that the display of emotions 'wasn't expected' of men 'in those days':

My father was always a very kind man...but he was never really a cuddly type person but again men weren't in those days, it wasn't really of expected of men. Men were supposed to be more a father figure type and he was certainly a very good father figure, a very kind, very thoughtful person but he wasn't cuddly [...] so often my father didn't show his emotions a lot, although he had a good sense of humour and he loved to sing [...] I don't think men of that generation were cuddly people, they were more seen to be the kind of people who do the providing and their bit in the looking after the family as they saw it [...] I think fathers in particular took less interest in the emotional side of what was happening with children.<sup>458</sup>

It is important to note that while interviewees' fathers may not have expressed emotions openly or often, it does not mean they were not felt.<sup>459</sup> Rather, the expression of emotion and 'close' father-child relationships were becoming more accepted dimensions of masculinity and a prominent expectation of fatherhood in the 1970s and beyond.<sup>460</sup> As indicated by Frank, however, widely held ideals may also fail to reflect lived realities.

Interviewees also noted changing attitudes and behaviours in relation to childcare, as well as a shift in 'public' and 'private' fathering. While pushing a pram could present challenges to masculine identity and status in their father's generation, such public displays of fathering were not only growing more acceptable but also increasingly celebrated. Respondents repeatedly drew upon such rhetoric in narrating the increasing range of fathering practices. Ian, for example, who first became a father

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<sup>457</sup> [SOHCA/054/25] Fleming.

<sup>458</sup> [SOHCA/054/21] McSherry.

<sup>459</sup> Dermott, *Intimate fatherhood*.

<sup>460</sup> E. Dermott, 'The 'Intimate Father': Defining Paternal Involvement', *Sociological Research Online*, 8(4), (2003) [www.socresonline.org.uk/8/4/dermott.html](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/8/4/dermott.html), accessed 13 May 2015.

in 1984, remembers ‘there being a shift in what fathers did’: ‘our generation...it was awricht to push the pram, it was okay to take the kid to the shops whereas I think my dad’s generation, they wouldnae been seen dead pushing a pram [...] we were a different generation from our parents as far as that went.’<sup>461</sup> Born in 1958, Ian’s narrative notes the breaking down of demarcated gender roles: ‘there were more rules if you like, who did what, certainly in my parent’s day...I’m probably about the generation where that started to merge.’<sup>462</sup> For Alistair, his involvement in baby care in the late 1970s and early 1980s distinguished him from his own father, and marked a ‘change’ and ‘evolution’ in fatherhood: ‘I was involved very much with bringing [daughter] up, change nappies and take her walks in the pram [...] and it shows the evolution of...I don’t think my father would have been capable of looking after a three year old.’<sup>463</sup>

Although these comments surrounding changing fatherhood appear strikingly similar to those employed by Young and Wilmott in the late fifties, there was a significant shift in public and private distinctions of men’s parenting from the 1970s onwards, a theme further explored in Chapter Four. Joseph’s father, a miner, for example, was widowed when he, the eldest of three, was nine years old. Born in 1949, Joseph similarly became a lone parent to his three children following marital separation in the early 1980s. His narrative below highlights the changing responses to lone fatherhood, in the context of shifting family and gender norms, as well as the extent to which men became much more visibly involved in childcare. It also indicates the unconscious ways in which the experience of being fathered impacted upon Joseph’s own fathering:

My dad unfortunately, as most men at that time did, didn’t really take much time to do wae the children, they just went to work and came home. And unfortunately sort of drifted away, we were left pretty much to our own devices when my mother died [...] He did his best, as I say it was just the way men were at that time. It was quite weird when I did come up here with my girls, I remember saying to him one day, “will you go and get me a bag of nappies when you’re out” he was horrified at the idea of going into the chemist and buying a bag of nappies! [laughs] I mean that just typified, that just showed you what he was like. It wasnae his fault, it was just the way he was. I didnae blame him for it. But I think it actually reflected in me cause when I was left with the girls, I made sure I did the

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<sup>461</sup> [SOHCA/054/04] Robb.

<sup>462</sup> [SOHCA/054/04] Robb.

<sup>463</sup> [SOHCA/054/06] ‘Alistair.’

opposite, unconsciously I think, it was only later on I thought that's why we sort of got into it the way we did, aye so, it had some effect on me I think. But that was it really, that was my father...he provided but he didnae give us very much time, he was very rarely ever there, once my mum went.<sup>464</sup>

Despite Joseph's assertion that 'most men' were less involved in family life during this period, he came to reflect over the course of the interview that the death of his mother was a clear turning point for his father's behaviour and temperament: 'he was a different person after that.' Earlier memories evoked a very different picture, adding nuance to his narratives of the father-son relationship: 'he was brilliant' 'take us for runs. He was there much more, he was very generous', 'he bent over backwards getting you stuff that you wanted', and he 'was always making things.' As Joseph notes, 'he was good man, my dad, he was just a product of his time. He never expected to be in a position where he was gonnae have to be looking after three children [...] it wasn't as if he was a gruff, nasty man, he wisnae. Far from it...He just didnae have a lot of time for us.'<sup>465</sup>

A few interviewees therefore attempted to recapture what was missed out on during their childhood, and this was particularly prominent for three men who had largely negative experiences with their fathers. Charlie, born in 1952, was the eldest of a family of ten. He described his alcoholic, abusive father as being 'like a lot of men in the shipyards at the time', and his relationship with him as 'practically non-existent.'<sup>466</sup> When Charlie had his first child in 1976, he was 'gonnae be everything ma dad wasn't.' He described his father as 'what is sometimes portrayed as the West of Scotland man, where they go out and work and drink, go out, and work, and drink and that's it': 'he never took part in anything, he never took us anywhere, never got involved. He never done our homework wae us. He never really done anything.' Becoming a father presented Charlie with the opportunity to correct the past: 'just enjoying happy families, and doing the best we could. I don't know if it's a bit of reliving ma childhood, I was gonnae make sure ma kids had everything I never had. And through them, I would have it.'<sup>467</sup> Frank had a similarly problematic and 'mixed' relationship with his father, due to his parent's argumentative and temperamental

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<sup>464</sup> [SOHCA/054/02] 'Joseph.'

<sup>465</sup> [SOHCA/054/02] 'Joseph.'

<sup>466</sup> [SOHCA/054/18] McKay.

<sup>467</sup> [SOHCA/054/18] McKay.

relationship. Following the birth of his son in 1984 he, too, had conscious and purposeful expectations to be different:

My first thought was that whatever happens with these kids, it's not gonna be what happened with me [...] I wanted to be more involved and I wanted to be more responsible towards my kids and I wanted to give them a stable environment. It couldn't be about me. It had to be about them.<sup>468</sup>

The birth of his son prompted Frank to realise how much his father had 'neglected and hadn't acted in a responsible manner' and the relationship formally broke down thereafter: 'I never wanted to see him again and I didn't.' This relationship breakdown had a noticeable influence on the way he recalled childhood memories of his father, in largely negative ways. Unlike Charlie, however, Frank came to reflect upon more favourable characteristics of his late father over the course of the interview. He attempted to 'compose' his memories, noting that he was perhaps being 'unfair':

The only thing I can remember is making model aeroplanes with him. He used to make these ones out of wood and he'd make these wee planes for me. He made a...*Aye he did actually*, he made me a sledge. He was a joiner to trade and he used to make me a castle...*just remembering aw that*.

He used to...that was the one thing...*actually I'm being unfair*, one thing he was really good at, he was a great teacher. Whenever I worked with him, he was always really patient with you and tell you what to do and how to do, never got upset with you. Even now, if I'm doing anything, I still feel I've got him over my shoulder, you know can hear his voice.<sup>469</sup>

Frank's memories above highlight the significant and continuing impact fathers could have on their sons' lives, even where relationships were fraught and complex. Jake's narrative similarly demonstrates both conscious and unconscious intergenerational transmissions between fathers and sons. As a child, he notes his father was 'a horrible, scary person' and a 'tyrant'; he was 'distant', strict, physically aggressive, and 'liked alcohol'.<sup>470</sup> Though Jake, born in 1968, rejected the model of fathering he experienced upon becoming a father himself in the late 1980s, he also found himself displaying similar traits, and again made conscious attempts 'to be the opposite' of his father:

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<sup>468</sup> [SOHCA/054/16] McGeoghegan. Emphasis added.

<sup>469</sup> [SOHCA/054/16] McGeoghegan.

<sup>470</sup> [SOHCA/054/24] 'Jake.'

I've got a different relationship with my son than I had with my father. Because I said I would never be him, so I am probably the complete opposite of him...my son is like a very good friend. I know my son will tell me things I could never discuss with my father, never in a million years [...] I remember I think my kids were two and six or seven, and I found myself, I can't remember what I got angry at. It was something silly, one of them had knocked something over. But I got angry and I seen my father, and I thought, Ah! No, no, no. That's not going to happen. That's just not me. I'm not going to do this. Right there at that point in time is a eureka moment, a real change around in personality and I just took a right step back from that and I handled things a lot differently from there on. I didn't use the anger that I remember being used on me. Not violence, because I never hit my kids, ever once. But I just found myself shouting and such a way I thought wow, this is over-reaction. I can just see them being extremely scared and I'm thinking, I remember being like that.<sup>471</sup>

Ambivalence therefore characterises not only many of these father-son relationships, especially over time, but also fathering across family generations. Jake, for example, continues to maintain a relationship with his father.

Finally, interviews with both a father and son from the same family provides for a more in-depth analysis of the narratives of both having and being a father, as well as the intergenerational transmission of fathering practices. Joe, an ironmonger, was born in 1938. He married at the age of twenty-five in 1963 and became a father for the first time in 1964, and again in 1966, 1967, 1969, 1972 and 1980. His son Gerald, a motor mechanic, was the third oldest. He married in 1989 at the age of twenty-two and has two sons, born in 1990 and 1992. Separate interviews found similarities as well as ambiguities, both between and within the individual life histories. With regards to discipline, for example, Gerry recollected that his mother 'done aw the discipline', something, which Joe noted he struggled with:

Gerry: Ma dad was shy and one thing that does stick in my head was one time when we were in big trouble...and we were threatened wae my dad to discipline us and ma dad took us into the room, clapped his hands and says "right start greeting." [laughs] so that was his discipline, he didnae have the heart to hit a kid, you know, he was just a big softie. Still is.<sup>472</sup>

Gerry's memories of his father served as both a positive and negative reference point from which his own fathering was narrated, more so than they did for Joe. Gerry

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<sup>471</sup> [SOHCA/054/24] 'Jake.'

<sup>472</sup> [SOHCA/054/22] Farrell.

described his childhood in the late 1960s and early 1970s as being hard: ‘we hudnae a lot of money’, but also ‘happy’: ‘it wisnae as if we felt hard done tae.’ That his parents struggled financially was a recurrent theme, and Gerry used such memories to construct narratives of his own fathering, centred on providing:

I didnae want a big family because I always just seen ma mum and dad struggling. They spent their whole married life struggling to provide and you learn when you’re a bit older how hard that struggle must have been. When I think of Christmases, six kids and we had great Christmases, we never wanted for anything, the toys we got were fantastic but they must have spent the whole of that next year paying them off on store cards or however they bought them. And I think that shows how they love you because they’ll do anything. They probably went without eating or that but they provided, so that was always important to me...I didnae want to be in the position where I’d say to them no, ye cannae go to Cubs or ye cannae go to the baths cause I’ve no got the money to gie ye.<sup>473</sup>

The narrative above highlights that while ‘involved’ fatherhood is popularly held in contrast to ‘breadwinning’, suggesting economic provision is somehow distinct from care, for many men their desire to be a ‘good’ breadwinner was confirmed through their intentions to be a ‘good’ father. Joe largely confirmed such financial pressures. Though he acknowledged that he ‘didnae make a great wage’, that ‘it wisnae a well-paid job’, he also sought to situate himself as a good provider: ‘we never...we didn’t struggle’, ‘we hudnae any money worries.’<sup>474</sup> For Gerry, becoming a father did nevertheless result in significant economic pressure. Having fallen pregnant three months into marriage, the family were thrown into ‘financial difficulty.’ As a result, Gerry worked overtime and long hours, and again made a positive comparison with his father with regards to commitment to work: ‘there was weeks where I was doing 60, 70 hours and that was hard going but I could remember ma dad doing that as well and he never ever moaned and I thought well...ye just have to get on wae it.’ Although Gerry expressed the desire to be more involved in his children’s lives, he also conceded that ‘in their early days, we didnae tend to do a massive amount, because again, like ma dad, I was working a lot.’<sup>475</sup>

Gerry’s expectations and memories of being a father therefore emphasised both continuity and change from his own father. Through his desire to be ‘involved’, Gerry

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<sup>473</sup> [SOHCA/054/22] Farrell.

<sup>474</sup> [SOHCA/054/23] Farrell.

<sup>475</sup> [SOHCA/054/22] Farrell.

had particular expectations of being more emotionally expressive, having emphasised the shyness and quietness of his father who he deemed to be ‘loving’ but in the ‘background.’ Joe confirmed this in his reflections on affection and intimacy with his children:

Gerry: Ma dad was shy so he wisnae one for showing emotions or anything like that and I thought, that’s wrong you know because ye shouldnae go through life no knowing if...I wouldnae say no knowing he doesn’t love ye but no knowing he doesnae care, or being feart to show yer kids ye love them or gie them a hug.<sup>476</sup>

Joe: I’m no a cuddly person [...] Although I would hold them if they hurt themselves or anything like that. But I wisnae a touchy-feely person [...] I think they knew, though. I’m one of these parents you shouldn’t really need to show your affection ‘cause you’re there, and *they should know*. You know. But I rarely did.<sup>477</sup>

Gerry did know. He recalls that ‘ye just knew that if you needed anything or if you hurt yourself, they were always there.’ This further indicates that intimacy and close father-child relationships were becoming central to ideals and men’s understandings of ‘good’ fathering, even if these expectations were not always realised. Despite his desire to be more emotionally expressive, Gerry reflected that, just like his father, he rarely conveyed his emotions outwardly, particularly as his two sons grew older, and just like his father, he asserted that ‘they should know’ how he feels towards them. This is something which he had not been aware of until the oral history interview: ‘probably the only thing that got in the way was myself, as I say wae the emotion and the cuddling. And it’s probably something I wisnae as aware of until I’m actually talking about it.’ Like others, he put this down to his own experience of being fathered:

It’s strange because I always found that ma dad was shy and he didnae show emotion very well so I always thought, naw, I’m no gonnae be like that but I did find myself being like that. I did find myself no struggling tae gie them a hug but I didnae feel I needed tae gie them a hug every day you know? And [wife] and I have had conversations about this, “you never show them affection,” “well I do” “but they don’t know that”, “*well they should know it*” and then I realise... and that worries me at times, or did worry me at times. I still praise them and did praise them but I dae find I’m no an emotional person, you know, I’m no one for showing ma emotions. Even towards [wife], not even just to the kids and I dunno if that

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<sup>476</sup> [SOHCA/054/22] Farrell.

<sup>477</sup> [SOHCA/054/23] Farrell.

does stem fae distance me having wae ma dad. I can only remember, well I'm now forty-seven and I think I can only remember about three times having a hug fae ma dad, and each of the times has been when one of his close relatives have died and it's me that's hugged him.<sup>478</sup>

Gerry's narrative highlights that the tendency among interviewees to emphasise differences rather than similarities may suggest a more radical transformation of fathering than was practiced in everyday reality. Moreover, while it was more desirable and permissible that fathers show their emotions, this is not necessarily a signifier that they were doing so, a theme explored further in Chapter Four.

## ***Conclusions***

The 1970s were seen to be a watershed in fatherhood. This included an ideological (but contested and ambiguous) shift from 'breadwinning' towards 'involved' fathering. Although prevalent, the dichotomy of 'new-involved-good' and 'traditional-breadwinner-bad' fathers is clearly problematic; these recorded narratives highlight both continuity and change in fathering within and across generations. In providing some insight into men's experiences of being fathered during the post-war period, the oral testimonies have also highlighted the complexity of the father-son relationships, showing that they, alongside fathers, were rarely 'good' or 'bad' in entirety.

Nevertheless, being fathered acted as an important reference point against which interviewees constructed their experiences of being a father, and the popular assumption that fathering improved in a linear fashion across the twentieth century was significant. Although not new to the late twentieth century, emotion and intimacy were central in men's construction of 'good' fatherhood and were framed as an improvement on the earlier practices and behaviours of their own fathers. There was also emphasis on a greater number of socially acceptable fathering and masculine practices and behaviours, such as practical childcare in public.

Although these men tended to emphasise the differences rather than similarities between themselves and their fathers, they did so with an awareness of the changing social, cultural, political and economic contexts which shaped their meanings and practices as parents. While their fathers experienced full employment and state sponsored notions of domesticity in the period after the Second World War,

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<sup>478</sup> [SOHCA/054/22] Farrell.



interviewees became fathers during a period of profound restructuring of the Scottish economy, from heavy industry to services, deindustrialisation and unemployment, as well as the rising numbers of mothers entering the labour market. Men framed their understandings of fatherhood around these historical contexts. In relation to their fathers' long working hours or lack of affection, for example, many acknowledged that 'it wasnae his fault', that was 'the way men were at that time' or 'that was the circumstance they were in at the time', he was 'just a product of his time', 'I don't blame him for it', it was 'through no fault of his own' and 'they had to do that in they days.'<sup>479</sup> At the same time, they also emphasised their own agency, they 'choose' to father differently - 'that was a deliberate thing on my part', 'I made sure I did the opposite.'<sup>480</sup>

The oral testimonies show, however, some of the ways the fathering men received could impact upon their own identities and practices as fathers. Transmission was complex, occurring in positive and negative as well as conscious and unconscious ways. Moreover, the 'new' fatherhood presented retrospectively by men held a number of inherent contradictions and tensions, particularly when their expectations of fathering did not reflect the lived reality. As the following chapters will demonstrate, fatherhood and family life were characterised by continuity as much as change. Government social policies continued to emphasise and prioritise the economic function of fathers and reinforce the relationship between masculinity and paid work, as well as emphasise care by mothers. Moreover, although fatherhood was characterised as shifting away from financial provisioning and the 'involved' father was held in contrast to the 'breadwinner' father, providing remained, as demonstrated in the next chapter, a central means by which men expressed parental affection, love and care, while 'involvement' was defined in complex and diverse ways. This chapter has nevertheless provided new insights into fathers, sons, and generational change, challenging the distinctive and pervasive stereotype of the Scottish working-class 'hard man', who was disinterested in or had a negative impact on family life during the mid-twentieth century.

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<sup>479</sup> [SOHCA/054/08] Watson; [SOHCA/054/02] 'Joseph.'

<sup>480</sup> [SOHCA/054/08] Watson; [SOHCA/054/02] 'Joseph.'

### CHAPTER THREE ‘Juggling Act?’ Fathers and Work

The cultural legacy of the father as provider is a thing of the past and will have to be a thing of the past for many families. The difficulty is that we have not really identified what role replaces it.<sup>481</sup>

Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, breadwinning formed the core of fatherhood. Deemed a benchmark of working-class respectability and masculinity, the gendered division of labour upon industrialisation allocated men the role of financial provider, and women, as carers of the home and family.<sup>482</sup> While fathering has always been about more than financial provision, and mothers have likewise engaged in paid work, the welfare state, trade unions and notions of the ‘family wage’ institutionalised this, originally middle-class, male-breadwinner female-homemaker model. Despite being presented as both natural and eternal, in practice, the male breadwinner family was achievable for only a relatively short historical period between 1940 and 1970, peaking in the 1950s.<sup>483</sup> Across the twentieth century, and particularly from latter decades, however, both the ideology of sole male breadwinning as well as the ability of men to fulfil the role, was increasingly challenged.<sup>484</sup> In 1968, more than half (52%) of husbands in British married couples under sixty-five were sole earners compared to less than a quarter (23.6%) in 1990.<sup>485</sup> Men’s contributions to overall family income also fell significantly from 73% in 1979-1981 to 61% in 1989-1991.<sup>486</sup> As Young argues, ‘by the end of the century, the concept of the male breadwinner was a shadow of its former self.’<sup>487</sup>

The perceived shift from fathering based on financial provision towards more active and shared caring and intimacy, or at least a shift in men’s status as breadwinners, was significant from this period onwards. Considerable debate has since centred upon the extent to which breadwinning has declined, alongside the

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<sup>481</sup> Hansard, Boys and Fatherhood (HL 24 January 2001 vol 621 cc300-34), Lord Northbourne.

<sup>482</sup> C. Creighton, ‘The Rise and Decline of the ‘Male Breadwinner Family’ in Britain’, *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, 23(5), (1999), pp. 519-541; S. Horrell and J. Humphries, ‘The Origins and Expansion of the Male Breadwinner Family: The Case of Nineteenth Century Britain’, *International Review of Social History*, 42(5), (1997), pp. 25-64.

<sup>483</sup> Hobson, *Making Men into Fathers*, p. 15.

<sup>484</sup> R. Crompton (eds.) *Restructuring Gender Relations and Employment: The Decline of the Male Breadwinner* (Oxford, 1999); N. Charles and E. James, ‘“He earns the bread and butter and I earn the cream”: Job Insecurity and the Male Breadwinner Family in South Wales’, *Work, Employment and Society*, 19(3), (2005), pp. 481-502.

<sup>485</sup> H. Davies and H. Joshi, ‘Gender and Income Inequality in the UK 1968-1990: the Feminisation of Earnings or of Poverty?’, *Journal of Royal Statistical Society A*, 161(1), (1998), p. 36.

<sup>486</sup> Creighton, ‘The Rise and Decline of the ‘Male Breadwinner Family’, p. 526.

<sup>487</sup> Young, ‘Being a Man’, p. 132.

implications of this for masculine identities.<sup>488</sup> Those citing the demise of male breadwinning note the changing nature and experience of work, deindustrialisation and rising female employment, as well as the disappearance of full-time, permanent male employment and the notion of the family wage. Significant changes in family structures and relationships, including later marriage and parenthood, also contributed to shifting understandings of gender, parenthood and the relationship between family life and paid work. Support for ‘traditional’ gender roles has declined over time; almost half (49%) of the public agreed in the 1984 *British Social Attitudes* survey that ‘a man’s job is to earn the money, a woman’s job is to look after the home and family’ compared to just 13% in 2012.<sup>489</sup>

Conversely, research during this period and since has highlighted that male provider identities remain strong for men, even in unemployment, and families continue to be structured on the assumption that men will take on primary providing.<sup>490</sup> Although mothers’ paid work increased significantly over this period, men’s unpaid domestic and care work, though rising, remained removed from full responsibility, and fathers undertaking primary childcare were in the minority. Today, the majority of fathers remain in full-time employment and there is continued public support for women having the primary caring role when children are under school age, and who are more likely to work part-time as a result.<sup>491</sup>

These important, though complex, social, cultural, and economic shifts were commonly depicted as either enabling or threatening to fathers and masculinities, on the one hand, allowing men to pursue more intimate and involved relationships with their partners and children, and on the other, undermining their ‘traditional’ roles and identities. The perceived decline of sole male breadwinning, alongside rising divorce and unmarried parenthood, informed debates over a ‘crisis’ in fatherhood, masculinity and the family during this period.<sup>492</sup> Sociologist A.H. Halsey noted, for example, in the 1991 Health and Welfare Unit Publication, *Families Without Fatherhood*, of the

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<sup>488</sup> Oechsle et al, *Fatherhood in Late Modernity*, p. 24.

<sup>489</sup> J. Scott and E. Clery, ‘Gender Roles: An Incomplete Revolution?’ in A. Park, C. Bryson, E. Clery, J. Curtice, M. Philips (eds.), *British Social Attitudes: the 30<sup>th</sup> Report* (London, 2013), p. 115.

<sup>490</sup> J. Wheelock, *Husbands at Home: The Domestic Economy in a Post-Industrial Society* (London, 1990); J. Warin, Y. Solomon, C. Lewis and W. Langford (eds.), *Fathers, Work and Family Life* (London, 1999); G. Ranson, ‘Men at Work: Change or No change in the era of the “New Father”’, *Men and Masculinities*, 4(1), (2001), pp. 3-26.

<sup>491</sup> Scott and Clery, ‘Gender Roles’, p. 115.

<sup>492</sup> See e.g. Gillis, ‘The Marginalisation of Fatherhood’; S. Lees, ‘Will boys be left on the shelf?’ in G. Jagger and C. Wright (eds.), *Changing Family Values* (London, 1999), pp. 59-76; L. McDowell, *Redundant Masculinities? Employment Change and White Working-Class Youth* (London, 2003).

‘emergence of a new type of young male...who is so weakly socialised and weakly socially controlled so far as the responsibilities of spousehood and fatherhood are concerned...he no longer feels the pressure his father, grandfather and previous generations of males felt to be a responsible adult in a functioning community.’<sup>493</sup>

Such competing conceptions of fatherhood suggest that economic provision is somehow distinct from ‘care’ or that financial provisioning and intimate father-child relationships are either/or options.<sup>494</sup> Restricting men’s fathering to either direct care of children or providing, however, fails to encompass the wide range of identities and behaviours which it entails, and simple classifications between ‘breadwinner’ and ‘involved’ fatherhood are, as demonstrated in the previous chapter, problematic. In comparison to care, however, little consideration has been given to the meanings of breadwinning.<sup>495</sup> Dermott, in particular, has challenged the construction of an ‘emotional-economic’ distinction, arguing financial provision is a basic and central component of parenthood, and that ‘the presence of money need not undermine the emotional basis of a personal relationship.’<sup>496</sup> Caring for someone may, on many occasions, involve providing financial support and breadwinning may exist as only one of multiple expressions from which men draw upon with respect to their fathering identity.

Sociological research has therefore revealed a complexity and plurality of fatherhoods and masculinities in relation to paid work in contemporary society. However, men’s roles as financial providers in the past were not fixed and clear cut. As Adrienne Burgess has noted, the reality of fathering ‘both is and was historically more complex, no doubt breadwinning fathers did and do nurture and nurturing fathers are and will be breadwinners.’<sup>497</sup> Historians have also challenged the perceived limited emotional involvement of fathers in the past, as well as shown that ‘breadwinner’ and ‘involved’ father were not mutually exclusive identities for men. Writing of twentieth century Scotland, Young has argued though the pressures of breadwinning could often limit fathers’ time with their families, it should not be taken as an indication of absence from family life, but rather evidence of presence as

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<sup>493</sup> N. Dennis and G. Erdos, *Families Without Fatherhood* (London, 1992), p. xiii.

<sup>494</sup> Dermott, *Intimate Fatherhood*.

<sup>495</sup> T. Warren, ‘Conceptualising Breadwinning Work’, *Work, Employment and Society*, 21(2), (2007), pp. 317-336.

<sup>496</sup> Dermott, *Intimate Fatherhood*, p. 25.

<sup>497</sup> Burgess quoted in Burghes et al, *Fathers and Fatherhood in Britain*, p. 88.

‘fatherhood linked the world of work to the family.’<sup>498</sup> Similarly, Lummis’ case study of East-Anglican Fishermen in the period 1890-1914, suggested that men’s long working hours were ‘not a rejection of fatherhood, but a necessary element of it’, while Strange has demonstrated the relationship between ‘love’ and ‘toil’ in her analysis of working-class fatherhood in the period between 1865 and the First World War. Arguing men’s work was an expression of attachment to the family, Strange maintains, ‘the good man’s desire to work for his dependents was inextricable from his affection for them’ and represented ‘a transcendental act of devotion.’<sup>499</sup> Finally, King has shown that in the first half of the twentieth century, providing for the family was a ‘proud and even enjoyable aspect of fatherhood’, and that there occurred shifts within the meaning of the breadwinner role. Provision extended from the inter-war period to include sweets, pocket money, and gifts in the wake of consumer culture and the mass media.<sup>500</sup>

Breadwinning has, nevertheless, retained somewhat negative connotations. As ‘traditional’ fathers of the past are popularly contrasted with ‘involved’ fathers of the present, they are inevitably deemed ‘uninvolved’ and financial provisioning is generally dismissed as being a valuable aspect of fathering. Furthermore, feminist critiques have long highlighted the male breadwinner model and men’s traditional roles as providers as being central to gender inequality.<sup>501</sup> Scottish historical narratives of working-class family life in particular, have focused upon ‘the dark side of breadwinning’, such as the shame of unemployment as well as the ways in which breadwinner status validated male power, authority and privilege in the home, providing entitlement to food and resources.<sup>502</sup>

This chapter will explore fathers’ retrospective narratives of work and family life in late twentieth century Scotland.<sup>503</sup> It begins by giving an overview of the significant changes that occurred in the experience and meaning of work during this period, particularly in relation to gender, as well as the political and cultural conceptions of the provider role. It then examines the relationship between fathers

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<sup>498</sup> Young, ‘Hard Man, New Man’, p. 78.

<sup>499</sup> Lummis, ‘The Historical Dimension of Fatherhood’, p. 56; Strange, *Fatherhood and the British Working Class*, p. 21.

<sup>500</sup> King, *Family Men*, p. 19.

<sup>501</sup> See e.g. A. Oakley, *Housewife* (London, 1974); Segal, *Slow Motion*.

<sup>502</sup> Strange, *Fatherhood and the British Working Class*, p. 23. See e.g. McIvor, ‘Gender Apartheid?’

<sup>503</sup> Though a significant feature of the late twentieth century, this chapter does not explore unemployment in great detail. Among my small cohort of interviewees, few discussed this.

and work as well as when and how financial provision was reflected upon as a component of 'good' fathering and masculinity. It will argue that while elements of breadwinning ideology and behaviours were disrupted, providing continued to be a central feature of fatherhood and of interviewees' fathering identities, both as an economic necessity and as an expression of paternal love. While a significant body of work exists exploring men's working lives and work cultures in Scotland, this chapter provides insight into how Scottish fathers fulfilled their roles within work and the family and the relationship between them.<sup>504</sup> The oral testimonies reveal that enduring stereotypes of fathers as mere economic providers conceal the complex experiences, emotions and activities of this act.

### ***Working lives***

The second half of the twentieth century was one in which the experience and meaning of work changed significantly. More women entered the paid workforce as the service sector grew, while industry and manufacturing, traditionally male dominated sectors, declined. As a result, men and women's participation in the labour market converged considerably, with the greatest shift in more women and fewer men working occurring in the period between 1971 and 1991.<sup>505</sup> Since 1993, women in Scotland have constituted half of the labour force, an increase of 42% from 1976, and the gap between men and women's employment rates decreased from 20% in 1984 to 5% in 2006.<sup>506</sup> These trends challenged the notion that men alone should be engaged in the labour market, that fathers alone should be responsible for the financial provisioning of the family and that the work carried out by women was of lesser value.

A number of factors contributed to the changing gender composition of the paid workforce. Second-wave feminism challenged the unequal status of women at both work and home, and the 1970 Equal Pay Act, 1975 Sex Discrimination Act, and 1975 Employment Protection Act prohibited, for example, unequal pay for the same work and made it illegal to dismiss a woman due to pregnancy. Figure 3.1 indicates

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<sup>504</sup> A. McIvor and R. Johnston, 'Voices from the Pits: Health and Safety in Scottish Coal Mining Since 1945', *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies*, 22(2), (2002), pp. 111-133; Chand, *Masculinities on Clydeside*; Wight, *Workers, Not Wasters*.

<sup>505</sup> Office for National Statistics, 'Women in the Labour Market' (2013), [www.ons.gov.uk](http://www.ons.gov.uk), accessed 14 Oct 2015, p. 2

<sup>506</sup> Scottish Executive, *A Gender Audit of Statistics*, p. 103.

that in Scotland the proportion of married women in paid work increased from 23.4% to 60.4% between 1951 and 1991.<sup>507</sup> In the UK as a whole, the proportion of married women with a pre-school child also increased from 27% in 1973 to 52% in 1994.<sup>508</sup> Such trends led to the creation of the dual-earner family as a significant norm. The *General Household Survey* in 1995, for example, found both partners were working in 62% of British married couples of working age with dependent children.<sup>509</sup> For most families, the division based on the husband/father as breadwinner and wife as a financially dependent, full-time housewife and mother no longer readily accorded with reality, except for a short period in the family cycle, namely early parenthood. In most, both mother and father were likely to be employed outside of the home.<sup>510</sup>

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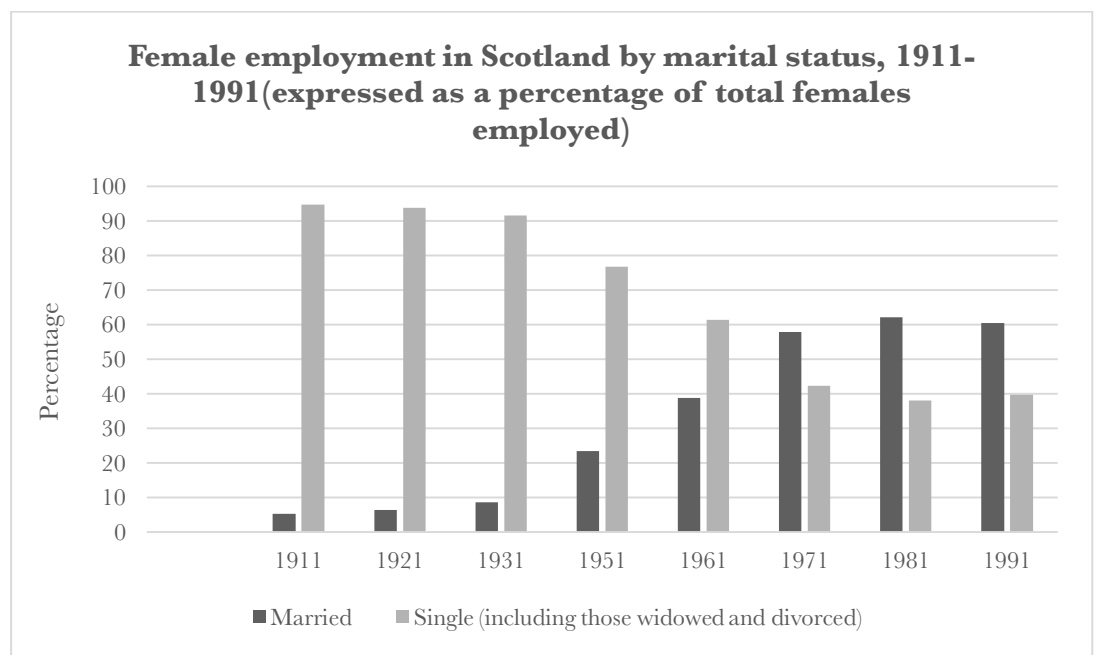
<sup>507</sup> McIvor, 'Women and Gender relations', p. 175.

<sup>508</sup> Creighton, 'The Rise and Decline of the Male Breadwinner Family', p. 526.

<sup>509</sup> Burghes et al, *Fathers and Fatherhood in Britain*, p. 46.

<sup>510</sup> D. Gowler and K. Legge, 'Dual-Worker Families' in R.N. Rapoport, M.P. Fogarty and R. Rapoport (eds.), *Families in Britain* (London, Routledge, 1982), pp. 138-158.

**Figure 3.1**



Source: McIvor, 'Women and Gender relations', p. 175. Data sourced from Census of Scotland, 1911-1991. 'Single' includes those widowed and divorced.

My own interviewees reflected on the changing position of women in employment, both over their own lifetime and that of their children. As one of them commented of the early 1970s, 'there was no such thing as the glass ceiling, it hadn't even been invented then.'<sup>511</sup> Alistair, born in 1949, for example, noted the presence and status of women in employment at the beginning and end of his career within the Civil Service. Reflecting on his daughter's paid work, he remarked that her identity as a 'career woman' is not incompatible with her role as a mother in the same way it might still have been when Alistair himself became a father for the first time in 1974. As he notes, 'I probably thought that I was responsible for the financial well-being of the family, I don't think that my son in law has that same thought':

[Daughter's] career's definitely more important than just...it's not secondary [...] she's definitely a career woman and that's quite common, this isn't "aw what do you do for pin money?" "Aw I just run this global operation." [...] When I started in the Revenue... the number of woman managers, you could count on your fingers on the one hand. Yet when I left, the chain above were all women, all the way up.<sup>512</sup>

<sup>511</sup> [SOHCA/054/21] McSherry.

<sup>512</sup> [SOHCA/054/06] 'Alistair.'



Alistair's narrative of change over time highlights that one of the most significant changes is not necessarily the employment of women, but the increased employment of married women and mothers and its impact upon the rigid demarcation of parenting roles within the home. Pat, born in 1956, noted of his childhood: 'I cannae remember any of the wumman up our close who actually had a job. Young women worked but the mothers tended not to work.' Now, he notes, 'you simply can't say, "Well, it's women's job to do this, and it's my job to do that. I'm the breadwinner, and she looks after the kids." Well, increasingly, the woman is the breadwinner as well, joint breadwinner, the sole breadwinner.'<sup>513</sup> By 1994, British mothers in employment outnumbered those who did not work.<sup>514</sup>

The changing composition of the labour market can also be attributed to the shift from industry and manufacturing to services. In the first half of the twentieth century, working in manual labour such as the heavy industries of coal mining, iron and steel manufacture, engineering and shipbuilding, as well as the ability to earn a wage for one's family, were, as noted, central to definitions of working-class male identity. Masculinities were formed within and through these industrial work cultures. McIvor and Johnston have employed oral testimonies to argue that some workers interpreted strength and the ability to overcome the inherently dangerous and risky nature of work in the heavy industries as a direct display of manhood, while David Walker has suggested that men did not seek out or accept such unsafe work conditions to demonstrate machismo, but were forced to sell their labour regardless.<sup>515</sup>

From the second half of the twentieth century, however, industrial decline was profound, particularly in Scotland. The workforce in shipbuilding and marine engineering, for example, declined from 77,070 in 1950 to 41,000 in 1978, reaching a low of 14,000 in 1991. The service sector, on the other hand, grew significantly over this period and by 1981, employed 72% of Glasgow's workforce.<sup>516</sup> The restructuring of the Scottish economy, as well as wider changes to welfare and education, resulted in both continuity and change in the types of work undertaken by working-class men, and also impacted upon the masculinities forged within these workplaces. Those I

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<sup>513</sup> [SOHCA/054/11] Clark.

<sup>514</sup> J. Brannen and P. Moss, 'The Polarisation and Intensification of Parental Employment in Britain: Consequences for Children, Families and the Community', *Community, Work and Family*, 1(3), (1998), p. 231.

<sup>515</sup> See e.g. Johnston and McIvor, 'Dangerous Work, Hard Men and Broken Bodies'; *Miners Lung*; Wight, *Workers, Not Wasters*; Walker, 'Danger was something you were brought up wi.'

<sup>516</sup> Knox, *Industrial Nation*, pp. 255-256.

interviewed undertook a variety of jobs, both as a group and as individuals. Some worked within the same company or profession their entire working lives, while others changed jobs regularly. Labour market shifts also meant the opportunities to enter professional or semi-professional employment expanded to an ‘unprecedented extent.’<sup>517</sup> Very few undertook the same or similar occupational roles as their fathers and many experienced upward social mobility throughout their lifetime, through home ownership, higher education and job progression.

These diverse working lives were reflected within men’s work narratives. Charlie, a family support worker, noted his entry into the shipyards was a ‘foregone conclusion’ when he left school in 1967, while Pat, a welfare rights officer, similarly recalled of Greenock in the 1970s: ‘school gates opened on Friday and everybody booted out and I went to a ship yard on the Monday. It's just what you did.’<sup>518</sup> Both men entered into the same yards as their fathers. On other hand, Frank, a retired P.E teacher, described himself as a ‘guinea pig’ for the post-war education system.<sup>519</sup> One of the schools where Frank taught was built upon the site of a pit in which his father, a miner, had worked, while Ken described his father’s working conditions in a welding yard as ‘prehistoric’ in comparison to his own apprenticeship at Rolls Royce in the 1960s:

I remember in the aftermath of his death going over to Howdens and I was amazed. I mean it’s giant sheds, the fan shop and all of that, heavy industry, they are making systems for ships, boiler houses you know, it’s rusty and it’s drafty [...] cause I remember prior to that...my father came over for the open day [at Rolls Royce] and he was amazed...all our machine shop areas were all painted red floors with white piping around them and wee flower pots and all this sorta stuff and he was...it was alien to him, you could see that whole time shift taking place and he commented...it musta looked space age to him [...] And when I saw where he worked, and his environment for that one time, it was really quite alien I said “my god” [...] the contrast couldn’t have been more marked.<sup>520</sup>

By the mid-1980s, the new electrical and electronic industries were employing more than double the numbers in steel, coal and shipbuilding in Scotland, and by the 1990s, manufacturing and mining together accounted for less than 20% of the Scottish labour

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<sup>517</sup> Lannelli and Paterson, ‘Social Mobility in Scotland’, p. 523.

<sup>518</sup> [SOHCA/054/18] McKay; [SOHCA/054/11] Clark.

<sup>519</sup> [SOHCA/054/25] Fleming.

<sup>520</sup> [SOHCA/054/07] Doran.

force.<sup>521</sup> The decline in manual work was seen to be particularly significant among my interviewees, who associated industrial decline with shifting masculinities and fatherhoods. While Charlie, born in 1952, noted that deindustrialisation had significantly undermined the rigid division of labour, ‘the dad was seen as the provider, he went out and worked and provided and the mum stayed at home and looked after the kids and done all the chores [...] Those days kinda died when the shipyards shut’, Joseph, the son of a miner, reflected on the implications of changing work for conceptions of manhood based upon manual labour.<sup>522</sup> Born in 1949, his testimony highlights the way in which the growth of services and job insecurity significantly undermined the connection between ‘hard’ physical labour and a ‘hard’ working-class masculinity:

The disappearance of the hard industries, the heavy industries, and the disappearance of the certainty of work and people having to accept work. I remember myself being quite shocked up at Tesco and seeing a guy working on a checkout for the first time, my experience up till then had always been girls working on checkouts...and I thought Oh! Now it’s common place, you don’t think anything of it, but I think that’s helped people as well, it’s tempered the attitude up here, because people realise work is work...and *just cause you’re no working in heavy industry you can still be a man*, you know. And I think things have changed quite dramatically, I mean you see it all around you now, don’t you?<sup>523</sup>

As a stay-at-home lone father who spent almost a decade caring for his three daughters following marital separation, these changes were viewed positively by Joseph, who struggled to re-enter the male-dominated, often misogynistic work culture of the coal industry in the mid-1990s. Deindustrialisation during this period did, moreover, lead to a decrease in opportunities for male employment, and as Joseph highlighted, undermined ‘the certainty of work.’ Mass and long-term unemployment grew from the 1970s onwards, with heavy industrial areas experiencing the highest rates. The 2001 census, for example, found that while the unemployment rate across Scotland was 7%, West-Central Scotland experienced male unemployment rates of between 10 and 14%.<sup>524</sup>

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<sup>521</sup> Foster, ‘Class’, p. 231.

<sup>522</sup> [SOHCA/054/18] McKay.

<sup>523</sup> [SOHCA/054/02] ‘Joseph.’

<sup>524</sup> Young ‘Being a Man’, p. 132.

Despite the significant transformation in the nature of employment across the twentieth century, there remained important differences in the working lives of men and women. In particular, women's continued responsibility for care within the home continued to impact on labour participation outside of the home and vice versa. Much of the growth in female employment was in part-time work, while the great majority of male employment remained full-time. In 1981, the proportion of female jobs that were part-time was 41% compared to only 7% of male workers, and in the early 1990s, around 90% of part-time workers in Scotland were female.<sup>525</sup> Almost all of my interviewees' partners returned to work at some stage, and while this income, as will be demonstrated, was often vital to the economic provisioning of the family, their roles as wives and mothers often continued to define the nature of work they were able to or wanted to take.

Parenthood and the presence of dependent children therefore continued to have a significant impact on the type and nature of work undertaken by men and women. In the early 1990s, for example, British fathers worked the longest average weekly hours in Europe, while mothers worked the second lowest.<sup>526</sup> Aside from strong cultural expectations surrounding working and caring, men's higher earnings provided a continued economic rationale for men to work full-time while women negotiated career breaks, reduced hours or left the labour market altogether for childcare. These trends remained significant in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, and in contemporary society. The Scottish Executive *Gender Audit of Statistics: Comparing the Position of Women and Men in Scotland* (2007) found the employment rates for fathers in Scotland were significantly higher than the average male employment rates, while the employment rates of mothers were lower than average female employment rates.<sup>527</sup>

Whilst such statistical profiles are highly valuable, they do not highlight the social structures and discourses which influence notions of 'appropriate' gender roles, and which have a significant impact on the expectations and choices available to parents. Britain strongly adhered to a male breadwinner model.<sup>528</sup> Despite shifting understandings, expectations and practices surrounding parenting from the 1970s onwards, fathers' responsibility as defined in policy was still largely directed towards

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<sup>525</sup> A. McIvor, *Working Lives: Work in Britain since 1945* (Basingstoke, 2013), p. 23; Cooke et al, *Modern Scottish History*, p. 177.

<sup>526</sup> Burghes et al, *Fathers and Fatherhood in Britain*, p. 44; Moss, *Father Figures*, p. XIII.

<sup>527</sup> Scottish Executive, *A Gender Audit of Statistics*, p. 112.

<sup>528</sup> Lewis, 'The Decline of the Male Breadwinner Model.'

economic provision, ideologically the male-breadwinner female-homemaker model remained powerful, and policies did little to accommodate the changing reality of working and family lives. Successive Conservative Governments during this period were reluctant to help mothers in combining paid and unpaid work, and did nothing to promote the involvement of fathers in the care of their children.<sup>529</sup> As demonstrated in Chapter One, there was little serious discussion, recognition or structural support by the British Government of ways to enable fathers to better reconcile their work and family commitments or take on a more active caring role, particularly when paternity and parental leave emerged as a social policy issue.<sup>530</sup>

Fathers' financial responsibility, alongside fears that they were failing or unwilling to fulfil this responsibility, were, moreover, emphasised by the Child Support Act 1991, which required all non-resident parents, in the majority of cases, fathers, to financially support their biological children. In 1990, Conservative MP Teresa Gorman, for example, argued for the need for such legislation; the welfare state was allowing 'men to walk away from their responsibilities, because they assume that...the Government and the taxpayer will pick up the bill.'<sup>531</sup> The anxiety expressed over some fathers' failure to provide, explored further in Chapter Six, was not therefore matched with concerns about their failure or inability to engage in practical caring.<sup>532</sup>

Even as mothers' working became more prevalent, there was still widespread political, and to an extent, public opposition to the employment of mothers of children under school age. Terms such as 'working mothers' but not 'working fathers' and concerns over the effects of maternal employment on child development but not of paternal employment, undermined the developing notion that men and women were equally competent in both work and childcare, or that parenting roles were growing increasingly interchangeable. Conservative Secretary of State for Social Services, Patrick Jenkin, claimed in 1981 that 'quite frankly' mothers did not have 'the same right to work as fathers': 'if the good Lord had intended us to have equal rights to go out to work...he really would not have created men and women. These are biological facts.'<sup>533</sup> Only following the arrival of New Labour in 1997 did the British

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<sup>529</sup> Lewis, 'The Problem of Fathers.'

<sup>530</sup> Moss, *Father Figures*; Burgess and Buxton, *Men and their Children*; Bell et al, *Fathers, Childbirth and Work*.

<sup>531</sup> Hansard, Child Maintenance (HL 29 October 1990 vol 522 cc1695-7081695).

<sup>532</sup> A. Braun, C. Vincent and S. Bell, 'Working-class fathers and childcare: the economic and family contexts of fathering the UK', *Community, Work and Family*, 14(1), (2011), pp. 19-37; Dermott, *Intimate Fatherhood*, p. 17.

<sup>533</sup> Hansard, Women's Rights (1981).

Government begin introducing policies intended to support an ‘adult-worker’ model, with the then Prime Minister Tony Blair arguing that ‘the welfare state based around the male breadwinner’ was ‘increasingly out of date.’<sup>534</sup> Overall, dominant political discourses during the late twentieth century showed significant continuity in the belief that fathers were, first and foremost, financially responsible for the family. Such gender ideologies were powerful, regardless of the everyday reality and complexity of fathering and family life, which the next section explores.

### ***Meanings of Breadwinning***

Financial relationships are a necessary part of family life and work was undoubtedly important to my interviewees, both as men and as fathers. Most were pushed by economic necessity to be primary wage earners upon becoming a parent when their partners gave up employment or temporarily left the labour market to care for children. It was also largely their expectation and desire to do so, and this division of labour was very much taken for granted; fatherhood confirmed their engagement in paid work. As demonstrated in Chapter One, assuming responsibility for the family’s financial wellbeing was therefore cited as one of the key changes upon becoming a father among interviewees, who reflected that work took on new meaning following the birth of a child. Ian, born in 1958, spoke for many interviewees when he described the financial changes experienced during early parenthood: ‘your wife’s just stopped working so that wage isn’t coming in anymore, you’re living on one wage and you’ve got more outgoings so it’s a double whammy.’<sup>535</sup> Ian began an electrical apprenticeship with BT in 1974 at the age of sixteen where he continues to work. He married in 1980 at the age of twenty-two and has two children, born in 1984 and 1986. He reflected that despite shifting notions of gender roles during this period, parenting roles of primary provider and carer persisted, ‘it was expected that mum would stop working when your kids were born.’<sup>536</sup>

Early parenthood therefore marked a significant turning point for the family practically, financially and emotionally. The role of sole financial provider could be a

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<sup>534</sup> See e.g. P. Moss and J. Brannen, ‘Fathers and Employment’ in C. Lewis and M. O’Brien (eds.), *Reassessing Fatherhood: New Observations on Fathers and the Modern Family* (London, 1987), pp. 36-53; Tony Blair quoted in Lewis, ‘The Decline of the Male Breadwinner Model’, p. 158.

<sup>535</sup> [SOHCA/054/04] Robb.

<sup>536</sup> [SOHCA/054/04] Robb.

source of pressure, anxiety and worry for men, both before and after children were born. David, born in 1956, recalls feeling the weight of the financial responsibilities of fatherhood during the pregnancy: ‘we had very little money, we only had the money that I was earning coming in [...] So I remember feeling very happy but also very concerned and worried about how we would manage and I was right to be concerned [laughs].’<sup>537</sup> He became a father at twenty-three in 1979, and recalls early parenthood as being ‘financially very difficult’: ‘I remember not having enough money sometimes to pay things and you just sat and worried all the time, the children were fine, they were snoring away in bed but it’s hard, hard times but you were always desperate to get more money.’ The testimony of Gerry, one of the youngest interviewees, born in 1967, highlights the remarkable continuity of these pressures. Having only been married three months before his wife fell pregnant at the age of twenty-two, Gerry, a mechanic, became a father for the first time in 1990:

We were down to one wage so it really threw us into financial difficulty. We struggled by which meant that I...luckily I was working, and I could get a lot of overtime but it meant then that I was spending a lot of time at work and no in the house you know? So there was a lot pressure on ye that way, ye had tae make sure you had a wage in to pay the bills first of all and then to feed the two of them so [...] It was quite hard but ye never gave it a second thought because you were happy of the extra money, any overtime that was offered, you took. Aw you seen was... “that’ll pay next week’s nappies or next week’s mortgage” cause I can remember there was weeks when we had like six pound left after we’d paid everything and that was to pay the nappies, the formula you know, really, really hard.<sup>538</sup>

Gerry’s commitment to work during this period as sole financial provider was framed as being for ‘survival’ and working *for* his family, though this meant he was sometimes unable to spend time *with* them: ‘there was times were I was oot more than I was in.’<sup>539</sup> He recalled one winter in which he worked continuously from the 23<sup>rd</sup> of December to the 10<sup>th</sup> of January and slept in the yard when on call to grit roads, missing Christmas. Many of the fathers I interviewed also noted taking on overtime or an additional job in order to maximise their income for their families. David made calendars and framed prints outside of his job as an engineer, ‘just to get some more

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<sup>537</sup> [SOHCA/054/01] Walker.

<sup>538</sup> [SOHCA/054/22] Farrell.

<sup>539</sup> [SOHCA/054/22] Farrell.

money.<sup>540</sup> Joe, an ironmonger, similarly made and sold crafts and ornaments, ‘anything I could put my hand tae, I done. Didnae make a great wage.’<sup>541</sup> Frank F, Tam and John D all took on second jobs too. As will be explored further, men’s attempts to negotiate their work and family responsibilities could assume somewhat of a ‘juggling act.’

Paid work could be an economic necessity for many mothers, as interviewees recalled their inability to provide solely. John, a retired engineer, was born in 1947. When his wife Louisa was six months pregnant with their first child in 1969, her employment was terminated. He recalls ‘we’d be dependent on my salary and I had at least a steady job although it wasn’t a particularly high paying job so we knew we’d be okay so finances wasn’t really an issue.’<sup>542</sup> The unproblematic nature of the breadwinner-homemaker model of the early 1970s however, was challenged after the birth of their second child in 1973, which coincided with extremely high mortgage rates and an additional mouth to feed. Louisa began working part-time night shifts around looking after the children as the family were ‘actually struggling to live’ and they eventually sold the family home.<sup>543</sup>

Alistair similarly recalls that his wife began working part-time due to high inflation during this period, ‘she decided, wanted, well would need to go back, we needed the money...we struggled’ and David, a retired engineer, born in 1941, noted that when he and his wife adopted a daughter and son in the early 1980s, ‘there were times when I would come home and she would have a shift to go to...and then I would run her to where she was working. In the morning, the kids in their pyjamas with dressing gowns, in the back of the car, go and pick their mum up, bring them home, then I would go to work.’<sup>544</sup> John D, a bin lorry driver born in 1959, placed significant emphasis on the joint effort of providing. He and his wife married and had their son in 1977 at the ages of sixteen and seventeen; they were often ‘like passing ships’: ‘we’ve always worked hard, the two of us. At one time when John was growing up we had four jobs, just tae try and make a better life for him.’<sup>545</sup>

A number of my interviewees also recalled periods in which their partners were the primary breadwinners, however such occasions often referred to the period either

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<sup>540</sup> [SOHCA/054/01] Walker.

<sup>541</sup> [SOHCA/054/23] Farrell.

<sup>542</sup> [SOHCA/054/21] McSherry.

<sup>543</sup> [SOHCA/054/21] McSherry.

<sup>544</sup> [SOHCA/054/06] ‘Alistair’; [SOHCA/054/20] Littlejohn.

<sup>545</sup> [SOHCA/054/17] Duffy.



before or after dependent children. While Kenneth's wife earned twice his salary when they were first married in the early 1970s, Pat's wife was also the main breadwinner in the early 1980s whilst he was student and 'househusband' having left the shipyards.<sup>546</sup> Since returning to college to become a social worker in the 1980s, Charlie's wife has been the main breadwinner: 'money's never been a factor in our marriage, who earns what. As long as we have enough to get by and it doesn't matter who earned it...what we had was ours.'<sup>547</sup> Narratives of shared provision for the family therefore emphasised equality and intimacy and were emphasised by factors such as shared bank accounts and home ownership as well as shared decision-making about such resources.

These oral testimonies indicate how crucial women's earnings often were to the family income and the way in which the employment of mothers was a significant component in the disruption of *sole* male breadwinning. They also highlight the contradictions and tensions between discourses surrounding gender roles and the reality for many men and their families. Patrick's conceptions of fathering and its associated responsibilities of provision, for example, did not necessarily connect with his lived experiences. Born in 1949 and becoming a father for the first time in 1974, he believed that the main role of the father and husband rested on economic provision. When Patrick married in 1968 at the age of nineteen, however, he was an engineering student, while his wife, two years his senior, was working: 'it's difficult to say that I thought I should provide everything because I couldn't provide everything, I know that my wife...was you know, it was imbalanced, she probably provided a lot more initially and eventually, a lot more than me, I was just the donkey if you like [laughs].'<sup>548</sup>

Men's employment and their economic role in the family continued to be given priority, however, and women's paid work was impacted by the arrival of dependent children. As indicated in Chapter One, traditional divisions tend to be asserted in parenthood. Many interviewees commented, for example, upon their partner's 'handy' employment, which fitted in with the children's schedule and care arrangements, a finding also uncovered by sociological research. A study of *Caring and Providing* in Scotland in the mid-1990s found that while women reported considerable involvement from their partners, they also indicated a strong sense of overall

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<sup>546</sup> [SOHCA/054/26] Paul; [SOHCA/054/11] Clark.

<sup>547</sup> [SOHCA/054/18] McKay.

<sup>548</sup> [SOHCA/054/09] Corrigan.

responsibility for the management and co-ordination of domestic and family life.<sup>549</sup> The need for flexibility in paid work pervaded accounts; jobs were often sought and kept because of how they could be fitted in around childcare.

Just as fathering changes over the life course, so too can the meanings attached to breadwinning and financial provisioning. As children grew older, men progressed in their careers or increased their income level, and some mothers re-entered paid work, the desire to provide financially was remembered not necessarily as a 'need' but also as aspirational. David, who had remembered early parenthood as a financial struggle, reflected that circumstances and desires shifted upon progressing from an engineer fitter to an advertising and publicity assistant within the transport sector. His narrative highlights the way in which providing was inherently linked to the strong aspirations many fathers had for their children:

It's a practical thing, you fall back on it, you've got to go and earn money...you've just got to do it. I'd quite like to [have] spent more time with them when they were young but didn't, I had to spend a lot of time working and getting money in so that they could have the things we wanted them to have cause every parent I think wants to give them a bit more than what you've had. We were well looked after as children but we wanted to give our children things we didn't really have, we wanted to go abroad for example, for a holiday, we wanted to have a car...we wanted to give them nice clothing [laughs] [...] we wanted to give more for our children...then that just got better as the years went by.<sup>550</sup>

The desire for higher standards of living, holidays and 'better things', associated with a further growth in consumerism during this period, could also come from children, particularly teenagers. Tam's memories highlight the reciprocity of this process. Born in 1956, he remembers that 'we aspired for them': 'I want ma kids to be better than me, better aff than me', but he also commented upon his children's role in driving these expectations: 'ma kids were fine tae they were aboot twelve and then they'd start getting a bit conscious of, "well I need to get ma hair done like that" and [so and so's] got this lovely jacket.'<sup>551</sup> Tam has three daughters, born in 1986, 1988 and 1991. Jo Warin et al's study in the 1980s likewise found that the role of provider, seen to be a central component of fathering by working-class participants, was intensified by living

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<sup>549</sup> K. Backett-Milburn, S. Cunningham-Burley and D. Kemmer, *Caring and Providing: Lone and Partnered Working Mothers in Scotland* (London, 2001), p. 26.

<sup>550</sup> [SOHCA/054/01] Walker.

<sup>551</sup> [SOHCA/054/10] McGrail.

in a consumer culture, in which teenagers expected their parents to ‘come up with the goods’, regardless of their income.<sup>552</sup>

Overall, interviewees’ retrospective narratives of work and family life do not give the impression that conceptions and practices of fatherhood were radically shifting away from ‘breadwinning’ during the late twentieth century. Despite notions of generational change, from ‘breadwinner’ to ‘involved’ father and of the apparent contrasts between these two constructions of fatherhood, for many interviewees, the motivation to be ‘good’ father often equated with or involved being a ‘good’ provider. A desire to ‘be there’ did not necessarily undermine attachment to the labour market, but strengthened it, as the household lost a wage on the arrival of children. The period of early parenthood was, for many families, often the only stage in the life-cycle when men were sole providers, and this was largely remembered as being a difficult and worrying element of fathering. What comes across very strongly within these recorded memories, nevertheless, is the sense of duty these men felt to ensure they provided and the new meaning derived from employment when they became fathers. The following section explores further the emotional significance providing could have for fathers.

### ***Financial Provision and Emotion***

Although intimacy and practical care were believed to becoming more central to notions of fatherhood from the late twentieth century, shifting away from financial provisioning, these elements were neither separate nor competing. Despite often presented as either/or options, and as ‘traditional’ or ‘new’, both breadwinning and involvement were not distinct.<sup>553</sup> As Warin et al argued, ‘for many men, it may be almost impossible to separate their desire to be a loving, caring, “involved” father from their desire to provide.’<sup>554</sup> Many of the fathers in their study experienced the breadwinner role at an emotional level, and the act of providing could give meaning to jobs which were, in many ways, unsatisfactory or undesirable.<sup>555</sup> For my own interviewees, providing was also used as a means of actively demonstrating parental affection, love and care. Gerry, for example, noted that while he does not verbally

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<sup>552</sup> Warin et al, *Fathers, Work and Family Life*, p. 22.

<sup>553</sup> Dermott, *Intimate Fatherhood*.

<sup>554</sup> Ibid.

<sup>555</sup> Ibid, p. 23.

express the love he feels for his two sons, he believes that he shows this emotion by providing, in various ways. Though his oldest son no longer lives in the family home, they continue to ‘help him out’ so he is able to undertake a photography course. As Gerry comments, ‘that’s why providing’s important because you want to gie your kids a great chance’:

I couldnae tell ye the last time I telt any of ma two boys I loved them do you know that? It’s just no a phrase I use to them. I do love them but they would probably be quite shocked if I said it to them, I think but again, I don’t feel it’s a term I need to use wae them to feel it, ye show it other ways by gieing them praise and providing for them. Making sure if they lift the phone, you’re there for them and help them out and everything [...] and I usually answer the phone to him [oldest son] now wae no “hi, how are you?”, it’s “how much?” But I’m glad to see he’s doing well at it and he seems to manage okay but we still have to help him out but that doesn’t bother me cause I’d rather do that and see him doing what he wants to do than saying “naw we cannae help ye out. You’ll need to go and get a job and forget uni.”<sup>556</sup>

Gerry’s narrative was indicative of many other interviewees, particularly in relation to gift-giving, aiding children’s futures and the importance of continuing financial, practical and emotional support to adult children. Furthermore, many similarly noted this support was something they had experienced from their own parents. For Gerry, the connections between financial provisioning and love were linked to his own childhood. With six siblings, he recalled the financial struggle his parents often endured, and highlighted Christmas as a specific example of this, ‘we never wanted for anything...but they must have spent the whole of that next year paying them off...and I think that shows how they love you.’<sup>557</sup>

The significant relationship between providing and men’s desire to be loving, caring, ‘involved’ fathers is also powerfully highlighted by Charlie, and in particular, his memories of being an adoptive father. He has two daughters born in 1976 and 1978, and two adopted daughters, sisters born in 1989 and 1991. For Charlie, indulging financially was a way in which to compensate for the early life experiences of his adopted children, as well as perhaps the ‘different kind of bond’ he felt as a father:

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<sup>556</sup> [SOHCA/054/22] Farrell.

<sup>557</sup> [SOHCA/054/22] Farrell.

I think it's a different kind of bond [pause] Love is a kinda funny word to me [pause] how can I explain it? Having adopted children and your own children is different. There is a difference there and no amount of love or anything can persuade me to think it's no different. I care for them as much, I probably treat them better than my other kids financially and things like that. Indulged them maybe a wee bit more. Protected them more. If ma older girls wanted something they would get so much money, like if they wanted £60 trainers, well I would give them £30 and they got the other £30 and things like that, whereas with the two youngest, ye never done that. And the oldest ones were like "why ye not dain that?" and ye kinda made excuses cause the life they had as babies, ye didnae want them to be picked on again so ye kinda over compensated sometimes wae that.<sup>558</sup>

The emotional importance of providing financially was also particularly evident when fathers could not do so. Some men, for example, those without jobs, on a low income or of ill health, were particularly vulnerable of being viewed by themselves and others as failing to be 'good' fathers due to the continued prioritisation and emphasis on the encomic function of male parenting.<sup>559</sup> Unemployment or the inability to provide effectively could also significantly undermine men's masculine identities.<sup>560</sup> Gerry remembers feeling at times, 'less of a man' during early parenthood in the early 1990s, whilst working in a garage. His narrative below highlights both public and private representations of the masculine self, and the way in which it was not enough to be the financial provider, but that it was important to be a 'good' provider:

There was times where the guys were saying "right Friday night, you coming oot to the club n that?" You'd say "well naw", "how no? she no let you oot?" you know but it was cause you hudnae the money but you didnae want to say "well naw guys cause I've only got three quid to feed the family" because then you didnae feel...*you felt less of a man*. So you were just making excuses so there was a lot of that kinda stuff as well because you felt you were defending yourself aw the time or making excuses no to be 'one of the lads' as it was in that environment.<sup>561</sup>

Frank, born in 1957, similarly noted that being unemployed or redundant was not 'respectable' or 'a good place to be' during this period.<sup>562</sup> Married in 1979, he experienced two periods of redundancy when his sons, born in 1984 and 1987, were young. Though he increased the time spent on practical childcare and housework;

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<sup>558</sup> [SOHCA/054/18] McKay.

<sup>559</sup> Braun et al, 'Working-class Fathers and Childcare'

<sup>560</sup> Warin et al, *Fathers, Work and Family Life*, p. 9.

<sup>561</sup> [SOHCA/054/22] Farrell.

<sup>562</sup> [SOHCA/054/16] McGeoghegan.

being out of work did affect Frank: 'I ended up cleaning the house every day, I started losing...well no losing it a wee bit, but it was kinda odd [...] Both times I'd always had enough money to see us by, it wasn't a case I never had any cash for it so it was okay.' Frank attains composure by emphasising that despite being unemployed temporarily, the family were still successfully provided for. Such resources, however, did not necessarily allow for treats or gifts which, as has been shown, held significant resonance with fathers:

The time I found it hardest to say no [to treats etc.] was when I was unemployed. When I didn't have the money I found it hard to say "no you can't have this" which seems a bit...cause I had a great reason for not being able to do it then, but when I could have afforded it, I wouldn't unless it was either deserved or if I thought it was reasonable [...] Like one stupid day, the oldest one came in and told me it was so unfair that he was the only boy in his class that hadn't been on an aeroplane so once I stopped laughing...I had no problem with that but maybe if he had said it to me when I was unemployed I might have thought differently about it.<sup>563</sup>

It is important to recognise that financial provisioning did not necessarily have the same emotional significance for children as it did for fathers. As the previous chapter highlighted, despite fulfilling popular conceptions of 'good' fatherhood by providing, some interviewees felt their fathers had been physically and emotionally distant due to their long working hours. Many noted wanting to avoid doing the same when they had children, emphasising the popular assumption that men were becoming 'more' involved in family life.<sup>564</sup> As the next section explores, however, the need and desire to provide financially could result in significant tensions between family and work for some men.

### ***Juggling Act'?***

While fathering continued to be organised around paid work, family responsibilities did affect men's working lives. Their relationship to paid work and their breadwinning identities and practices were also complex, as seen in the pressure, anxiety and worry, as well as the status, pride and emotional significance derived from financial provision. David L, for example, remembers of the early 1980s: 'I used to get off the train at night,

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<sup>563</sup> [SOHCA/054/16] McGeoghegan.

<sup>564</sup> Warin et al, *Fathers, Work and Family Life*, p. 14.

after work, and I used to run from the train station to the house. I suppose people wondered what was wrong, it was just get into your house to see this wee one.’<sup>565</sup> Ian, moreover, spoke for many of the men I interviewed when he noted ‘the financial responsibility was mine cause I was the breadwinner, I was the guy that was out making whatever money it was at the time [...] then that itself comes wae its double-edged sword’:

You get offered a Saturday’s over time, do I work it cause the money would be nice or do I refuse it cause I want to spend more time with my family? So that is always a juggling act, I think every family will have that issue. If you get offered a promotion even with more hours or less structured hours, do you take it? I’ve been there for probably most of those things.<sup>566</sup>

Ian’s narrative of fathering highlights that while the state failed to acknowledge work-family balance as an issue for fathers, it did cause considerable tension for some men during this period. Ian, for example, made the conscious decision to change to a shift job because it enabled him to spend more time at home: ‘I was getting asked to do more and more overtime and my work-life balance was going the wrong way that I wanted it to be’ and ‘the kids werenae seeing me.’ So while financial responsibility belonged to fathers, they also made conscious and informed choices about work and career in attempts to balance ‘time’ with ‘finance’: ‘it’s a juggling act, you need the money but you want the time, you need the time but you want the money.’<sup>567</sup>

Frank also made the conscious decision to change his employment. He recalled a particularly poignant memory in which he realised that his self-employed work as a joiner was preventing him from developing a close relationship with his son: ‘I suddenly realised that I didn’t really know my oldest son very well.’<sup>568</sup> Like many other couples during this period, their early married and family life coincided with high mortgage rates, and so as Frank recalls ‘you were scraping to find cash’ and ‘at that time that’s just the way it was. If you wanted to bring money in, you had to put food on the table and that’s what you had to’:

I was working a lot at the time and I remember [son] must have been about three or four and I remember taking him into town for something and

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<sup>565</sup> [SOHCA/054/20] Littlejohn.

<sup>566</sup> [SOHCA/054/04] Robb.

<sup>567</sup> [SOHCA/054/04] Robb.

<sup>568</sup> [SOHCA/054/16] McGeoghegan

sitting having a coke and realising that I didn't really know my son...at that point in time I decided I was splitting up the partnership and was gonnae do something on my own cause I knew I could get more time with my kids so I was well aware that at that point in time, that hadn't really happened. You know, I was there, I was his dad, but we weren't doing very much together and it was because I just didn't have the time. [...] *I felt like I was a stranger.*<sup>569</sup>

Frank's narrative further indicates that while financial provision was a necessary and expected element of being a father, provision without intimacy, time or a close relationship resulted in Frank feeling, as he remembers, like a 'stranger.' Changing employment meant he was able to do 'things differently with the youngest', also highlights the way in which fathering and meanings of providing changed over time and in response to various family circumstances. This occurred in both positive and negative ways. Anthony, for example, recalled the considerable pressure he felt being the sole provider for his family. Born in 1949, he attempted to negotiate a better work-family balance in the cleaning company where he worked as a manager: 'I've got a letter that I wrote to my then boss, saying that I hadn't seen ma son for three days [...] I said "if you cannae relieve me of some of these duties, albeit I'll need to take a wage cut, or I'll need to go somewhere else."' The birth of his daughter in 1981, however, diminished the extent which he could do so: 'I had to look for similar money so I couldn't then say I'm no doing this or I'm no doing that.'<sup>570</sup> In establishing his own cleaning company, these pressures increased considerably:

Not because I love my work or I wanted to be at my work more than I was interested in my family. It was because of my family and...if you're working for yourself you don't know what next week's gonnae bring, the work's there today but tomorrow it might not be there so you do the work that's there today and then tomorrow you do it again and you do it again because it might not be there next week and before you know where you are, two or three years have passed and you've lost the three years somewhere because you're wanting to make sure that everything is safe and secure for your family.<sup>571</sup>

Some fathers attempted to create active change within their workplaces. As a trade union secretary, Ken, born in 1940, recalled that he and other union colleagues made a claim for paternity leave within Rolls Royce Hillington in 1972. With Ken and his

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<sup>569</sup> [SOHCA/054/16] McGeoghegan

<sup>570</sup> [SOHCA/054/14] 'Anthony.'

<sup>571</sup> [SOHCA/054/14] 'Anthony.'



wife, who was pregnant with twins, used as a test case, the company conceded and he got a ‘whole paid week off, which was quite a breakthrough’:

We sorta said “why not? This isn’t right.” It was very symptomatic, aw the wife’s having it and the man, well you know you’re just sorta you’ve helped produce in the initial stages, you’re no really required...the man didnae really need time off it was just a view generally speaking of industry which was dominated by men funnily enough [...] It was just a traditional view of things, you just don’t do it. I mean why would a man, why’s he wanting to be there you know? And we said, “well we’re part of the new men” you know, “we’re no your age.” All the managers in their sorta forties and fifties, here’s us in our twenties and thirties having a family. We think it’s time we had the opportunity to spend more time helping to bring up the family.<sup>572</sup>

Ken’s memory demonstrates shifting ideals of ‘good’ fatherhood, and associated masculinities, across generations and the resultant impact on men’s relationship to work. His self-identification with the term ‘new men’ is particularly interesting given the phrase, used to denote a man who is caring, sensitive and willing to undertake an equal share of childcare and housework, was not widely used until the decade after he became a father. Ken’s fight to receive recognition as a father within his workplace and the leave he received following the birth of his sons, was, nevertheless, a significant ‘breakthrough.’ Statutory paternity leave was only introduced in 2003, and as Bell et al’s study of *Fathers, Childbirth and Work* in 1983 found, the majority of fathers used holiday, sick and unpaid leave, which could result in employer hostility, loss of pay and in extreme cases, job loss.<sup>573</sup>

Despite attempts to ‘juggle’ work and family life, long working hours or commitment to work could be a source of reflection or even regret for some men. In his mid-thirties, John was sponsored by the company where he worked as an engineer to undertake a degree. Reflecting on this particular period, he notes ‘there’s still times where I still do have regrets that I didnae spend more time with the kids.’ Though John’s wife Louisa was keen to reassure him, and perhaps myself as the interviewer, that he did spend time with the children, for John, who is now retired, attempting to progress in his career and provide more for his family was a source of tension, both then and in retrospect. His narrative below further indicates the significant aspirations

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<sup>572</sup> [SOHCA/054/07] Doran.

<sup>573</sup> Bell et al, *Fathers, Childbirth and Work*, p. 7.

tied to providing, in the hope that in the time men spent with the family they could do ‘more’ with it:

I probably during that time [pause] missed a bit of the kids growing up, and you can never get it back again, that’s the whole thing. Now because of that, I got bigger jobs and we got more money and we could do more so it was kinda two sides of the same coin but to get one there was a penalty to be paid and that was the other. And I couple of times of doing it, I thought “am I doing the right thing?” but I was so far into it then I thought I need to finish it but I think that’s only kinda main regret I had regarding being with the kids and helping and it was during that kinda period where I had to discipline myself to study [...] when you’re older you can look back and reflect on things differently, when you’re younger it’s just things you do and you do it for the best possible reasons normally, but when you look back you think, hmmm maybe.<sup>574</sup>

While some fathers attempted to balance time and finance while their children were young, others only recognised the implications of work-family balance on reflection. Considering grandparenthood, for example, Patrick, recalled that in his job as an engineer, extremely long working hours were ‘just a given, you just did it.’ He has a daughter and son, born in 1974 and 1976:

I wasn’t able to do the things which I can do now, simply because I didn’t have the time. I mean I literally did not have the time, I can’t...when I look back on it just now, I think I used to work seven days a week, every week continuously and why? You know because it was expected of me to do it. I was a resident engineer on building sites so building sites work seven days a week and I was expected to be there, seven days a week and you think that’s really quite unreasonable, and it is unreasonable but we tolerated it in those days and maybe we shouldn’t have [...] I didn’t think it was unreasonable at the time, I thought it was just the way it was, that was how it worked out. If...I mean okay [pause] there were some people on the building sites who didn’t work seven days a week and some of the bosses didn’t work seven days a week but I was always the resident engineer, I was the top man so to speak and I always wanted to be there, as far as I possibly could. Maybe that was wrong, maybe should have been in a more balanced kind of way, maybe it could have been better balanced.<sup>575</sup>

Patrick’s use of the collective ‘we’ in the excerpt above implied that long working hours were perhaps a necessary part of working life in the 1970s and 1980s. He also, however, framed his work commitments as an individual and free choice. He did not

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<sup>574</sup> [SOHCA/054/21] McSherry.

<sup>575</sup> [SOHCA/054/09] Corrigan.

have to be there seven days a week, but chose to, and derived status and satisfaction from doing so and being ‘the top man.’

These recorded narratives have indicated a greater complexity to the relationship between work and fatherhood in the lives of Scottish working-class men than has been historically assumed. Providing for the family, although a significant marker of masculinity, could produce significant tensions as men sought to balance ‘time’ with ‘money’, particularly as family circumstances changed over time. The following section will further highlight the complexities of breadwinning, demonstrating, with in-depth case studies, that those who identified with ‘new’ and ‘involved’ fatherhood also viewed financial provisioning as a component of ‘good’ fathering, and vice versa.

### ***Complexities of Breadwinning***

Despite work and the provider role being central to their ideas and memories of fathering, explicit references to terms such as ‘breadwinner’ or ‘provider’ were notably few. Across all twenty-seven interviews, the word ‘breadwinner’ was used on only twenty-five occasions, by ten interviewees and with the majority of references clustered within only a few interviews.<sup>576</sup> Interestingly, those men who did explicitly use ‘breadwinner’ or ‘provider’ to describe their roles as fathers were among the youngest interviewees, generally born in the 1950s and 1960s and becoming fathers in the 1980s and early 1990s. Men born in the 1940s, who became fathers for the first time in the 1970s, employed a different language. John viewed himself as being a ‘provider of resources’, Ken spoke of ‘putting bread on the table’, ‘pulling in the money’, while Patrick made reference to being the ‘main source of supply.’ Alistair spoke of being ‘responsible for the financial well-being of the family’ and Robert self-identified as being a ‘financer’ and ‘earning the wage.’<sup>577</sup> The lack of explicit reference to being the ‘breadwinner’ may have resulted for a number of reasons. Perhaps the fathers’ role as financial provider was so taken for granted it was not deemed worthy of mention, or definitions of fathering defined solely around paid work were inadequate to characterise their identities as parents. Furthermore, it is possible that as public

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<sup>576</sup> Similar trend for the terms ‘provide’, ‘provider’ and ‘providing.’

<sup>577</sup> [SOHCA/054/21] McSherry; [SOHCA/054/07] Doran; [SOHCA/054/09] Corrigan; [SOHCA/054/06] ‘Alistair’; [SOHCA/054/05] Speedie.

discourses surrounding ‘good’ fatherhood have continued to move away from breadwinning and ‘involved’ fatherhood tends to refer to shared participation in childcare, men may feel that to self-identify with this term would be to be considered ‘uninvolved’ particularly in relation to a young woman.<sup>578</sup> Perhaps the youngest interviewees use the term most frequently because they have relatively young adult children who they continue to provide for.

Robert, now retired, was born in 1945, the only child to his father, a shipyard plumber, and his mother, a full-time housewife. He joined the merchant Navy in 1963, progressing from Ships Officer to Captain, and married in 1968. He has two daughters, born in 1971 and 1973. When asked what he thought his main role or duty was as a father, Robert and his wife Sandra, who was also present at the interview, noted Robert’s central role as the family’s sole breadwinner, which required spending months away from home:

Aimee: What did you think your main role or duty was being a dad?

Robert: Financer [laughs]

Sandra: [laughs] I was going to say provider but that’s probably the same thing.

Robert: Naw, I mean that’s all you really...that’s unfair it’s not all you were but I mean, if you were unemployed you didn’t have what you had so that was the alternative in some ways and you had to make sure you had a job all the time to keep things ticking over, but that was it you know. That and the fun times you had when you were home.<sup>579</sup>

For Sandra, who returned to work when the children were sixteen, this division of labour was common in the early 1970s: ‘it was just expected that girls didn’t go back to work then either so it was just expected that you would need to stay at sea, cause we woulda liked you to come ashore then.’ Robert similarly remembers, ‘you had the kids to look after but I still had to go to sea, I was still earning the wage if you like and that was the trauma as well, money was [tight].’ While Robert clearly identified as being a breadwinner, it was evident throughout the interview that his fathering identity based on financial provision was not simple or straightforward. Despite his initial comment that ‘all you were’ as a father was the ‘financer’, he also expressed significant discomfort with this notion. Robert developed a coping mechanism for the time he spent away from home, by ‘just going away and forgetting about it’:

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<sup>578</sup> Dermott, *Intimate Fatherhood*.

<sup>579</sup> [SOHCA/054/05] Speedie.

I just didn't like doing it but it was just you had to do it, it was your job. It was just lousy, but you just tried to wipe it, it was...I don't know if you've ever been on platform one on Central station, there's a big bend at the end, you just [gestures] pooft! Finish you know [...] You just said that's me I'm a different person from now on until I come back round that bend.<sup>580</sup>

The longest period of time Robert spent at sea was five months and twenty-six days, and the fact that figure is engrained in his memory is significant in itself. He came ashore in 1979 because Sandra had fallen ill, and as the couple recalled collectively, 'Sandra: you were getting fed up with being away from home all the time...cause he felt he was missing... Robert: Missing so much.'<sup>581</sup> At this time, his daughters were eight and five and as Sandra noted, the move meant Robert could be a 'proper daddy':

Sandra: Then you could be a proper daddy! [Laughs]

Aimee: You just said be a proper dad [to Sandra], did you not feel you were getting to do that [to Robert]?

Robert: I wasn't getting what I was wanting you know, which was birthdays and weekends [...] You didn't have any, you weren't a parent at all when you were at sea because what you were was this, what's the...not quite but a "Sugar Daddy" who came home after four months and hung about for a month and then went away again [laughs]

Sandra: But the kids reacted so differently when he did come home...

Robert: Oh aye...

Sandra: [...] And even going away, the teachers at school...they said without asking Lynn they always knew when her daddy had gone away cause she just sat so quiet you know and because I was friends with a few of the girls that taught at [school] and they would say in the staffroom, "is Lynn Speedie's daddy away back to sea?", "uh huh, she hasn't said anything all morning, she's just sitting quietly" so they always knew when, not through Caryl [laughs] cause Caryl just a different personality though, but Lynn, it did affect Lynn.

Robert: Oh aye, it's...

Sandra: She obviously missed you more than...

Robert: Aye, she's got more of my...

Sandra: She has, she's more like him in nature as well...

Robert: Whereas Caryl is a bit more like you in some ways.

Sandra: But it was just different...

Robert: Going back a bit *to get away from that*, my father's father, what was the story there? [To Sandra]<sup>582</sup>

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<sup>580</sup> [SOHCA/054/05] Speedie.

<sup>581</sup> [SOHCA/054/05] Speedie.

<sup>582</sup> [SOHCA/054/05] Speedie.

By explicitly changing the topic of conversation, it is possible that Robert experienced discomposure when remembering the way in which his absence significantly affected one of his daughters. The excerpt also highlights that for Robert being a father meant significantly more than mere financial provision. As Sandra recalls, ‘you always brought them presents home but you didn’t over do it because you didn’t want them to be seen... he wanted to be a bit more than that. You wanted them to be excited about you coming home and not for what they were going to be getting.’<sup>583</sup> Though men viewed economic provision as a means by which to actively demonstrate the care and love they felt towards their children, they therefore also considered it important to spend time *with* them, rather than money *on* them. Chapter Six will demonstrate that balancing financial provision without a regular father-child relationship could be particularly problematic for non-resident fathers.<sup>584</sup>

Tam self-identified as being a ‘breadwinner.’ Currently a janitor, he described fatherhood in the early 1980s as being a ‘wake up call’, and an event that also confirmed his adult and masculine status, recalling ‘it really made me probably look at myself in the mirror and went “Tam you’re a daddy noo. You’re a real man” and this wee soul, and [wife] obviously rely on you tae provide.’<sup>585</sup> The fact that the family relied solely on him to provide was, however, partly because of his own strong orientation to breadwinning. Though he notes his wife ‘wanted to take the time off’, Tam also played a central part in this decision, an act which he now describes as ‘old fashioned’ and chauvinistic:

Old fashioned or no, *I decided* that [wife] shouldnae work. She worked for the health board at the time and I said “naw I’d rather you were here.” I think because I was brought up wae ma granny and I was used to having somebody there [...] so I said “look you’re there for the weans, you ain’t papping the wean onto...” Well ma mammy still worked and her mammy and daddy, they were younger than ma mammy and they worked, so ye couldnae likes of... “here, have a wean” and to me that’s no how you dae it anyway [...] And deciding to be the breadwinner, [wife] obviously just got nothing then, it was... “man up here Tam, oot there and work.” I’ve always taken ma responsibilities and said right I’m the breadwinner here. I know it’s a kind of male chauvinist thing but that’s what I done [...] I just think women are better equipped for...and that’s probably the reason I

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<sup>583</sup> [SOHCA/054/05] Speedie.

<sup>584</sup> J. Jenkins and K. Lyons, ‘Non-Resident Fathers’ Leisure with their Children’, *Leisure Studies*, 25(2), (2006), p. 227; J. Jenkins, ‘Non-resident Fathers’ Engagement with their Children: The Saliency of Leisure’, *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, 41(2), (2006), pp. 183-193.

<sup>585</sup> [SOHCA/054/10] McGrail.

says to ma wife, “don’t you work.” She had an equal job to me financially, she had the same money as me but I thought you’re better in here. Now, mibbe if she was on three times my salary, we might have thought “you know what Tam, you dump the job, I’ve got a high flying job” but that wisnae the situation. We were both equals and it was like you can take the time and she wanted to take the time off to be fair.<sup>586</sup>

Tam’s memories further show that the meanings attached to work could shift upon becoming a father, as well as demonstrates that despite women’s economic and social gains in employment, cultural beliefs in ‘superior’ maternal care continued to provide rationale for a gendered division of labour. Despite having equal incomes, it was Tam’s wife who was required, by Tam, to halt career progression to care for the children. Tam negotiates these traditional attitudes to gender by commenting that both parents were ‘equals’ and that it made economic sense.

Breadwinning was therefore highly significant to both Tam’s male identity and role as a father. However, providing financially could be considered as simply one of a number of ways of ‘doing’ involved fathering, which did not impede the existence of an emotional relationship.<sup>587</sup> Having not known his own father, Tam pursued very close relationships with his children, and following divorce, his three teenage daughters lived with him, his youngest continuing to do so. Tam’s account below, which emphasises time, interaction, intimacy and reliability as key elements of ‘good’ fathering, indicates that divergent discourses on fatherhood were not used to construct either/or identities, but co-existed and provided a range from which men could draw upon:

It was just being reliable, it’s like having a decent motor I think, ye know it’s gonnae start. “That’s great old motor, ma father, aye ma dad’s there, he’s there for me.” And that’s what I’ve, as I say I take pride in that noo at 58 years of age, saying, “hey I’m not the worst guy in the world”, I’m there for ma kids and I’m still there for them. I might no always have money tae gie them, “too late, bookies have got it, pub got it, you’ll need tae wait till next week when I get paid.” But as I say, it’s no aboot financially; it’s aboot the whole aspect a shoulder tae cry on.<sup>588</sup>

Leslie’s memories of fathering also highlight the duality and complexity between financial provisioning, care and intimacy and tensions within different aspects of the

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<sup>586</sup> [SOHCA/054/10] McGrail.

<sup>587</sup> Dermott, ‘The ‘Intimate Father.’

<sup>588</sup> [SOHCA/054/10] McGrail.

father's role. When asked what he thought were the most important things a father should do for his children, Leslie, a Learning and Development Officer born in 1959, commented that fathers should 'be there, basically and provide for them. The basics.'<sup>589</sup> Leslie had wanted to 'be there' and 'be more involved' with his own sons, born in 1990 and 1994, than he remembers his own father being, simply because he worked long hours to provide for a family of five. In doing so, he placed particular emphasis on 'time', 'love' and input beyond 'money': 'you should be there, I mean like spend as much time wae them as ye can and have input into their life [...] It's awricht throwing money at things but if ye don't get involved yourself and ye don't gie them the love...' <sup>590</sup> Despite Leslie's emphasis on a conscious break from the practices of his father, this did not result in an active rejection of breadwinning. Leslie's belief in the centrality of the economic function of the father became particularly apparent in relation to paternity leave, for example, which he described as 'ludicrous', 'a load of rubbish' and 'a joke':

Mibbe I'm just old fashioned, I don't know [...] I just felt it was...ma place was then to provide for them and be there when I had the time to be there but their mother was their main carer if ye like, is the right word...I think there is a danger in Britain we'll turn men into wimps [...] See if I owned ma own company and I had men working for me, and they came to me and asked for paternity leave I'd probably sack them. I know I cannae but that's how I'd feel [...] I'm no saying they arenae capable but I don't think in the early stages they would do it as well as the woman. Now I know that's generalisation and some men would do better than some women but on the whole I'm talking about it [...] I just don't...mibbe different if, say the mother's the breadwinner then I've nothing against stay at home husbands if ye like who the take role of the females, nothing wrong wae that but I just think that if there's a normal relationship then the dad, yip be there as much as ye can at the birth and just after the birth but then get back tae work and provide for your family, that's what I think they should do.<sup>591</sup>

Leslie's comments that paternity leave may run the risk of turning men into 'wimps' demonstrates the continued connections between paid work and masculinity and the way in which caring, particularly for young children, can still often be considered feminine and therefore un-masculine. Leslie's attitudes towards leave provision also indicate the work cultures and attitudes that continue to prohibit men from taking on

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<sup>589</sup> [SOHCA/054/08] Watson.

<sup>590</sup> [SOHCA/054/08] Watson.

<sup>591</sup> [SOHCA/054/08] Watson.



more equal and caring roles within the family in contemporary society. During the Scottish Parliamentary enquiry in 2014 into the experiences of fathering in Scotland, for example, fathers expressed the difficulties of managing work and family life. In some companies it was found colleagues were less likely to show understanding for the parenting issues of male staff and fathers were less likely to be granted flexible working, reduced hours or time off to look after children during holidays or when sick.<sup>592</sup>

Overall, interviewees cannot be distinguished as being either ‘traditional’ ‘breadwinner’ or ‘new’, ‘involved’ fathers, as they were generally both to a greater or lesser extent. Financial provisioning was not separate from other fathering duties, and this duality was evident among all interviewees in their understandings of ‘good’ fathering. Charlie commented on the need to ‘provide for and protect. Love, care for them’ and John reflected that while he viewed himself as a ‘provider of resources, cash if you like,’ this was inherently connected with ‘being there for the kids when they were growing up and working with them and helping them.’<sup>593</sup> Donald recalled that he was ‘provider. It’s as simple as that’ but that ‘providing...wasn’t necessarily in cash terms.’<sup>594</sup> Kenneth spoke of how important it was to ‘make sure there was food on the table for them’ but also ‘morally bring them up the right way.’<sup>595</sup> Jake commented on the need to ‘make sure there’s an income level there to give them what they need’ but also to be a ‘role model’, ‘someone they’re going to come to, ask for things, for help and support...someone to listen to.’<sup>596</sup>

## ***Conclusions***

A shift in men’s status as financial providers is a central element of changing understandings and experiences of fatherhood from the late twentieth century onwards. The ideology of sole breadwinning from this period was challenged by the profound restructuring of the labour market, including deindustrialisation, and the convergence of men and women’s employment. The shift from manual work to services was, in Scotland, particularly profound. These social, economic and cultural changes limited men’s potential to be providers, impacted upon conceptions of gender

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<sup>592</sup> Scottish Parliament, ‘Fathers and Parenting: Summary of Evidence Submissions’ (2014) [www.scottish.parliament.uk](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk), accessed 20 Sept 2015.

<sup>593</sup> [SOHCA/054/18] McKay; [SOHCA/054/21] McSherry.

<sup>594</sup> [SOHCA/054/27] ‘Donald.’

<sup>595</sup> [SOHCA/054/26] Paul.

<sup>596</sup> [SOHCA/054/24] ‘Jake’; [SOHCA/054/16] McGeoghegan.

roles and relations, both at the workplace and at home, and challenged the idea that men alone should be engaged in the labour market, that fathers alone should provide financially for the family or the idea that women alone should be responsible for unpaid housework and childcare. In this sense, sole male breadwinning did decline; more mothers were working and financially providing for the family, both before and after children, and within lone mother families, providing solely. This impacted upon men's authority within the home, reflected in, for example, shared decision-making, and the division of family resources and labour.

Although the ideology and practice of male breadwinning was in some ways disrupted, the importance of fathers' roles in providing financially by engaging in paid work did not decline. The need to provide for the family was a taken for granted necessity, and interviewees believed it to be their duty and responsibility to do so. Fathering still largely took place out with the home in the form of earning for their families rather than providing practical care within it. Though mothers worked and a single earner ideal was often unattainable, breadwinner ideologies and identities remained powerful. Political discourses in particular persisted in emphasising that providing financially was a necessary, if not the most important, element of 'good' fathering. The oral testimonies reveal however, a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between fathers and work, and of the significant tensions men could face as they sought to balance work and family commitments.

This chapter has also demonstrated that although financial provisioning remained a key element of men's fathering and masculine identities, 'involved' and 'breadwinning' fatherhood were not distinct. Money and emotion were interrelated, provision was used as a way to actively demonstrate paternal involvement, and the presence of one without the other was deemed problematic; fathers strongly committed to breadwinning were clearly also very concerned with developing close and meaningful relationships with their children. Overall, there was a shift in male breadwinning at both a behavioural level and as an ideology; the precise nature of that shift was therefore complex. As the next chapter will further highlight, providing was considered an important element of 'being there', but it was not all that fathers did for their children.

## CHAPTER FOUR 'Being there': Fathers' Roles in the Family

In 1985, Labour politician Jo Richardson argued that men were rethinking their traditional roles in the family. Many fathers, she asserted to the House of Commons during a debate about parental leave, 'are rejecting the role which deprives them of the experience of caring for their children. They are expressing the desire to build a new type of relationship...[and] are challenging some of the outmoded notions about what it takes to be a real man.'<sup>597</sup> Lewis and O'Brien's 1987 study, *New Observations on Fathers and the Modern Family*, defined these 'new fathers' as 'both highly nurturing towards...children and increasingly involved in their care and housework.'<sup>598</sup> Though the economic underpinning of fatherhood did not disappear, fathers were expected to perform parenting functions traditionally associated with mothers, such as baby care. A recurring theme within popular conceptions of fatherhood during this period was that of gender convergence, shown in figure 4.1.

As Chapter Two demonstrated, the idea that fatherhood was changing was not new. The notion that family life had been shifting in the direction of greater equality was also an oft-repeated theme throughout the post-war period, reflected in notions of the companionate marriage in the 1950s, for example.<sup>599</sup> The last decades of the twentieth century, however, were a period of significant instability in gender identities and relations, particularly as a result of growing female employment, as well as the second-wave feminist movement, which contested the 'traditional' sexual division of labour between men and women. Though fathers were increasingly expected to 'help' with childcare and housework from the interwar period, the strong differentiation between motherhood and fatherhood remained.<sup>600</sup> Undertaking these activities could also present challenges to masculine identity and status. The image of the pram-pushing father, for example, remained controversial within some groups and regions well into the post-war period.<sup>601</sup>

By the 1970s onwards, however, fatherhood was central to a range of discursive shifts in relation to gender, the family, paid work and caring. The rise of 'new' fatherhood was also linked to new definitions of masculinity. The shifting role of the

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<sup>597</sup> Hansard, Parental and Family Leave (1985).

<sup>598</sup> Lewis and O'Brien, *Reassessing Fatherhood*, p. 2.

<sup>599</sup> Clark, *Marriage, Domestic Life and Social Change*; Peplar, *Family Matters*.

<sup>600</sup> Bourke, *Working Class Cultures*; King, *Family Men*; Fisher, 'Fatherhood and the Experience of Working-Class Fathers.'

<sup>601</sup> King, 'A Great Many Men'; Young, 'Hard Man, New Man'; Brennan, *Reshaping a City*.

father from 'helper' to equally responsible carer was evident in childcare advice, for example. The 1958 edition of Spock's best-selling infant manual *Baby and Child Care* emphasised the support function of fathers, urging men that they could be 'a warm father and real man at the same time': 'of course, I don't mean that the father has just to give as many bottles or change as many diapers as the mother. But it is fine to do these things occasionally.'<sup>602</sup> By 1979, the third edition published to 'eliminate the sexist biases', recognised that 'the father's responsibility is as great as the mothers.'<sup>603</sup> These new cultural discourses heightened the expectations surrounding fatherhood. The 'good' father was no longer only economically supportive but also involved in directly caring for children. By the 1990s, 'caring' fathers were evident in everyday imagery, with sportsmen and politicians celebrated for their engaged, 'modern' and very public fathering.<sup>604</sup> A significant change during this period, then, was the shifting distinction between public and private fathering; men became much more visibly involved in childrearing and greater prominence was placed upon the positive value of fatherhood.<sup>605</sup> As Segal noted in 1990, 'today, the hardest of macho male images can combine with the softest portrayals of paternity.'<sup>606</sup>

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<sup>602</sup> Spock quoted in Beail and McGuire, *Fathers: Psychological Perspectives*, p. 237.

<sup>603</sup> Spock, *Baby and Child Care* (1979), p. 17.

<sup>604</sup> See. e.g. T. Lyold, 'Fathers in the Media: An Analysis of Newspaper Coverage of Fathers' in P. Moss (eds.), *Father Figures: Fathers in Families in the 1990s* (Edinburgh, 1995), pp. 41-51; Bruzzi, *Bringing Up Daddy*; Dermott, *Intimate Fatherhood*.

<sup>605</sup> Lamb, *The Role of the Father*; Beail and McGuire, *Fathers: Psychological Perspectives*.

<sup>606</sup> Segal, *Slow Motion*, p. 33.

**Figure 4.1. Cartoon: gender convergence**



Source: *Project on Fatherhood: Report of the Youth at Risk Advisory Group, Scotland* (Dundee, 1987), p. 40.

There was also uncertainty, however, about the role of fathers during this period, and concerns that their responsibilities were no longer as clearly defined, or as strongly felt by men, as they once were. According to Moss, ‘breadwinner, benefactor, disciplinarian, head of the family – the traditional roles of the “father figure” are disappearing as family structures change and develop.’<sup>607</sup> As the next chapter will demonstrate, ‘families without fathers’ in the context of rising divorce and lone parenthood, were deemed to be the cause of many societal problems.<sup>608</sup> Significant concerns about the effects of ‘father-absence’ were accompanied with anxieties that, stripped of their role by women and deindustrialisation, were a generation of ‘uneducated, untrained, unemployable, unsocialised and unwanted’ men.<sup>609</sup> Such men were, according to the cross-bench spokesman for families and children, ‘facing dilemmas as to their very purpose in being.’<sup>610</sup> Both masculinity and fatherhood were

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<sup>607</sup> Moss, *Father Figures*, foreword.

<sup>608</sup> Hobson, *Making Men into Fathers*; Jagger and Wright, *Changing Family Values*.

<sup>609</sup> Hansard, *Fathers in the Family* (1999).

<sup>610</sup> *Ibid.*

seen to be entering a period of 'crisis.' These anxieties about the role of the father, and of men in society more broadly, highlights a preoccupation with shifting gender roles.

During the late twentieth century, then, fatherhood was widely observed and discussed, and though debates were often contradictory and competing, they nevertheless emphasised the importance of fathers. Sociologists began to question to what extent shifting representations surrounding men's roles in the family were accompanied by real change in fathering practices.<sup>611</sup> Time-use studies, for example, suggest that there was an increase in the time spent by British fathers on childcare and housework. Fathers of children under the age of five devoted less than a quarter of an hour per day to child related activities in the mid-1970s in contrast to two hours a day by the late 1990s, while the time spent by men on domestic work rose from an average of 90 minutes in the 1960s to 148 minutes per day in 2004.<sup>612</sup> The extent to which class impacted upon fathers' contributions has produced ambiguous evidence. Despite the construct of the 'new' father as predominantly white and middle-class, Brannen's research exploring fathering across three generations in the twentieth century, for example, found that as a result of economic instability and the need for two incomes, 'it is among low-skilled, working-class families where the changes in fatherhood are most striking.'<sup>613</sup>

The growing body of research on fatherhood also highlighted, however, that it was characterised by continuity as much as change. Lewis and O'Brien, for example, concluded that 'discussion about the "new father" far outweighs evidence to demonstrate his existence.'<sup>614</sup> Though there was growing convergence in parent's contributions to both paid and unpaid work, there remained significant continuity in women's primary responsibility for domestic and caring tasks.<sup>615</sup> Men, continuing to take major responsibility for economic provision, were more likely to engage in childcare than housework, as well as to undertake play and leisure activities.<sup>616</sup> The

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<sup>611</sup> McKee and O'Brien, *The Father Figure*; Lewis and O'Brien, *Reassessing Fatherhood*; Lewis, *Becoming a Father*; Moss, *Father Figures*. Since the 1970s, academic studies on gendered household divisions of labour have also collected time budgets and data on the distribution of tasks, as well as explored issues of responsibility.

<sup>612</sup> O'Brien and Shemilt, *Working Fathers*, p. 21.

<sup>613</sup> Brannen and Nilsen, 'From Fatherhood to Fathering.'

<sup>614</sup> Lewis and O'Brien, *Reassessing Fatherhood*, p. 3.

<sup>615</sup> R. Crompton and C. Lyonette, 'Who Does the Housework? The Division of Labour within the home' in A. Park et al, *British Social Attitudes: The 24<sup>th</sup> Report* (London, 2008); A. Hoschild, *The Second Shift: Working Parents and the Revolution at Home* (London, 1989).

<sup>616</sup> These trends are evident in contemporary society. See e.g. Dermott, *Intimate Fatherhood*; Doucet, *Do Men Mother?*

value attached to childcare when undertaken by men also differed. As Chapter Seven will explore, role reversal remained novel, and as a result lone fathers, for example, were praised by politicians and the community at large for undertaking the same duties as mothers were expected to.

Men, moreover, could be seen to be fulfilling the ideals of ‘involved’ fatherhood in spite of the wide range of behaviours and relationships that such a term entails.<sup>617</sup> Kathryn Backett’s 1970s study in Scotland found that men, compared to mothers, did not have to do equal amounts of caring in order to be considered ‘good fathers.’<sup>618</sup> Belief in father ‘involvement’ was sustained through the relationship between parents and expressed by fathers in being ‘*willing* to do things for the children when necessary, *able* to do things for them *if* necessary and having *had* demonstrated such voluntarism and ability.’<sup>619</sup> Other studies during this period similarly found that men’s role as an emotional support could compensate for their lack of practical involvement.<sup>620</sup> While Jamieson has argued ‘intimacy and inequality’ can ‘co-exist in many personal lives’, Dermott has suggested ‘intimate’ fatherhood may well be compatible with a limited investment in household and caring labour.<sup>621</sup>

Such findings, highlighting a gap between cultural ideals and actual practices, introduced a ‘streak of realism’ to discussions of the ‘new father’, but also an element of cynicism.<sup>622</sup> He was increasingly criticised as being ‘a rare breed’ and ‘media hype’: ‘an ideal that even the most liberated men would never lay claim to.’<sup>623</sup> The reasons for such a gap are complex, however, and fathering was enacted within clear historical, societal and cultural constraints. Workplace practices, government policies related to work and family life, and contradictory gendered discourses continued to constrain the choices available to parents.<sup>624</sup> As Chapter One demonstrated, there was little serious discussion, recognition or structural support for paternity and parental leave, meaning

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<sup>617</sup> Miller, *Making Sense of Fatherhood*.

<sup>618</sup> Backett, *Mothers and Fathers*.

<sup>619</sup> K. Backett, ‘The Negotiation of Fatherhood’ in C. Lewis and M. O’Brien (eds.), *Reassessing Fatherhood: New Observations and the Modern Family* (London, 1987), p. 87.

<sup>620</sup> Oakley, *From Here to Maternity*, p. 214; Lupton and Barclay, *Constructing Fatherhood*, p. 56.

<sup>621</sup> Jamieson, ‘Intimacy Transformed?’, p. 491; Dermott, *Intimate Fatherhood*.

<sup>622</sup> J. Finch and D. Morgan, ‘Marriage in the 1980s: A New Sense of Realism?’ in D. Clark (ed.) *Marriage, Domestic Life and Social Change: Writings for Jacqueline Burgoyne (1944-88)* (London, 1991), pp. 55-80. A move to realism included research into areas of family living such as violence, rape and child abuse.

<sup>623</sup> Sharpe, *Fathers and Daughters*, p. 16; R. Chapman and J. Rutherford, *Male Order: Unwrapping Masculinity* (London, 1988), p. 247.

<sup>624</sup> B. Brandth and E. Kvande, ‘Masculinity and Childcare: The Reconstruction of Fathering’, *Sociological Review*, 46(2), (1998), pp. 293-313; Miller, *Making Sense of Fatherhood*; Sarre, *A Place for Fathers*; Burghes et al, *Fathers and Fatherhood in Britain*; Lewis, ‘The Problem of Fathers.’

gendered divisions of labour were established and reinforced from the outset of parenthood. While the UK Government adopted a European Council Recommendation on child care in 1992, article six of which stated the importance of encouraging the 'increased participation by men' in the 'care and upbringing of children', in 1994 it again refused to accept the Directive on Parental leave.<sup>625</sup> Within these debates remained deeply embedded ideas about the natural and instinctive care of children by mothers.

In Scotland, the gendered division of unpaid labour, in respect to care and housework, was still evident as the twentieth century came to a close. In 1999, in couple households, 64% of women reported they were mostly responsible for childcare compared to only 2% of men, while 63% of men said their partner was mostly responsible for childcare, compared to only 2% of women. As indicated in table 4.1, around a third of both women and men (34% and 33% respectively) said that childcare was shared.<sup>626</sup> These divisions have persisted despite a considerable shift in attitudes towards parenthood and work, with both men and women expressing more egalitarian beliefs.<sup>627</sup> In Scottish historiography, such statistical evidence has not only been used to highlight continued gender inequality, but also to emphasise men's lack of involvement in, or their negative impact on, family and home life. As McIvor argued, by the end of the century, 'the 'new man' remained a distant ideal': 'female subordination and economic dependency...the persistence of a marked sexual division of labour...and the survival of chauvinist attitudes and patriarchal values continue to characterise the Scottish family.'<sup>628</sup> This has meant men's involvement in family life has largely been understood via their position as husbands and partners, rather than fathers, and has been limited to direct care of children and housework. The other roles men played within the family, the father-child relationship, and fathering outside of the home has been overlooked.<sup>629</sup>

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<sup>625</sup> Moss, *Father Figures*, p. xvii.

<sup>626</sup> Scottish Executive, *A Gender Audit of Statistics*, p. 177. Interestingly men and women's responses were the same in relation to childcare, while most other tasks there is a discrepancy. This suggests men perceived themselves to be doing more than women perceived them to be doing, and vice versa.

<sup>627</sup> Findings from the *Scottish Social Attitudes Survey* in 2005 found that just over 90% of women and almost 90% of men said that both partners should be equally responsible for ensuring that housework is done.

<sup>628</sup> McIvor, 'Gender Apartheid?', p. 195.

<sup>629</sup> McKee, 'Fathers' Participation in Infant Care'; Clarke and O'Brien, 'Father Involvement in Britain.'



This chapter will explore men's recorded narratives of being a father and will examine their perceived roles beyond that of financial provider, the centrality of which was demonstrated in Chapter Three. Fathers emphasised the desire to 'be there' and give 'time' to their children, the narratives are used to explore how this time was spent and how men recalled and talked about their interactions around child rearing and domestic labour. It will explore how they conceptualise, define and interpret what it means to be a 'good' father. Using oral testimonies of fathers themselves, this chapter provides new insight into men's fathering identities and their experiences of fatherhood, offering some significant understandings into their everyday importance in the family in late twentieth century Scotland. It will argue that while 'involved', emotionally engaged and hands-on fatherhood was held as the ideal, the term was ambiguous, and used to describe a wide range of situations and relations. As a result, the relationship between fatherhood and masculinity remained complex during this period. There was greater fluidity and overlap in parenting roles, and convergence in expectations about work and family commitments, but important continuities too; parenting did not become a gender-neutral activity. Despite public imagery emphasising men's involvement in nurturing and childcare, and men being more visibly engaged in doing so, primary care of young children or role reversal, for example, continued to clash with hegemonic ideals of masculinity centred on paid work, particularly in public policy. Overall, however, this chapter argues that fathers were central, rather than, peripheral to, Scottish family life, and that men could be highly 'involved' and engaged parents, despite a gendered division of labour.

**Table 4.1**

<b>Division of household tasks between couples in Scotland, 1999</b>						
<b>Household Task</b>	<b>Percentage of each gender with responsibility for particular household tasks</b>					
	<b>Mostly Self</b>		<b>Mostly Partner</b>		<b>Shared</b>	
	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
Who does the grocery shopping?	14	53	43	11	42	35
Who does the cooking?	20	63	55	14	25	22
Who does the cleaning?	9	64	57	8	29	24
Who does the washing/ironing?	9	77	71	5	19	15
Who is responsible for childcare?	2	64	63	2	33	34

Source: Scottish Executive, *Men and Women in Scotland: A Statistic Profile* (Edinburgh, 2001), p. 72. Data sourced from British Household Panel Survey 1999, produced by the Institute for Social and Economic Research at the University of Essex.

### ***‘Hands-on?’ Childcare and Housework***

As the previous chapter demonstrated, fathers, on the whole, assumed the role of sole or primary financial provider while mothers temporarily or permanently left the labour market to care for children. This division of labour was not rigid, however. As the dual earner household largely replaced the male breadwinner one, most mothers and fathers cared and provided. The men I interviewed recalled a wide range of behaviours and attitudes; a few (five) reported never having had any responsibility for domestic labour, some were involved in childcare to a greater extent than housework (eight), while twelve out of twenty-five reported that they did ‘share’ in these activities when they were ‘at home.’ These patterns were subject to change over time and in relation to specific circumstances. This section explores how men retrospectively recalled and constructed their caregiving and domestic responsibilities and identities and how this interacted with their masculinity. It also examines how these practices were remembered within the interview context.

For a few interviewees, a gendered division of labour was demarcated, especially if their wives stopped working for a prolonged period of time, and there was significant continuity from the post-war period in relation to ‘public’ and ‘private’ chores, and ‘manly’ domestic labour. Donald, born in 1947, noted that while he felt he was ‘very much hands on’ with the children, ‘changing nappies, feeding’ there was a ‘split’

regarding housework: ‘she would do the bulk of it and I would help at times [...] my wife had the inside role and I had the outside role if you want to put it that way. But we did help each other out.’<sup>630</sup> The couple have two daughters, born in 1983 and 1985. Anthony, who was born in 1949 and first became a father in 1979, similarly recalled that all domestic chores were carried out by his wife: ‘I was out earning the money, paying all the bills and doing the gardening and any maintenance around the house’, while Jim, born in 1942, also reflected on the ‘clear split’ of domestic duties.<sup>631</sup> Despite initially distancing himself from the very rigid division of labour he had witnessed growing up in the post-war period, Jim reflected that when his own children, born in 1971, 1972 and 1976, were young, it continued to be distinguished along ‘male-female lines’:

There were very clear lines. The men worked, the women did the house and...looked after the kids...if somebody did it in my dad’s time they might have called him “hen pecked” if they were seen to do certain things...I mean I’d like to think I’d shared the division, but it was probably shared along male-female lines [...] I really think there was delineation in the house. I did the garden, the car, did the decorating and [wife] did the cooking so there was a kinda...maybe...I dunno if that’s sexist or not, there was a division of labour.<sup>632</sup>

These narratives show that unpaid work could remain clearly divided by gender in some Scottish families well into the 1970s, 1980s and beyond.

Other interviewees, particularly those who became fathers in the 1980s and 1990s, rejected traditional gender roles and instead drew upon discourses of equality and partnership. Pat, born in 1956, dismissed ‘any kind of strict demarcation lines between what’s my role and what’s her role’: ‘we just kind of muck in and do it together [...] wae the kids we’d take turns who’s getting up and night feeding them, we’d take turns making up the bottles, changing nappies. I would probably be untruthful if I didnae say that she probably did these things more than me.’<sup>633</sup> Pat, then a shipyard worker, got married in 1985 and became a father one year later. Ian, reflecting on married and family life in the 1980s, also noted roles were not ‘pre-defined’: ‘we got stuck into whatever was needing done [...] when I was at home, certainly we shared,

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<sup>630</sup> [SOHCA/054/27] ‘Donald.’

<sup>631</sup> [SOHCA/054/14] ‘Anthony’; [SOHCA/054/12] Burns.

<sup>632</sup> [SOHCA/054/12] Burns.

<sup>633</sup> [SOHCA/054/11] Clark.

I didnae think “aw your child’s nappy needs changed”, you would go and do it.’<sup>634</sup> Gerry, born in 1967, and the father of two sons born in 1990 and 1992, similarly commented ‘we were never that was her job and that’s ma job’: ‘I think because we both worked, but in the early days when [wife] didnae work, she would do a lot ae it.’<sup>635</sup> Sharing childcare and housework was held as an ideal among these interviewees, even when their ability to assume equal responsibility on a day-to-day level was compromised by their paid employment, and whilst also acknowledging that mothers continued to do ‘more.’

For a few men, caring for children and undertaking domestic work was a natural part of family life, particularly in light of their childhood experiences. For John, who had been responsible for his two younger siblings during the 1950s when his mother passed away, ‘washing dishes, ironing, washing clothes, aw came naturally.’ Born in 1949, he has three daughters, born in 1974, 1978 and 1982, for whom he took sole care in 1986. Frank, born in 1957, noted that when he was not working as a joiner, he ‘split the duties’ with his wife. As a child, he had significant responsibility for his younger brother, seven years his junior, whilst his mother, the family breadwinner, worked three jobs: ‘I would take him to nursery and then pick him up and make his dinner and put him to bed because my mother was out all the time working, just to survive.’<sup>636</sup> Charlie, born in 1952, also recalls that domestic duties were done in ‘partnership’ with his wife: ‘if I was getting one ready, she would be bathing the other one. We just worked as a team.’ The eldest of a family of ten children, he felt ‘privileged’ having helped his mother with his younger siblings: ‘nothing fazed me about washing babies or changing nappies cause I had done it all before so I felt comfortable. It wasn’t alien tae me.’<sup>637</sup> Charlie, then a shipyard worker, and his wife, have two biological daughters, born in 1976 and 1978, and two adopted daughters, sisters born in 1989 and 1991. The significant domestic responsibility each of these men experienced during childhood was largely the result of the behaviours of their own fathers, who were often absent, meaning their mothers were required to work. These testimonies add a new level of complexity to understandings of working-class fatherhood, indicating that not only were some men significantly involved in the

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<sup>634</sup> [SOHCA/054/04] Robb.

<sup>635</sup> [SOHCA/054/22] Farrell.

<sup>636</sup> [SOHCA/054/16] McGeoghegan.

<sup>637</sup> [SOHCA/054/18] McKay.

practical aspects of family life, their own childhood experiences could be significant in their motivations and/or ability to do so.

Work schedules and the employment of wives and partners were also significant in determining the unpaid work undertaken by men. John D, then a steel worker, noted that he had been a ‘hands-on da’ when he became a father in 1977 at the age of eighteen: ‘I would be on the shifts so I would have the wean and [wife] would be working and then she would have him and I would be working [...] we always split, we still, split everything...ye had tae dae it, it was your boy, it was your house, it was everything.’<sup>638</sup> Leslie, born in 1959, similarly described his shift work pattern as a sales manager as being the ‘ideal situation’ when he became a father in 1990. It meant he could do ‘a lot of day time work’: ‘I was there to look after the kids in the afternoon [...] I would bath the boys, I would change their nappies...I would do more housework than I used tae to do, *tae gie her a help*.’<sup>639</sup> Leslie’s memory highlights the way in which some men may have been more ‘hands-on’ in relation to childcare than housework, for which he continued to assume the role of ‘helper.’

The meaning of ‘sharing’ domestic work and childcare, then, was private, shifting and negotiable, particularly over time.<sup>640</sup> John, born in 1947, for example, described himself as a ‘one nappy a day man.’<sup>641</sup> He worked as an engineer while his wife Louisa cared for their two children, born in 1969 and 1973. Although they both acknowledged ‘perceived roles’ when they became parents, in the narrative below, Louisa asserts John’s involvement in physical childcare and his status as a ‘good’ father:

Louisa: Fed them yeah, you would give them a bottle. John, he was quite hands on with the baby when he wisnae at work.

John: I was good at making bottles as well.

Louisa: Uh huh, you made the bottles. No, he was always there and helping and he was happy to take them a walk and he was happy to change them and he was happy to feed them and he loved the parties, he would always get involved in organising the parties, no, I think he was a great dad, he is a great dad.<sup>642</sup>

While John was clearly involved in the practical care of his children, the notion that he was ‘happy’ to ‘help’, implies voluntarism, he chose to but was not responsible for doing

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<sup>638</sup> [SOHCA/054/17] Duffy.

<sup>639</sup> [SOHCA/054/08] Watson.

<sup>640</sup> Doucet, ‘Gender Equality and Gender Differences.’

<sup>641</sup> [SOHCA/054/21] McSherry.

<sup>642</sup> [SOHCA/054/21] McSherry.

so. Louisa's comments also highlight that fathers did not have to do equal amounts of caring as mothers in order to be considered 'hands-on' parents, as well as the extent to which a willingness to help and emotional support may have been more important to women than the equal sharing of labour. John's hands-on attitude with the children, for example, did not necessarily extend to other domestic chores. As he recalls, 'I've managed to get through my whole married life with Louisa doing the cooking for me, and doing the washing for me and doing the ironing for me and basically I brought the money in and Louisa did that, as well doing her own job of course but women like that kinda thing, don't they? [laughs].'<sup>643</sup> As noted, intimacy and inequality can often co-exist in personal relationships, and men could be 'involved' in childcare without challenging the notion that it was primarily and 'naturally' women's responsibility.

Divisions of labour could also vary in relation to family circumstances and could shift over time. Jim, for example, was significantly involved in the care of his third son, who was born with severe physical and mental disabilities, into adulthood: 'a thirty-seven-year-old adult who in many ways was still a baby. Couldn't speak and couldn't go out, had to be fed and I had to bath him, shave him, cut his hair.'<sup>644</sup> Men could therefore provide different kinds of 'care' for different children. By the time Frank, born in 1944, and his wife had their final son in 1976, they had four children, including a set of twins, under school age. While he emphasised his desire to be an involved hands-on father throughout the course of interview, he also noted that having twins made this a necessity; he and his wife 'both mucked in...feeding time was two bottles': 'it was twice the work, twice the time.'<sup>645</sup> Ian, moreover, positioned his involvement as being 'slightly different' because his wife was deaf. While he dismissed a rigid division of labour and emphasised the changing role of fathers, his narrative below implies that his 'forward thinking' attitude and 'hands-on' behaviour were perhaps out with the norm:

Mibbe I was more hands on because mibbe I thought [wife] needed more support, mibbe she didnae...but naw I think I was more forward thinking, I don't know...It was things like if they were two and they went through the room, and they fell and they hurt themselves and they were crying, nobody went for them, nobody went and picked them up cause they didnae know they were crying [...] if any of the kids woke up in the middle

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<sup>643</sup> [SOHCA/054/21] McSherry.

<sup>644</sup> [SOHCA/054/12] Burns.

<sup>645</sup> [SOHCA/054/25] Fleming.

of the night it was always me that got up, cause [wife] didnae hear them so I didnae go “your kid’s crying.” I got up.<sup>646</sup>

Overall, the narratives above reflect the growing role of fathers in baby care as well as a shift in the acceptability of men’s public displays of fatherhood, adding nuance to statistical snapshots of men’s involvement in childcare and housework. Ken, born in 1940, felt like a ‘star’ because of the ‘enormous attention’ he received having twins in the early 1970s: ‘you were treated differently, doors opened for you...all goo gaaing at these wee twinkled eyed baby boys.’<sup>647</sup> Jake described the lack of stigma surrounding acts such as wheeling a pram in the late 1980s and early 1990s when he first became a father: ‘I shouldn’t push a pram because I’m a guy?’ “I’m not doing that, that’s her job.” I can’t say I really seen or heard that.’<sup>648</sup> Ian also noted that during this period there was no ‘deterrent to your manliness if you show caring for your kids and if you look after your kids and you change nappies or whatever...makes you any lesser of a man. Or pushing a pram, that’s no “he’s a big sissy, he’s pushing the pram.”’<sup>649</sup> As Alistair, born in 1949, reflected, non-involvement in childrearing was associated with ‘traditional’ notions of masculinity, and a positive value was attached to fathering. His daughters were born in 1974 and 1978:

When my wife was working on a Saturday, she would come in at nine o’clock, “I’d say here’s your dinner, I’m out! Going to the pub” [laughs] And it was Saturday night and I would meet up with couple of guys, same age, family circumstances, few beers but nobody said, “and ye did what? Ye took the weans for a walk?!” ye know, the sorta things that if my father had said that in a pub, it’d be like [gestures]... “Aye, right. Hen pecked are ye?” ...it was the accepted thing to do. In fact, if you didn’t do that, you were looked on as a bit of a dinosaur.<sup>650</sup>

There also remained limitations to these shifts, however, and masculinities could be performed differently in public and private, particularly at the start of this period. John reflected that while he would feed or change his daughter in his own home or that of a relative, he would not have done so in public, because that was his wife’s ‘job’: ‘it was

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<sup>646</sup> [SOHCA/054/04] Robb.

<sup>647</sup> [SOHCA/054/07] Doran.

<sup>648</sup> [SOHCA/054/10] McGrail; [SOHCA/054/24] ‘Jake.’

<sup>649</sup> [SOHCA/054/04] Robb.

<sup>650</sup> [SOHCA/054/06] ‘Alistair.’

natural for a woman to feed a baby, it wasn't as natural for a man to be seen feeding a baby, unless he's in his own house.'<sup>651</sup>

The complex discourses surrounding fatherhood and associated ideals of masculinity during this period, and since, produced complicated narratives during discussions of unpaid work and care, particularly as interviewees sought to convey an acceptable image. Many of the men I interviewed, perhaps feeling the need to show that they embraced gender equality in relation to a young, female interviewer, were keen to note that they were open to, as well as capable of, practically caring for children or doing housework, even if they did not do so on a full-time basis.<sup>652</sup> Frank, for example, discussed that being a stay-at-home dad was 'perceived as odd' and 'not a great idea' during the mid-1980s when he first had children. When asked if he would ever have considered it, Frank replied, 'oh aye, yeah, absolutely. Personally I don't have any problems with it, I just thought it would be odd but no, not at all.'<sup>653</sup> For some men, the ideals they endorsed in the interview did not always parallel their own experiences. Tam, born in 1956, noted that he took his share of housework, commenting that he'd 'never been a man's man...these guys that are like "that's her job", I was never wan eh they "well I'm working, you'll dae everything."' Tam, nevertheless, went on to say that he 'cannae cook', and 'never done the washing'; he was 'car cleaner', and the 'grass cutter.'<sup>654</sup>

The extended narrative of Ken is particularly insightful in highlighting the significant tensions, contradictions and attempts for composure that could result from such discussions within the interview context. Ken had twin boys when he became a father for the first time in 1972, as well as another son, born in 1977, and his interview narrative emphasised generational differences in fathering. As he claimed, 'you saw it changing as they became "new men" sorta thing and I fell into it much more naturally.'<sup>655</sup> Ken, nevertheless, also indicated that his involvement in practical childcare was necessitated by having twins: 'you were right in there so I suppose because it was twins you were more involved when you were there, than you woulda been normally', 'had it only been one perhaps, I would have stood back from it more.'<sup>656</sup> On a number of occasions throughout the interview, Ken was also keen to

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<sup>651</sup> [SOHCA/054/21] McSherry.

<sup>652</sup> Young, 'Hard Man, New Man'

<sup>653</sup> [SOHCA/054/16] McGeoghegan.

<sup>654</sup> [SOHCA/054/10] McGrail.

<sup>655</sup> [SOHCA/054/07] Doran.

<sup>656</sup> [SOHCA/054/07] Doran.



acknowledge that though he was ‘hands-on’, it was only when he was not at work or when ‘available’ and ‘required’:

It was very hands on. I mean when you were here. Margaret was struggling during the day with it, with help from family and friends but aye you were changing nappies, you were feeding them. I remember things like going to Boots and buying all these wee bottles of baby food, I mean there was dozens of them, and making up the feed, feeding them. Putting them to bed, keeping an eye on them at night when they were going to sleep, getting up during the night when you had to...and as I say going out working cause you needed to fund it all, that was your main responsibility balanced out with what you had to do when you were in the domestic sorta situation...but the brunt of it was borne by the women [...] I can only remember, Margaret might have a different view of it, I can only remember it was hands-on. You didn’t have the luxury if it was one child, the women could do it all. You had to help, you had to just jump in and change nappies... a view perhaps was that well one, the man, he wasn’t there to do it, and when he was there to do it he either didnae want to do it, or he wasn’t able to do it you know, he didn’t have these sorta skills. That’s a load of waffle of course, I mean to me, men are just as capable as women at doing virtually everything other than having the child. So I found myself having to change nappies and you know help hanging them up and bringing them but only when I was here because your obligations lay elsewhere [...] But I don’t remember having any hang ups about doing it then, than I have now doing it for my grandchildren. I mean we change the nappies of the grandchildren and you know there’s some things that seems more natural for the women to take first, I mean like the bath...I mean I’m not...with the grandchildren...I mean I’m sure I bathed the boys and all that but the tendency is for the women to go and bath them. You’ll be up there as backup, same with the grandchildren so I don’t sorta rush to do it but if somebody says it’s your turn to do it then I would go and bath them or change them. That’s my memory of it, I don’t remember shirking, I mean it was just...whatever was asked of you, you would do but I never had any hang-ups about doing it, but I’m well aware some men of my generation inherited a lot of habits of their fathers. I mean I cannae imagine my father ever bathing us or that, I mean it was exclusively the woman’s domain. So we moved on a stage...it just wasn’t the woman’s job to do all these things but there was probably an element of it, you bring it with you and you only evolve and change as you get older.<sup>657</sup>

While Ken explicitly compares himself to his father, who he claims would never have bathed children, he also acknowledges that he rarely bathed his own children or his grandchildren, doing so only as a ‘back up.’ Furthermore, while he was keen to highlight that he did not have a traditional attitude that men could not or should not

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<sup>657</sup> [SOHCA/054/07] Doran.

undertake housework and childcare, he also indicates that it was ‘natural’ for his wife to carry out certain tasks, referring to himself as his ‘father’s son’ with regard to housework. Ken’s wife, Margaret, who briefly joined the interview, recalled that ‘Ken didnae have any option with the twins...he had to...he was quite good, he didnae mind. He would have went out and hang out a washing, did all that. I mean I never washed a dish. Ken and the boys did the dishes at night but I did everything else [laughs].’<sup>658</sup> While Margaret notes that her husband did not have any option but to help, acknowledging that he ‘didnae mind’ and was ‘good’ for doing so implies that he in fact did have a choice, and that men were still not expected to be as competent in childcare as mothers. A key theme within Ken’s narrative, then, was that while he believed himself to be ‘liberal’ and ‘non-traditional’, there could be significant variation between his beliefs and his behaviour, both past and present. He noted, for example, ‘people might say you were just as bad as the rest of them. It’s not my recollection, I’ve always thought it [gender equality] but thinking it and being able to practice it are two different things.’<sup>659</sup>

Overall, the recorded narratives above indicate that a division of labour continued to exist well into the late twentieth century and beyond, both in ideology and practice. Within the small sample of men that I interviewed, change was evident over time; those who became fathers in the late 1980s were more likely to engage with notions of and recall memories of, equality and partnership, in comparison to older interviewees who generally emphasised their role as ‘helper.’ Overall, however, ‘sharing’ domestic chores and childcare held diverse meanings and there was significant variation for individual men over time. Men could negotiate their role as involved fathers within a framework of significant continuity in divisions of labour by ‘being there’, which the following section explores.

### ***‘You’ve got to be there, that’s it in a nutshell’***

At the centre of fatherhood is the father-child relationship. Although emotion and intimacy were not ‘new’ features of fatherhood to the late twentieth century, they were increasingly expected of ‘good’ fathering. Fisher has argued that perhaps the ‘most striking’ aspect of the Fathercraft movement, which in interwar Britain sought to

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<sup>658</sup> [SOHCA/054/07] Doran.

<sup>659</sup> [SOHCA/054/07] Doran.

educate fathers on the skills and knowledge required of male parenting, was ‘an emphasis on a loving, friendly and affectionate relationship between father and child.’<sup>660</sup> By 1960, King maintains, ‘a father’s instrumental role as a provider, disciplinarian, playmate and helper was not in itself enough: an emotional connection between father and child was prized.’<sup>661</sup> Codes of normative masculinity during this period could, however, prevent men from displaying these emotions, particularly in some groups and regions. In Scotland, the dominance of a ‘hard man’ masculinity largely prohibited the display of emotion or vulnerability in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and as Abrams argues, working-class fathers who publicly expressed their affection and emotion for their children ‘were in a minority.’<sup>662</sup>

A more openly emotional, and public style of fathering did become more prominent during the late twentieth century. Chapter One demonstrated that childbirth could be a highly moving experience for men, and the significant increase in fathers attending from the 1970s was central in signifying the emergence of a new form of emotionally engaged fathering and masculinity.<sup>663</sup> By the 1980s and 1990s, the importance of close father-child relationships was also highlighted in debates concerning the growth in divorce. As will be discussed in the next chapter, the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, for example, emphasised that it was in children's best interests that they maintain significant relationships with both parents, whether they were living together or apart, and many fathers, particularly those involved in the fathers’ rights movement, were openly challenging separation from their children, as well as voicing the difficult emotions associated with this experience.

A number of interviewees recall being openly affectionate and nurturing towards their children, as well as showing emotion in direct, embodied ways, particularly with infants and young children. Joseph believed that perhaps having three daughters and living in London during the 1970s, made him ‘much more touchy feely’: ‘we’ve always been very affectionate...we always make sure we love each other and we always say it, to this day.’<sup>664</sup> David L described his adoptive daughter as being ‘just a beautiful, wee girl that you cuddled, and you sat on your knee, and you watched television together, and you played with her.’<sup>665</sup> Leslie recalls his youngest son got into

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<sup>660</sup> Fisher, ‘Fatherhood and the British Fathercraft Movement’, p. 453.

<sup>661</sup> King, *Family Men*, p. 116.

<sup>662</sup> Abrams, ‘There was Nobody’, p. 241.

<sup>663</sup> Dermott, *Intimate Fatherhood*, p. 64.

<sup>664</sup> [SOHCA/054/02] ‘Joseph.’

<sup>665</sup> [SOHCA/054/20] Littlejohn.

the habit of sitting next to him before going to bed every evening as an infant: ‘he’d just voluntarily get up and come up and sit beside me and that wis his cue, and within two minutes he’d be sleeping. And then I’d just lift him through, put him in his bed...That wis his thing, he’d get tired and think right it’s time for bed noo, I’ll go up and sit beside ma dad.’<sup>666</sup> Though John reflected that he was ‘probably not overly touchy feely’, his memories indicate that he was, and is, often openly affectionate towards his children: ‘when they done something good, and you wanted to say “that’s absolutely brilliant” and I think also at times where things had gone a wee bit wrong for them...both of us were quite happy to gie them a wee hug, just to kinda reassure them, “don’t worry about it, things’ll be okay.”’<sup>667</sup>

While ‘closeness’ was deemed to be an important aspect of ideal fatherhood, individual practice and behaviours could vary. More traditional notions of masculinity could continue to exist in tension with or prevent some men from displaying their emotions outwardly. These ambiguities could exist in both public and private. Recalling telling his father that he was going to have a grandchild, Alistair noted ‘he embarrassingly gave me a hug [laughs] in the middle of a pub “put me down, there’s folk watching” [laughs].’<sup>668</sup> Leslie, on the other hand, commented that he ‘hardly slept’ before his son’s first day at school, but that he was not open about this, even to his partner: ‘we would discuss it, mibbe I wouldnae be as honest as I’m being now...mibbe didnae want tae been seen like a bit of wimp getting nervous about yer boy going tae the school.’<sup>669</sup> These narratives provide an interesting insight into masculinity at various stages in the life cycle. Alistair’s father publically showed him affection, from which at the time he recoiled, while Leslie admits to feeling worried about his son only now that he is ‘more mature.’ Moreover, some interviewees’ reflected that they had perhaps not been affectionate ‘enough’ or showed ‘enough’ emotion towards their children as they had expected to, or as they had felt. Donald, for example, had the ‘feeling’ that he ‘probably wasn’t as affectionate as I should have been. I was there if there was a problem, I’d support them if they were in trouble. But I probably wouldn’t turn around and say “that was brilliant” “that was good” “I love you.”’<sup>670</sup> Significant tensions could therefore exist between ideals surrounding open,

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<sup>666</sup> [SOHCA/054/08] Watson.

<sup>667</sup> [SOHCA/054/21] McSherry.

<sup>668</sup> [SOHCA/054/06] ‘Alistair.’

<sup>669</sup> [SOHCA/054/08] Watson.

<sup>670</sup> [SOHCA/054/27] ‘Donald.’

intimate fathering and the lived reality, a theme explored briefly in Chapter Two. Many reflected that ‘being there’ demonstrated the emotion, affection and love they felt towards their children.

‘Being there’ was evoked as being one of, if not the most significant, attribute of being a ‘good’ father, and was a phrase used by every one of my twenty-five interviewees. What it meant to ‘be there’ for their children could, however, take varied and multiple forms. Men evoked ‘being there’ physically as either an active or passive presence within the home. Robert noted ‘you just gotta be around’ and John D commented on the need ‘to be wae him, to be there for them, love them.’<sup>671</sup> For a couple of interviewees, being there meant physically caring for their children. James reflected that ‘you have to be totally immersed in the process, you have to be prepared to just be there’, while Jake recalled, ‘I was always there for both, for everything, bringing them up around the house. Teaching them things. Eating, speaking, walking.’<sup>672</sup> Interviewees emphasised not just the amount of time spent at home, but also the quality of it, and the importance of showing an active interest in their children’s lives. Tam stressed the need to ‘interact wae them, listen tae them and if they wanted tae dae something, then be interested in it, say “I’ll dae that”’, as did Charlie: ‘engage wae them, be there, interact wae them... the most important thing you can give them is your time.’<sup>673</sup>

Other interviewees reflected upon being there for their children in times of need, when they required help or advice. Gerry highlighted, ‘making sure if they lift the phone, you’re there for them and help them out’, while Frank noted ‘you wanted to be a friend that they could talk to, you could help them if they needed help and you were just there for them.’<sup>674</sup> It was expected that they should be approachable and emotionally available to their children, even in adulthood. For Ken, ‘I’ve always said to them that there’s nothing that they shouldn’t be able to approach me on, whether it’s sex, gambling, drugs whatever’, while John emphasised the need to be ‘someone they can come to, someone they can talk to about things, they can feel comfortable around.’<sup>675</sup> For Tam, fathering also meant caring emotionally for his children, ‘it’s about the whole aspect a shoulder tae cry on.’<sup>676</sup> He described having been there for

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<sup>671</sup> [SOHCA/054/05] Speedie; [SOHCA/054/17] Duffy.

<sup>672</sup> [SOHCA/054/15] Oakes; [SOHCA/054/24] ‘Jake.’

<sup>673</sup> [SOHCA/054/10] McGrail; [SOHCA/054/18] McKay.

<sup>674</sup> [SOHCA/054/22] Farrell; [SOHCA/054/16] McGeoghegan.

<sup>675</sup> [SOHCA/054/07] Doran; [SOHCA/054/21] McSherry.

<sup>676</sup> [SOHCA/054/10] McGrail.

his daughters, born in 1986, 1988 and 1991, and still being ‘part of their life’ as his ‘greatest achievement’, ‘I think no having a father...I just wanted them to know that I was there and loved them and that I was always there. And that’s probably the only thing that I want ma kids to remember me for, that I was always there, and I am always there’:

If they had got scared...[daughter] used tae have night terrors and...she’d be lying in the middle and we’d be lying oot the bed at either end. But the wee soul...that’s important tae her, “Darling you come in here, this is your wee safe haven.” They can come in here and escape and they know they’re safe [...] Just gie me aw yer worries kid, I’m fine wae that. And if I was on a downer, I mean remember I lost ma job and ye cannae share that wae them. That tae me was important that ye didnae “aw god, we cannae dae that, I’ve nae money” and then you start taking it oot on them...It’s not that ye want tae shield them fae life forever but it’s important that... “aw can we no get that the day?” “ach naw I forgot tae get that darling” which really meant I couldnae afford tae get that the day but ye telt them a wee white lie. It was important no tae share ma problems...or let anything that was worrying me, worry them cause they’ve got their own wee lives.<sup>677</sup>

Tam’s narrative of providing a ‘safe haven’ for his children was echoed by a number of my interviewees, who considered that the family home should be a place where children feel happy, content and safe. As Frank F highlighted, an important element of being a father is ensuring that children ‘felt good about themselves being at home in a family unit’, whilst James noted fathering is about ‘being close to your children, growing up with them, and taking responsibility. Trying to make them happy and secure and optimistic.’<sup>678</sup> Pat commented that the home ‘has to be loving’ a ‘sort of a refuge’: ‘you want your kids to know when they’re at home they’re safe, they’re going to be protected, they’re going to be looked after.’<sup>679</sup> Elements of ‘being there’ could also exhibit both continuity and change over time. As Alistair noted, ‘being there will have different forms as they grow’: ‘being there for a two year old is not the same as being there for a forty year old... safe and happy means different things as they get older...happiness is much more complex when you get to forty and how much you can influence that.’<sup>680</sup> These narratives therefore undermine the notion that fathers contributed ‘remarkably little’ to the emotional life of the family. Many men believed

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<sup>677</sup> [SOHCA/054/10] McGrail.

<sup>678</sup> [SOHCA/054/25] Fleming; [SOHCA/054/15] Oakes.

<sup>679</sup> [SOHCA/054/11] Clark.

<sup>680</sup> [SOHCA/054/06] ‘Alistair.’

themselves to be influential and significant to their children and their memories highlight intimacy in their fathering relationships.

Overall, the testimonies above explore what ‘involved’ fathering means to this group of men, how they view the *ideal* of the ‘good’ father. Emotion, as well as being approachable and reliable, was central to this conception, as they emphasised the need to ‘be there’ for their children in varied and diverse ways. The following sections explore fathers’ other roles in the family, in relation to discipline, child development and leisure, and how their desire for close father-child relationships impacted on each. These roles, as demonstrated in Chapter Two, have long been associated with fathers, and were also examined by King in her analysis of British fatherhood in the period 1914-1960.<sup>681</sup>

### ***‘Wait till your daddy gets in?’ Discipline and Authority***

The emphasis on close father-child relationships meant that most of the fathers I interviewed were keen to distance themselves from the notion of the strict, authoritarian father figure. During the late twentieth century, men’s authority and status as the head of the household was further contested. Second wave feminism challenged the fundamentally unequal status of women, while legislation such as the Divorce Act 1967 and the growing convergence of men and women’s paid work, shifted men’s position within the family hierarchy, as did changing understandings of child welfare, including a legal shift from parental rights to responsibilities.<sup>682</sup> However, the father’s role and status in discipline remained contradictory in cultural and, in particular, political discourses during this period. As noted, there were growing concerns over ‘fatherless families’, and in response, fathers were emphasised as necessary because they provided authority and discipline, and a gendered role model to children.<sup>683</sup>

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<sup>681</sup> King, *Family Men*.

<sup>682</sup> S. Kraemer, ‘What are Fathers For?’ in C. Burck and B. Speed (eds.), *Gender, Power and Relationships* (London, 1995), pp. 202-217.

<sup>683</sup> These discourses were highly similar to those during the Second World War, in which the rise of delinquency was often linked to the absence of fathers and working mothers. Lewis, ‘The Problem of Fathers’; Lees, ‘Will boys be left on the shelf?’; L. F. Harding, “‘Family Values’ and Conservative Government Policy: 1979-1997’ in G. Jagger and C. Wright (eds.), *Changing Family Values* (London, 1999), pg. 119-135.

Many of my interviewees were often framed as the ultimate disciplinarian, despite feeling discomfort with this role. Anthony felt that he was left with ‘no alternative’: ‘it was always “you better behave or I’ll tell your father when he comes home”...so you’re sort of portrayed as the bad guy because “if you don’t behave, I’m gonnae tell your dad.”’<sup>684</sup> Similarly, Donald commented that this routine was not an ‘ideal situation’: ‘I got the feeling at times she was waiting for me to come home...and I also felt that doing that...it made me look like a bad man.’<sup>685</sup> These narratives demonstrate the way in which fathers continued to be perceived as being the final word in relation to discipline, perpetuated by mothers’ threat, and that they resented this role for fear that it might jeopardise the father-child relationship. Lewis’ 1980s study similarly found that two-thirds of fathers’ reported feeling uneasy about taking a disciplinary stance. They were less likely to leave a baby to cry, more likely to regard themselves as soft, and to describe the father-child relationship as more indulgent than that of mothers; sixteen of the thirty mothers interviewed criticised their husband’s laidback approach to discipline. As Lewis concluded ‘most men appear reluctant to live up to the stereotype that has existed for generations and which their wives often expect of them.’<sup>686</sup>

The expectation that fathers were more authoritative and the parent better suited to giving out discipline could therefore often fail to connect with their own expectations or identities as fathers. Pat recalls that he ‘supposed to be bad cop’ but ‘wisnae cut out’ for it: ‘I’m too soft. I would say, “Right, you’re not getting out” and then about an hour later “och that’s a sin.”’<sup>687</sup> Being a disciplinary figure did not necessarily come easily or naturally to fathers, even when they identified as being the ‘stricter’ parent. Charlie, for example, reflected:

I can remember one time we fell out. I had an argument wae [daughter] I think she was about ten at the time. She was wanting something, and I said “it’s not happening, you’re no getting it.” “I’m leaving!” Well I said “the door is there if you want to leave!” She put on her coat and walked oot and it was the most horrible feeling I’ve ever had in my life and I ended up following her...she went to ma pals’ hoose who stayed about 500 yards away and it was the worst feeling I’ve ever had in ma life. I never for a

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<sup>684</sup> [SOHCA/054/14] ‘Anthony.’

<sup>685</sup> [SOHCA/054/27] ‘Donald’

<sup>686</sup> Lewis, *Becoming a Father*, pp. 126-28.

<sup>687</sup> [SOHCA/054/11] Clark.



minute thought she would put her coat on and walk out. I never ever said that again [laughs].<sup>688</sup>

Anthony similarly remembers hiding ‘behind the curtain looking out’ after his six year old daughter decided to leave: ‘she’s looking back to see if I’ve came out after her and so I waited and I waited and then I could see her keeking round this hedge [laughs].’<sup>689</sup> Such testimonies demonstrate that despite the continuing association between fathers and discipline, often this did not take the form of direct confrontation or imposing parental authority but could instead take many forms.

Many mothers were recalled as being the main disciplinarians, a trend identified by a number of contemporary and historical twentieth century studies of family life.<sup>690</sup> For Robert, born in 1945, it was important to defer discipline of his two children, born in 1971 and 1973, to his wife, Sandra. Being in the Navy, he would travel for long periods, sometimes up to four months at a time. Although he felt it was important not to return home ‘sorta banging the drum’, he reflected that this meant he was ‘a junior partner in the parent ratio.’ Below, it is possible that Robert felt discomposure when recalling working away during his daughters ‘most formative years’, as he actively sought to change the conversation:

Robert: You always had to make sure that you weren’t the big bad guy either, you couldn’t say “well no you’re not doing that”, you’d say “ask your mum” [laughs] [...] you could either be too hard, be too soft, be too nice, be too nasty, you know, you didn’t want tae to get any of these labels because you weren’t there all the time you couldn’t be consistently good, or bad or indifferent so you really had to defer these things to your wife cause it would be unfair for you always be Mr. Nice Guy or the Mr. Bad Guy, whichever you know [...]

Sandra: [laughs] I know, and when he came ashore, it tended to be just “well you better see what your mum says” cause it had always been that way for them and I suppose you were away their most informative years. Don’t they say they learn most...

Robert: Do you think we evolved through our parents? As you said earlier, that my mother was a housewife, my father earned the money and we very much followed that guideline didn’t we? In the main. You were at home, and your mother was at home.<sup>691</sup>

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<sup>688</sup> [SOHCA/054/18] McKay.

<sup>689</sup> [SOHCA/054/14] ‘Anthony.’

<sup>690</sup> Abrams, ‘There was Nobody’; King, *Family Men*; Bourke, *Working-Class Cultures*; Fisher, ‘Fatherhood and the Experience of Working-Class Fathers.’

<sup>691</sup> [SOHCA/054/05] Speedie.

Tam, on the other hand, recalled the benefits which resulted from being ‘the laid back one.’ He noted that he and his wife, ‘agreed to disagree’ when it came to discipline, that she was ‘the disciplinarian’ and ‘always quite strict.’<sup>692</sup> He perceived himself as being more indulgent and affectionate towards his three daughters:

[Wife] would tell them off and I would say “look your mum’s right, you shouldnae have done that...but anyway, when she’s not here I’ll gie ye this or that, or go to your room you’re no getting anything, shhh, don’t tell yer mammy.” [...] I made it easier for them I think, if they got a row after I’d say “right, you’re not gonnae do that again, come on, we’ll dae this”...okay they might have thought at the time aw ma mammy’s bad but ma daddy’s good, but I was just making it a wee bit easier.<sup>693</sup>

While a number of men shied away from the role of disciplinarian, they nevertheless reflected a key function of being a father, which was to guide and shape their children’s development. Frank’s sole goal, for example, was to ensure his children became ‘decent human beings’: ‘it was up to you to bring them up in the way you saw think fit and proper...You want them to behave in a decent way so that’s what I saw as my role, so I suppose educational in a way.’<sup>694</sup> Kenneth, born in 1954, continually emphasised the need to ‘morally bring them up the right way’, proudly noting that he could ‘put they kids into anybody’s hoose.’ Kenneth, who has three children born in 1975, 1983 and 1986 also emphasised that this was achieved without imposing authority, maintaining ‘you never get results wae dictating’: ‘just trying tae teach them good manners, how to say thank you and how to say please, how to respect [...] I’ve never believed or thought you could achieve the right upbringing through fear.’<sup>695</sup>

Although fathers emphasised their authority in giving children boundaries, guidance and values, not being a strict, unapproachable, authoritative figure was deemed important in allowing them to develop in their ‘own way.’ While Pat highlighted the need to bring his children up with ‘proper values’, and to have ‘a proper moral compass’, it was also important to let them ‘develop in the way they want to develop’: ‘you let them do what they want to do, rather than trying to force them into doing things that you think they should maybe be doing.’<sup>696</sup> Ian made the ‘conscious

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<sup>692</sup> [SOHCA/054/10] McGrail.

<sup>693</sup> [SOHCA/054/10] McGrail.

<sup>694</sup> [SOHCA/054/16] McGeoghegan.

<sup>695</sup> [SOHCA/054/26] Paul.

<sup>696</sup> [SOHCA/054/11] Clark.

decision' not to 'live my life through my kids': 'I just wanted to be a supportive parent rather than forcing them into doing something they didnae want to do', while Joe emphasised the need to 'guide them in doing the right thing, but not telling them what to do [...] always be there for them, and listen to them.'<sup>697</sup> Guiding and developing children, as well as being supportive of them and their decisions, clearly changed over time as children grew older. John, for example, spoke for many interviewees when he highlighted the need to 'be there for them when they needed help, leave them alone when they didnae need help', as well as 'encourage them to think for and to act for themselves':

It's trying to understand your children, and the phases they're going through, try to be there for your children when they need ye, supporting children as much as you can either financially or emotionally and I think it's also [pause] being friendly without being their friend [...] I think that's important as part of being a good parent that as well as loving your children, as well as looking after your children and giving them the best you can, it's also giving them an idea of the boundaries, and it's also not about giving them everything they want, or everything they think they want. It's to teach them a sense of value as much as anything [...] so it's about giving the kids a sense of not only who they are but a sense of value that they understand life and are able to move on with life their self and handle things.<sup>698</sup>

Overall, the oral testimonies indicate a variety of behaviours regarding disciplining children. Although political discourses continued to position fathers as the ultimate figure of authority and discipline, men valued closed relationships with their children, and often did not want to disrupt what time they had with them, around paid work, by being the 'bad guy.' Instead, most of the fathers I interviewed emphasised the need to spend time meaningfully, and in ways which fostered the father-child relationship. The following section explores how they remember this time being spent, with the emphasis being on play and leisure.

### ***Father-child time***

Like that of disciplinarian, the role of the father as 'playmate' is a long established one. Abrams, for example, found that working-class fathers in Scotland during the late

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<sup>697</sup> [SOHCA/054/04] Robb; [SOHCA/054/23] Farrell.

<sup>698</sup> [SOHCA/054/21] McSherry.

nineteenth and early twentieth centuries could be indulgent figures, who ‘squeezed their affection for their children in around the edges of a crowded family life and a long working week.’<sup>699</sup> In post-war Britain, King has demonstrated that changing circumstances of family life including higher standards of living and improvements in housing encouraged men to embrace fatherhood in more meaningful ways, and meant that playing with children could be completed within a man’s own leisure time in the home.<sup>700</sup> Scotland’s post-war New Towns, for example, were planned to provide opportunities for family leisure, in comparison to traditional, urban areas and industrial settings where gender segregated leisure remained significant.<sup>701</sup> These trends continued into the late twentieth century as the changing nature of work and the expansion of television, overseas holidays, car and home ownership during this period ‘created a more privatised way of life and consumerist mentality.’<sup>702</sup> The growth of ‘family’ pubs and restaurants, for example, similarly facilitated such a shift to family-oriented as opposed to male-only leisure pursuits.<sup>703</sup> Moreover, there was emphasis on child-centred time and on fathers engaging in activities that were *for* children, outside of the home.<sup>704</sup> Warin et al’s study of working-class fathers and teenagers in the 1980s found, for example, that fathering took place in a range of settings, with men spending significant amounts of time with their children on hobby-related activities.<sup>705</sup>

Among my interviewees, spending time with children was recalled as being significant for both father and child, as well their relationship. Chapter Three demonstrated the significant tensions which could emerge between work and family commitments for men, and as a result, the meaning and quality of time spent together was emphasised over the quantity of time. Ken noted ‘you spent what time you had meaningfully with them’, Pat commented on the importance of making ‘use of the time that you do have available’, while Ian reflected, ‘when you did come home, I wanted time reading bedtime stories [...] I quite liked that time at night, I liked to try and make something of it.’<sup>706</sup> Time spent with children on a one to one basis while their

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<sup>699</sup> Abrams, ‘There was Nobody’, p. 242.

<sup>700</sup> King, ‘Hidden Fathers?’; King, *Family Men*.

<sup>701</sup> Abrams and Fleming, ‘From Scullery to Conservatory’; Wight, *Workers, Not Wasters*.

<sup>702</sup> Knox, *Industrial Nation*, chapter 27.

<sup>703</sup> Lambert, ‘Leisure and Recreation.’

<sup>704</sup> Simms and Smith, ‘Young Fathers’, p. 147; Lewis, *Becoming a Father*, p. 142.

<sup>705</sup> Warin et al, *Fathers, Work and Family Life*.

<sup>706</sup> [SOHCA/054/07] Doran; [SOHCA/054/11] Clark; [SOHCA/054/04] Robb.

partners worked, often on the weekend, was also significant for men. David L, born in 1941, recalled that when his wife worked at the weekends, it was him and ‘the wee one’: ‘You had her all to yourself. That was really...that was my time then.’<sup>707</sup> His eldest child, a daughter, was born in 1980 and adopted by David and his wife fifteen months later. Alistair similarly enjoyed the time he was able to spend with his children at weekends when his wife was working, particularly in relation to their hobbies. He described the vicarious satisfaction he derived from these activities:

If they are happiest when they’re doing horse-riding or ice skating, they’re talking about it, looking at books, or drawing horses, I’m happy wae that...I didn’t have any hobbies of my own in a way, it felt like my satisfaction and happiness was vicarious. That people might play five-a-side football, I did all the things like that through my children...This is what makes them happy, and seeing them happy makes me happy.<sup>708</sup>

That time spent with their children was ‘activity based’ indicates the significant amount of, and importance of fathering which took place outside of the home.<sup>709</sup> With two jobs, Tam’s fathering, for example, was similarly remembered as being special or significant on a Saturday, and he noted at numerous points during the interview that it was ‘always ma day wae ma lassies and I looked forward to it.’<sup>710</sup> Tam perceived this as part of ‘being there’ and being a ‘good’ father, commenting ‘I had tae make a point of...wasnae just gonnae go tae the pub and fall asleep on the couch, I wanted to be there for them’:

It was interacting with them and if they were interested in dain something, “right that’s great”, “what did you do at school the day darling?” “Dad, can ye help me with this?” and I wanted to be the go to guy...I just liked to interact with them, build snowmen with them and go walks down the park. Show them stupid things like, “that’s an acorn darling and that’ll grow into a big oak tree.” And things like make paper aeroplanes and throw them and just generally be there wae them.<sup>711</sup>

Tam’s narrative highlights a number of themes noted by interviewees. Not only was time spent together child-oriented, it was often free, such as going for walks and

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<sup>707</sup> [SOHCA/054/20] Littlejohn.

<sup>708</sup> [SOHCA/054/06] ‘Alistair.’

<sup>709</sup> [SOHCA/054/04] Robb.

<sup>710</sup> [SOHCA/054/10] McGrail.

<sup>711</sup> [SOHCA/054/10] McGrail.

learning about nature, activities which, as demonstrated in Chapter Two, many interviewees recalled doing with their own fathers. Charlie, for example, similarly reflected upon the importance and frequency of ‘simple’ leisure time.<sup>712</sup> As he recalls, ‘any free time I had we would spend as a family. It’s not as if I went out on my own’, ‘my time was their time’:

Take them to the park, take them to the beach, play in the house, everything, anything...just wrap them up and take them out, down the beach and throw stones in the water, anything at all, simple things. It didnae cost us anything, we didnae have a lot of money so we just spend time wae them [...] That’s the most important thing you can give them, is your time [...] If you spend time with kids, they get aw they need aff ye.<sup>713</sup>

How fathers would spend time with their children, and how often, could vary by the gender of their children. Ian highlighted that while he did not spend any less time, or feel any less of a connection with his daughter, ‘the dads tended to go with the boys to football and the mums tended to go with the girls to horse riding and dancing...as they got older, there was more of a split in what hobbies and activities they got involved in.’<sup>714</sup> Alistair, despite being responsible for taking his two daughters to their horse riding and ice skating activities each weekend, nevertheless highlighted this distinction, noting that ‘a father to girls is probably more difficult than boys, there’s nothing you can normally relate to in terms of socialising, you couldnae...I tried to take the girls to the football.’<sup>715</sup>

For others, the gender of their children did have an impact as they reflected on having more ‘involvement’ with their sons than their daughters because of their shared gender. Football in particular was indicated as being a significant father-son activity. Donald recalled that because his wife took his daughters to ‘girly things’, he did not have the same responsibilities as would be the case for the ‘father and son routine.’<sup>716</sup> For Anthony, the gender of his children impacted quite significantly on the time and ways in which he would spend time with them: ‘if it’s a girl you can’t have as much perhaps involvement with them [...] if it’s a boy, I can take him out walks, play football. I can still do things with a girl, I did things with the girl but with a boy you can do

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<sup>712</sup> [SOHCA/054/14] ‘Anthony.’

<sup>713</sup> [SOHCA/054/18] McKay.

<sup>714</sup> [SOHCA/054/04] Robb.

<sup>715</sup> [SOHCA/054/06] ‘Alistair.’

<sup>716</sup> [SOHCA/054/27] ‘Donald.’

boyish things.<sup>717</sup> Finally, given Robert's employment at sea, he reflected that 'it was probably a good fortune that I didn't have any sons', as did his wife Sandra:

Sandra: From my point of view, we'd always said that in a way...maybe...you never ever ever said you wished you'd had a son, you've never said that...

Robert: No, No.

Sandra:...at any time, but from my point of view it was probably quite good cause I had been a Brown Owl, it was always wee girls that I had dealt with so I felt I could cope with these wee girls quite well but if I'd had boys to take to football I'd probably need to have got...

Robert: Well that's what I'm...I wouldn't have been able to take them to the football. So it worked out actually quite well.

Sandra: [laughs] It probably worked out well that I had the two girls cause it was easier for me to cope with, and the fact there were only two years between them and they liked much doing the same thing. So say if you'd had to get a wee girl to go to this on a Saturday morning and a wee boy wanting to go to football, I...

Robert: You wouldn't have coped.

Sandra: I wouldn't have coped [laughs] I would have had to [rousted?] my brother or something like that, my dad or somebody to help.<sup>718</sup>

The notion that Sandra 'wouldn't have coped' with boys rationalises Robert's time at sea. Indeed, during their interview, the desire for composure as well as diverse inter-subjectivities was evident as they both reflected upon family life. When asked how he would spend his time at home, for example, Sandra was very keen to portray Robert as a 'good' father and emphasise that he did in fact take the children out:

Aimee: How would you spend your months when you were home?

Robert: I don't know, what did we do? You had to compensate, you had so much to squeeze in.

Sandra: I mean *you did take the girls out* [my emphasis] a lot during the day, take them round Hogganfield Loch, *you did take the girls out* then, you took them out onto the middle reservation...*but you did take them out*.

Robert: I had a squad of the kids, it wasn't just...

Sandra: It was the other kids in the neighbourhood too. No you did, *you took them out*.

Robert:...Oh aye, you had a lot to squeeze into that month.<sup>719</sup>

Overall, the narratives collected highlight the significant role fathers continued to perform in relation to play and leisure, how meaningful this time was to them and also

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<sup>717</sup> [SOHCA/054/14] 'Anthony.'

<sup>718</sup> [SOHCA/054/05] Speedie.

<sup>719</sup> [SOHCA/054/05] Speedie.

the ways in which gender could impact on how fathers interacted with their children, and perhaps influence the relationships they then developed with them. There was continuity from earlier periods in relation to activities, but there was a further shift and emphasis on fathers engaging in activities that were *for* children, and spending time as a family. Their involvement and interaction with children could enable them to engage with notions of 'involved' fatherhood, while maintaining the role of provider and without necessarily undertaking an equal division of unpaid labour in the home.

## ***Conclusions***

During the late twentieth century, the 'traditional' roles and responsibilities of fathers were perceived to be changing in the wake of significant social, economic and demographic change. Men's roles in the family were also increasingly observed and discussed, by politicians, social researchers and the media, in contradictory ways. The role of breadwinner, for example, was perceived to be under threat and held in opposition to 'involvement', but was also emphasised and still largely dominant in public and personal conceptions of fatherhood.

Although Chapter Two demonstrated the repetition of discourses stressing the novelty of 'new' fatherhood practices, there *were* significant changes to the way in which men carried out their fathering roles, and the context in which they were enacted. Practical care of children by fathers, on the whole, was no longer perceived to undermine masculinity and there was an increased visibility of fathering in public. Moreover, while providing remained important to many fathers and a key component of 'good' fatherhood, this role was increasingly shared with mothers and there were shifting perspectives on how fathers should engage in childcare balanced with their financial responsibilities. There were also further shifts towards family and child-centred leisure, a decline in men's position of authority in the home, and increasing emphasis placed upon emotionally involved fathering. Fundamentally, men reflected upon and emphasised the quality of relationships they experienced, or hoped they had achieved, with their children.

There were also strong elements of continuity in men's roles in the family, however. Most significantly, the ideal of the sensitive, hands-on father was not matched with a substantial shift in the gendered division of domestic labour and childcare, for which women continued to be perceived as 'naturally' responsible.



Men's participation in these areas increased but being an 'involved' father may not have depended upon physical care to the same extent as mothers, or on housework at all. The recorded narratives suggest that the relationship between fatherhood and masculinity was fluid and complex during this period. Just as a simple classification between *either* continuity *or* change is problematic - in the interviews, men associated with ideals of 'new' fatherhood but also with more traditional elements such as breadwinning. Divergent discourses about fathering instead co-existed, and provided a range that men could draw upon in constructing their identities. As a result, there was greater fluidity of gender and parenting roles, as well as some convergence in the position of women and men in society more widely, despite persistent gender inequalities. Within the interviews, the ideals men endorsed did not always correspond with their own experiences, highlighting a gap between cultural standards and lived realities. The narratives collected feature a number of tensions, as men sought to reconcile the constructions of fatherhood available to them, both past and present.

Overall, fatherhood occupied a significant place in the lives of these working-class men, who fulfilled a number of roles within the family, and conceptualised father 'involvement' in diverse ways. They saw themselves simultaneously friends, playmates, disciplinarians, carers and moral guides, and the oral testimonies evidence a wide variety of fathering behaviours and attitudes in relation to these roles. The recorded narratives also provide insight into the emotions that men felt as fathers, the emphasis they placed on 'being there' and the strong feelings of love and responsibility they felt for their children. As the final two chapters will explore, fathers' roles and their ability to 'be there' could be significantly affected by divorce, separation or lone parenthood, and have implications for men's fathering identities.

## CHAPTER FIVE ‘Families Need Fathers?’ Changing Families, Changing Fathers

In 1993, the Scottish Office White paper, *Scotland's Children* asserted that ‘many of our children now experience diverse forms of family life.’<sup>720</sup> Divorce, cohabitation, remarriage, as well as childbirth and parenting outside of marriage, were established features, having increased significantly from the 1970s.<sup>721</sup> In Scotland, the percentage of births to unmarried parents increased from 10% in 1979 to 27% in 1990, by which point one-parent families constituted one in six families with dependent children.<sup>722</sup> In 1970, one in ten of those marrying were widowed or divorced and there were 2000 divorces. In 1999, this figure had increased to one in three, and there were 12,000 divorces.<sup>723</sup> By the 1990s, 20% of children would not spend all of their childhood with both of their biological parents.<sup>724</sup>

These demographic changes, demonstrated in figures 5.1 and 5.2, had a significant impact upon the nature of fatherhood, both as a cultural construct and as a lived experience. One consequence was the growing numbers of fathers who did not live with their children, whether for some or all of the time. Following divorce, made easier by the Divorce (Scotland) Act 1976, children were overwhelmingly more likely to live with their mother, and it was estimated that as many as 90% of fathers who divorced became non-resident parents during this period.<sup>725</sup> Whilst there are significant problems in reasonably estimating the exact numbers of non-resident fathers, Jonathan Bradshaw et al’s 1999 study of over 600 non-resident fathers in Britain estimated that for men between the ages of sixteen and sixty-five, as many as one in seven was a non-resident father.<sup>726</sup>

Prior to the late twentieth century it was not uncommon for people to have sex before marriage, for women to parent alone, for marriage and relationships to break down, and for fathers to be more or less absent from their children through death,

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<sup>720</sup> Scottish Office, *Scotland's Children: Proposals for Childcare Policy and Law* (Edinburgh, 1993), p. 2.

<sup>721</sup> Scottish Executive, *Family Formation and Dissolution*; Hinds and Jamieson, ‘Rejecting Traditional Family Building?’

<sup>722</sup> Scottish Office, *Scotland's Children*, p. 1.

<sup>723</sup> Scottish Executive, *Men and Women in Scotland: A Statistical Profile* (Edinburgh, 2001), p. 12.

<sup>724</sup> Glasgow Caledonian University Archives, Records of One-Parent Families Scotland (OPFS), Box 4: ‘Family Mediation Scotland, Families in the 1990s: The Challenge for the Education Service - Conference Programme’ (1993)

<sup>725</sup> M. Lund, ‘The Non-Custodial Father: Common Challenges in Parenting after Divorce’ in C. Lewis and M. O’Brien (eds.), *Reassessing Fatherhood: New Observations and the Modern Family* (London, 1987), p. 212.

<sup>726</sup> J. Bradshaw, C. Stimson, C. Skinner and J. Williams, *Absent Fathers?* (London, 1999), p. 4.

desertion, hospitalisation, imprisonment and working away from home.<sup>727</sup> Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, however, there was growing political concern over these shifting family patterns and about the role of fathers after divorce and outside of marriage, particularly within the New Right Conservative Government. Such trends, alongside the weakening of the male breadwinner role outlined in Chapter Three, were considered to be contributing to a 'crisis in fatherhood' and furthermore, to the 'decline' of the 'traditional' family.<sup>728</sup> The roles, rights and responsibilities of fathers, and questions of masculinity, explicitly entered the political agenda during this period as a result. There was debate about what 'the family' meant, whether fathers were needed and what kinds of fathers they should be.<sup>729</sup>

In contrast, when sociologist Dulan Barber proposed his study of *Unmarried Fathers* in the mid-1970s, he was 'greeted with general incomprehension.'<sup>730</sup> Such fathers, he argued, had been given little consideration:

Little is known, said or written about unmarried fathers because society expects them to remove themselves, even to turn away, from the situation they have helped to create [...] Society offers no other model to the unmarried father and certainly does not take into consideration his feelings and problems [...] Society bewails the fact there is nothing to be done with him – and never tries to do anything with him.<sup>731</sup>

In the space of a mere decade however, Barber's observations were increasingly out of date. By the late 1980s, there was much said about unmarried, divorced and separated fathers, many men were expressing their 'feelings and problems' in relation to their rights and responsibilities as parents, while the government, policy makers and politicians did attempt to 'do something.' Legal and social policies on parenting, for example, shifted to reflect the growing reality that family relationships may not be connected through marriage or shared residence and made 'conscious and purposeful attempts' at keeping fathers connected to their children, both inside and outside of

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<sup>727</sup> Prior to the late twentieth century, illegitimacy was usually the result of 'a failed courtship' and formal divorce remained rare. See e.g. 'A History of Working-Class Marriage in Scotland 1855-1976'; Thane, 'Happy Families?'

<sup>728</sup> See e.g. Westwood, 'Feckless Fathers'; Jagger and Wright, *Changing Family Values*.

<sup>729</sup> Lewis, 'The Problem of Fathers'; Collier and Sheldon, *Fragmenting Fatherhood*; Collier, 'A Hard Time to be a Father?'

<sup>730</sup> D. Barber, *Unmarried Fathers* (London, 1975), p. 15.

<sup>731</sup> *Ibid*, p. 20-21.

marriage.<sup>732</sup> This period similarly witnessed the emergence of Fathers Rights groups such as Families Need Fathers (1974) and Fathers 4 Justice (2002), which campaign for greater access to children on divorce.<sup>733</sup>

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<sup>732</sup> Hobson, *Making Men into Fathers*, p. 1. See e.g. Burgess and Buxton, *Men and their Children*; Sarre, *A Place for Fathers*.

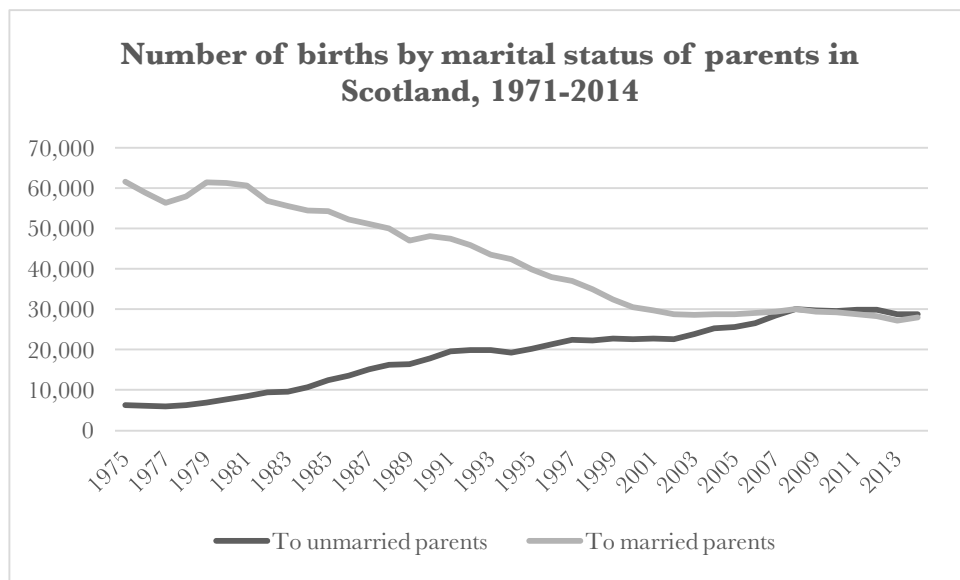
<sup>733</sup> N.V. Love, 'The Legal Status of Fathers: Past and Present' in L. McKee and M. O'Brien (eds.), *The Father Figure* (London, 1982), p. 31.

**Figure 5.1**



Source: National Records of Scotland, Registrar General Scotland, Divorces Time Series Data, Table: Divorces, Scotland, 1855 to 2011, [www.nrscotland.gov.uk](http://www.nrscotland.gov.uk), accessed 9 May 2017.

**Figure 5.2**



Source: National Records of Scotland, 'Registrar General's Annual Review of Demographic Trends' (2015), Infographic Report, Figure 2.2: Number of births by marital status of their parents, Scotland, 1975-2015, [www.nrscotland.gov.uk](http://www.nrscotland.gov.uk), accessed 9 May 2017.

This chapter explores the political and public representations of non-resident and unmarried fatherhood in the late twentieth century, as well as the recorded narratives of Scottish men who became non-resident fathers during this period. It will examine

political concerns surrounding the growing separation of marriage and parenthood, as well as the legal and social policy responses to such concerns in the form of the Child Support Act 1991 and the Children (Scotland) Act 1995. Both pieces of legislation highlight the competing and often contradictory discourses surrounding fatherhood. While some fathers were believed to be more ‘involved’ in child rearing and nurturing, other groups were presented as emotionally and physically distant, failing to fulfil their ‘traditional’ economic and authoritarian roles.<sup>734</sup> It will thereafter explore the lived experiences of non-resident and unmarried fathers, arguing that complex economic, practical and personal factors influenced both frequency of contact with children and father-child relationships.

While non-resident fathers are defined as fathers of biological children with whom they no longer lived, this definition can be problematic. Many fathers may be resident for some periods of time with children who normally live in another household, while the level of involvement by non-resident fathers may in fact be higher than those who live with their children.<sup>735</sup> It can refer to divorced or separated fathers who have had significant, long-term relationships with their children’s mother as well as to those who are perhaps unaware they are fathers at all. Moreover, most fathers eventually become non-resident if their dependent children leave home, and while in political discourses ‘absent’ fathers are often assumed to be unmarried, many unmarried fathers are resident with their children, and in stable, cohabitating relationships. Experiences of fathering are also inevitably mediated by a variety of factors such as age, class and geographical location, and beyond the significant differences that exist between social groups, what it means to be a father may vary significantly between individual men. Divorce, cohabitation and remarriage in the last decades of the twentieth century have produced diverse and fluid contexts in which fathering takes place, and men may experience more than one ‘type’ of fatherhood over their life-course. By the end of this period, it was not uncommon for a divorced father to have various caring and financial responsibilities across households. As O’Brien has argued, ‘probably more than at any time in history, fathers, both biological and social, confront a range of decisions about how to conduct their kin and non-kin relationships.’<sup>736</sup> Finally, some men may not identify as being ‘non-resident’,

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<sup>734</sup> Gregory and Milner, ‘What is “New” about Fatherhood?’, p. 590.

<sup>735</sup> Bradshaw et al, *Absent Fathers?*; Burghes et al, *Fathers and Fatherhood in Britain*.

<sup>736</sup> M. O’Brien, *Shared Caring: Bringing Fathers into the Frame* (Manchester, 2005), p. 20.

instead viewing themselves as simply fathers. The following section explores the ways in which politicians, policy makers and the media have sought to characterise them.

### ***‘Feckless Fathers?’***

Non-resident fathers have largely been depicted in a negative way. In 1999 during a debate about marriage, Lord Ashbourne, for example, asserted that ‘there are whole communities where committed fatherhood is virtually unknown.’<sup>737</sup> So called ‘absent’ fathers were predominantly represented by the ruling Conservative Government as being ‘feckless’ and ‘errant’, purposely avoiding or failing to fulfil the responsibilities of fatherhood. The negative discourses surrounding non-resident fathers were, as noted, part of wider popular debate about the ‘decline’ of the ‘traditional’ family, and linked to juvenile delinquency, illegitimacy and unemployment.<sup>738</sup> Using the 1950s as a benchmark for family norms, a period in which marital and child-rearing patterns were a historical anomaly, demographic statistics on rising divorce and lone-parent families were contrasted with political discourses of what the family should be, and employed as evidence of a decline in morality.<sup>739</sup> The Local Government Minister for the Conservatives, Dr Rhodes Boyson, for example, publically condemned lone mothers as ‘the most evil product of our time’ at the 1986 Conservative party conference. He blamed the ‘wildness of the uncontrolled male young’ on a lack of fathers in such families: ‘boys can generally only be civilised by firm and caring fathers. The banishment of the father means that boys take their values from their aggressive and often brutal peer groups and are prepared for a life of violent crime, of football hooliganism, mugging and inner city revolt.’<sup>740</sup> In 1989, the Conservative Minister of Social Security John Moore similarly accused young single mothers of deliberately getting pregnant in order to secure a council house tenancy and condemned fathers for walking away from their financial responsibilities in the knowledge that the state

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<sup>737</sup> Hansard, Marriage (HL 24 March 1999 vol 598 cc1294-343).

<sup>738</sup> K. Mann and S. Roseneil, ‘Poor Choices? Gender, Agency and the Underclass Debate’ in G. Jagger and C. Wright (eds.), *Changing Family Values* (London, 1999), pp. 98-118.

<sup>739</sup> Smart and Neale, *Family Fragments?*, p. 28.

<sup>740</sup> Records of OPFS, Box 1: ‘Boyson condemns ‘evil’ single parents’ *The Guardian*, Oct 10, 1986.

would provide.<sup>741</sup> Anxieties about family breakdown were not new, but the explicit policy focus on fathers by the end of the 1980s was.<sup>742</sup>

There was, however, much continuity in family forms.<sup>743</sup> As shown in table 5.1, 75% of dependent children in Scotland were living in a married couple family and 10% in a cohabitating couple family in 1991. Furthermore, more than eight in ten fathers of dependent children in the 1992 *British Household Panel Study* were found to be living with all their own, biological children.<sup>744</sup> That is also not to say that all families headed by a mother are ‘fatherless.’ Studies showed that divorce did not necessarily result in ‘absent’ fathers, but rather men could have frequent contact and strong relationships with their children.<sup>745</sup> Bradshaw et al found only 3% of fathers had no contact with their children after separation or divorce, whilst 45% had contact at least once a week.<sup>746</sup> Moreover, the authors changed the original title of their study, ‘Fathers Apart in Britain’, because it implied a physical and emotional distance unrepresentative of their research findings.

**Table 5.1**

<b>Dependent children by family type in Scotland, 1991-2001</b>		
	1991	2001
Married couple	75%	64%
Cohabitating couple	4%	10%
Lone parent	19%	25%
Not in a family	0%	1%

Source: Scottish Executive, *Family Formation and Dissolution: Trends and Attitudes among the Scottish Population* (Edinburgh, 2004), p. 3. Data sourced from General Register Office for Scotland, 2001.

Concerns about ‘fatherless families’ were nevertheless voiced in the media. In 1993, a BBC Panorama documentary asserted that the lack of a male role model, ‘a working man...who goes to work and comes back and does all sorts of DIY’ was missing and

<sup>741</sup> Records of OPFS, Box 4: ‘Gingerbread Scotland, An Association for One-Parent Families, Annual Report: April’ (1989)

<sup>742</sup> For studies on lone motherhood see e.g. J. Lewis, ‘The Problem of Lone-Mother Families in Twentieth Century’, *Journal of Social Welfare and Family Law*, 20(3), (1998), pp. 251-283; Gillies, *Marginalised Mothers*.

<sup>743</sup> E. B. Silva and C. Smart (eds.), *The New Family?* (London, 2004), p. 6.

<sup>744</sup> JRF, *A Man’s Place is the Home: Fathers and Families in the UK* (York, 2000), p. 1.

<sup>745</sup> The extent to which fathers remain in contact with their children after separation is hard to estimate due to issues of bias on the part of the mother and the father, as well as the significant change experienced over time.

<sup>746</sup> Bradshaw et al, *Absent Fathers?*, p. 81.



resulting in ‘barbarism’ among young men.<sup>747</sup> That same year, *The Sunday Times* advocated for a ‘Return to the Family’:

The disintegration of the nuclear family is the principle source of so much social unrest and misery...The past two decades have witnessed the growth of whole communities in which the dominant family structure is the single parent mother on welfare, whose male offspring are already immersed in a criminal culture by the time they are teenagers and whose daughters are destined to follow the family tradition of unmarried mothers...for communities to function successfully they need families with fathers.<sup>748</sup>

The importance attached to fathers was also reflected in academic work, in which father absence was cited as a major cause of public disorder, poverty and crime.<sup>749</sup> Echoing the work of American New Right political thinker Charles Murray on the ‘underclass’, Patricia Morgan’s 1995 *Farewell to the Family* argued that men were becoming disengaged from family life and that the traditional family was being replaced by the ‘mother-child-state unit.’<sup>750</sup> With welfare deemed to be making births outside marriage an attractive option, and changes in the labour market making men ‘poor investments’ and ‘unviable as mates’, Morgan argued that young men, without the responsibilities of fatherhood and marriage, adopt a ‘predatory lifestyle’ and are unable to become ‘responsible citizens.’<sup>751</sup> Notions of a ‘dad deficit’ highlighted the value of family life in ‘civilising’ men, and emphasised that the successful socialisation of children required two parents: ‘many of our troubles today stem from the fact that there is no father in the home—there is not a married couple—to act as a role model particularly for boys.’<sup>752</sup> These assertions were made without any significant research on non-resident fathers, and in the absence of a proven link between ‘fatherlessness’ and crime rates.<sup>753</sup>

Fathers were therefore deemed to be both the problem and solution to a range of social problems. Rather than indicating moves towards gender-neutral parenting, these debates about fathers implicitly connected responsible fatherhood with financial

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<sup>747</sup> Mann and Roseneil, ‘Poor Choices?’ p. 103.

<sup>748</sup> Ibid.

<sup>749</sup> Dennis and Erdos, *Families Without Fatherhood*; P. Morgan, *Farewell to the Family? Public Policy and Family Breakdown in Britain and the USA* (London, 1995); C. Murray, *The Emerging British Underclass* (London, 1990).

<sup>750</sup> Morgan, *Farewell to the Family?*, pp. 50-59.

<sup>751</sup> Ibid, p. 113.

<sup>752</sup> Hansard, The Family (HL 11 December 1996 vol 576 cc1085-149).

<sup>753</sup> Lewis, ‘The Problem of Fathers’

provisioning, and highlighted that fathers were important because they provided something that was ‘father-specific’, including authority and discipline.<sup>754</sup> During the Second World War and its aftermath, there had been similar concerns about ‘father absence’, and specifically the rise of juvenile delinquency as a result. King has demonstrated that fathers were seen to be crucial in acting as a gendered role model, particularly for sons.<sup>755</sup> By the late twentieth century, however, such anxieties were amplified by the decline of paternal authority, the loss of traditional male employment and women parenting independently without men, often outside of marriage. As Segal has argued, ‘just as some women began to question whether families need fathers, significant men’s pressure groups have arisen to assure them that they do.’<sup>756</sup> Certain elements of the fathers’ rights movement have proved controversial, emphasising the perceived diminution of men’s legal rights and traditional roles in relation to ex-partners, feminism, and a discriminatory ‘system.’<sup>757</sup>

As well as reasserting the importance of a heterosexual nuclear family, such political and public discourses surrounding fatherhood were also, as demonstrated, explicitly classed. The ‘irresponsible’, ‘feckless’ and ‘absent’ father, presented as being prevalent among working-class households, and within ethnic minority communities, and was frequently contrasted to the fathering provided by responsible, respectable, white middle-class married men.<sup>758</sup> Gillies notes that the models of fatherhood sanctioned by Government during this period were ‘grounded in middle-class values and privilege’, while Brid Featherstone similarly notes that politicians, promoting themselves as ‘good’ fathers, sought to demonise other groups of fathers, without acknowledging the constraints within which fathering practices operated.<sup>759</sup>

A number of my interviewees drew upon these past, and very much present, discourses surrounding ‘distant daddies’ when discussing their experiences of fatherhood, and upon notions of what constituted ‘good’ and ‘bad’ fathering.<sup>760</sup> Alistair, born in 1949 in Glasgow, spoke at length about the ‘societal issues in terms of

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<sup>754</sup> Dermott, *Intimate Fatherhood*.

<sup>755</sup> King, *Family Men*, pp. 63-65.

<sup>756</sup> Segal, *Slow Motion*, p. 257.

<sup>757</sup> B. S. Catlett and P. C. McKendry, ‘Class-based Masculinities: Divorce, Fatherhood and the Hegemonic Ideal’, *Fathering*, 2(2), (2004), pp. 165-190.

<sup>758</sup> Collier and Sheldon, *Fragmenting Fatherhood*, p. 228.

<sup>759</sup> Gillies, ‘Understandings and Experiences of Involved Fathering’, p. 53; B. Featherstone, *Contemporary Fathering: Theory, Policy and Practice* (Bristol, 2009).

<sup>760</sup> [SOHCA/054/10] McGrail.

the diminution of the role of the father.<sup>761</sup> He questioned the relevance of fatherhood in contemporary society, highlighting that many families now operate without the continuity and centrality of men: ‘the role of the father nowadays is...I don’t think he has a role now’, ‘is the role of father dead? Does it longer exist? Is there a place, a requirement for a father?’:

Men are...probably redundant now, full stop. Even biologically, you don’t really need the physical act now to beget children, you don’t need a father, it can now be done in test tubes, don’t need a father. And a lot of places basically it’s happened already, father was there at conception and never been seen since...and that’s basically the role of men as fathers are totally begetters. They’re not there...there’s places now where, for example in city gangs where one of the issues is no fathers, and especially in London, they’re saying there is no fathers, West Indian community, there is a major problem there with gangs because if you don’t have a father, who’s your role model? Who gives you the instructions? Who sets the boundaries? The gang does, they tell what’s right and wrong. There’s no male there to tell you...to say that’s right and wrong, they were never on the scene [...] We’ve got to the stage now where parents, fathers of children, no longer feel responsible for them. There’s no responsibility. When a father walks out the door, I don’t know, they have no responsibility, what do they think?<sup>762</sup>

For Alistair, what is ‘missing’ is the traditional, authoritarian father figure to act as a role model, particularly for young men: ‘there’s nobody there to set the *male* boundaries.’ He emphasised a distinctly gendered male parenting role, and linked its demise to the ‘evolution of women’ and men’s declining position as ‘the head of the house.’ Alistair’s constructions of non-resident fatherhood can therefore be used to explore aspects of his own fathering identity, and what he feels fathers should do for their children, although this was by no means straightforward. While he appears almost nostalgic about the need for this ‘type’ of father, he was also keen, however, to engage with discourses of ‘new’ fatherhood. He noted, for example, ‘I would like to believe I wasn’t an authoritarian father’ and spoke, in positive ways, of taking on a greater and more involved role as a father than his own when his daughters were born in 1974 and 1978. Alistair’s, at times, complicated narrative highlights the multiple discourses surrounding fatherhood, as well as the way in which men can draw on these to describe themselves and others, and in relation to different aspects of parenting. It

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<sup>761</sup> [SOHCA/054/06] ‘Alistair.’

<sup>762</sup> [SOHCA/054/06] ‘Alistair.’

also indicates the class, age and ethnic dimensions of discourses surrounding ‘absent’ fathers.

Charlie, born in 1952, also reflected upon the responsibilities of fatherhood, as well as the notion that some men are unwilling to fulfil them. Through his current role as a family support worker he reflected that even where physically present, a number of the young fathers he encounters lack ‘responsibility.’ Charlie notes the importance of providing to self-esteem and fathering identity, as well as the socialising impact of work and family for male adulthood:

They’ve no had good role models and they also don’t have an identity as such cause they’ve never had any jobs, they’ve never earned a wage, they’ve got no self-esteem [...] I think what you’re finding wae a lot of young dads who are unemployed is that they almost cop out it. Sometimes when I go into houses...and I’m seeing dads there, who are mid-twenties, late twenties and aw they are interested in is playing games on their machines. There’s no interest in their kids. It’s as if they haven’t grown up themselves. They have never progressed from being a child cause they’ve never had to go and work, or earn a wage and had any responsibility. But now they’re a dad and they’ve still not got that responsibility.<sup>763</sup>

The emphasis on what fathers bring to parenting, and what they should do for their children, and particularly sons, was also evident among one of the non-resident fathers I interviewed. While Leslie, born in 1959, positively viewed the increased ‘input in the early years’ by fathers and noted that parenting responsibilities should be gender neutral, he maintained that certain elements of parenting remain gendered, privileging the heterosexual two-parent family because of that. As Leslie notes, having a father ‘brings a masculine view of life’<sup>764</sup>:

I don’t think there’s anything should be only the mum’s responsibility and something else should only be the dad’s responsibility, I think ye should share things because that means...I think the boys, the children, got the best of both worlds. They got a mum and a dad, and I think to be quite honest wae ye, especially in the early years, I think they need two parents cause [...] I think if you watch children, especially boys who grow up wae only their mother, I think ye notice as they get older their behaviour’s worse cause there’s probably no been a lot of discipline as they’re growing up and I don’t mean that in a bad way I just mean, I think boys need a father figure and if ye grow up without that I think yer lacking in

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<sup>763</sup> [SOHCA/054/18] McKay

<sup>764</sup> [SOHCA/054/08] Watson.

something, you've missed out in something [...] I'm mibbe being political now, but I think lot of mibbe the problems in society these days is caused by, in the last twenty to twenty-five years there's been an awful lot of people are being brought up in single parent families.<sup>765</sup>

Father 'absence' was therefore deemed to be problematic amongst interviewees, not only for individual children but also society at large, reflecting wider public and political discourse. Former Liberal Party MP Lord Alton argued in 1999 for example, that unless the 'importance of fathers in child rearing' was reaffirmed, society faced 'further long-term social collapse and civic disaggregation.'<sup>766</sup> The attempts to 'reassert' and maintain men's responsibility to children and their importance in childrearing, however, were ambiguous.<sup>767</sup> In law, notions of 'involved' fathering informed the importance of maintaining a link between fathers and children after divorce and outside of marriage. New theories of developmental psychology highlighting the benefits of father involvement from the 1970s had resulted in a rethinking of the place of the father in child welfare and wider acknowledgement of the view that fathers contribute to their children beyond financial provision.<sup>768</sup> Social policy, however, responded to the profound change in family structures by seeking to reinforce men's obligation to financially maintain their families and privileged 'traditional' gender roles. As the Conservative Government sought a return to the 'traditional' nuclear family and family values, traditionally hegemonic forms of masculinity and fatherhood, the breadwinner and authoritarian, were emphasised. The following section examines the Child Support Act 1991 and the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, both framed around the concept of parental responsibility, and explores the differing understandings of the need for fathers within these pieces of legislation.

### ***Legal/Policy Responses***

In 1989, the Children Act was passed in England and Wales, and marked a significant shift in thinking about post-divorce parenting. Focusing on parental responsibilities rather than rights, it prioritised parenthood over marriage by stipulating that the end

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<sup>765</sup> [SOHCA/054/08] Watson.

<sup>766</sup> Hansard, *Fathers in the Family* (1999).

<sup>767</sup> Harding, "'Family Values' and Conservative Government Policy.'

<sup>768</sup> Lamb, *The Role of the Father*; Jackson, 'Great Britain.'

of a marital relationship between adults need not undermine the parent-child relationship. Heralded as a watershed in children's legislation, the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 which followed similarly enshrined that both parents have clear, equal Parental Responsibilities and Rights (PRRs) in respect of their children. In changing the previous legal concepts of 'custody' and 'access' to 'residence' and 'contact', it, too, emphasised that it was in children's best interests that they maintained significant relationships with both parents, whether they were living together or apart.<sup>769</sup> As the Scottish Law Commission argued in their 1992 *Report on Family law*, which formed the basis of the Act, 'the balance has now swung in favour of the view that parents are parents, whether married to each other or not.'<sup>770</sup> This shift from rights to responsibilities placed emphasis on equal and gender-neutral parental responsibilities, highlighting that fathers have a vital contribution to make to children's development beyond financial provision and that children might be competently cared for by both fathers and mothers.<sup>771</sup>

The Law Reform (Parent and Child) (Scotland) Act 1986 had also eradicated the status of illegitimacy and made it possible to recognise the rights of unmarried fathers, by private agreement. The proportion of children in Scotland born to unmarried parents had doubled since the 1960s, a trend which undermined marriage as a way of legally grounding the father-child relationship.<sup>772</sup> This Act similarly drew upon notions of nurturing fatherhood, acknowledging that 'an unmarried father may be just as motivated to care for and protect his child as a married father, or indeed as the mother of the child', and that it is 'no longer possible, if it ever was, to assume that almost all unmarried fathers are irresponsible, uninterested in their children, or undeserving of a legal role as parent.'<sup>773</sup> Although the number of 'illegitimate' births in Scotland increased by 96% in the period 1974-1984, the number of joint registrations more than doubled during the same period, from 48% to 63%. A high proportion of these (69%) had the mother and father registered as living at the same

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<sup>769</sup> The Children (Scotland) Act 1995 created parental responsibilities and rights (PRRs). These included responsibility to safeguard and promote the child's health, development and welfare; provide direction and guidance to the child; maintain personal relations and direct contact with the child on a regular basis, and to act as the child's legal representative. Rights were given in order to allow a person to fulfil his or her parental responsibilities and entitled a parent to take key decisions such as arrangements about residence, contact, adoption, religion, education, and medical treatment.

<sup>770</sup> Scottish Law Commission, *Report on Family Law* (Edinburgh, 1992), p. 14.

<sup>771</sup> Collier and Sheldon, *Fragmenting Fatherhood*.

<sup>772</sup> Scottish Law Commission, *Family Law Report on Illegitimacy* (Edinburgh, 1983), p. 2.

<sup>773</sup> Scottish Law Commission, *Report on Family Law*, pp. 12-13.

address.<sup>774</sup> Collectively, these legal changes demonstrated an increased willingness to recognise parenting outside marriage and placed an increasing emphasis on fathers' role as carers, despite government rhetoric on the importance of the nuclear family, consisting of a married couple adhering to the male breadwinner-female homemaker model.<sup>775</sup>

Though recognising that a father may play a significant role in their children's lives without being married to the mother, there nevertheless remained several deficiencies in the law with regards to unmarried fathers and the legal relationship to their children. Despite a recommendation by the Scottish Law Commission that responsibilities and rights should be based on parental status alone, only a father who was married to the mother at the time of conception or subsequently *automatically* acquired PPRs, unless by private agreement with the mother or through the courts. The Commission had argued that the acquisition of PPRs by these means were 'second best solutions.'<sup>776</sup> Moreover, whilst an unmarried father did not automatically acquire parental responsibility for his children, financial responsibility was imposed irrespective of marital status. The emphasis on the importance of fathers maintaining contact with their children in family law was influential to the Conservative Government only in terms of enforcing fathers' obligation to maintain them financially.<sup>777</sup>

The issue of child support became the most salient policy issue affecting divorced and unmarried non-resident fathers during the late twentieth century, significantly after the Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher declared in 1991, that 'parenthood is for life':

Legislation can't make irresponsible parents responsible. But it can and must ensure that absent parents pay maintenance for their children, for it is not fair for them to expect other families to foot their bills too...We will set up a new child support agency...to trace absent parents and make them accept their financial obligation.<sup>778</sup>

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<sup>774</sup> Records of OPFS, Box 038: 'Unpublished Correspondence, The General Register Office for Scotland' (1985)

<sup>775</sup> Collier, 'Men, Heterosexuality and the Changing Family', p. 42; Harding, "Family Values" and Conservative Government Policy.'

<sup>776</sup> Scottish Law Commission, *Report on Family Law*, p. 12.

<sup>777</sup> Lewis, 'The Problem of Fathers'

<sup>778</sup> Margaret Thatcher Speech, 18 July 1991, [www.margareththatcher.org/document/108156](http://www.margareththatcher.org/document/108156), accessed 1 Aug 2014.

The Child Support Act 1991 and the establishment of the Child Support Agency (CSA) in 1993 required all non-resident, divorced and unmarried parents, in the majority of cases, fathers, to financially support their biological children.<sup>779</sup> Despite Thatcher's gender-neutral use of 'parents', with 90% of lone-parent families headed by a woman, the legislation was largely presented as addressing the problem of 'feckless', 'absent' dads, who having abandoned their material responsibilities to their children should be accountable to the state to pay up.<sup>780</sup> Indeed, the impetus behind the child support reform was both financial and moral.<sup>781</sup> As noted, the Conservative Government, concerned about changing family demographics, conceived it as a way to limit the extent to which the state was responsible for the growing numbers of lone-mother families. In the 1970s and 1980s, it was estimated that only 30% of lone mothers and 3% of lone fathers received regular maintenance from the non-resident parent.<sup>782</sup> Research found that existing arrangements for child support were often unsatisfactory, low and unmaintained. Barbara Doig, for example, found that in divorces involving children in Scotland in the early 1980s; a claim was successful in 95% of cases, but only 25% of these were paid regularly and in full, and a quarter were never paid at all.<sup>783</sup> With inadequate childcare provision, this resulted in increasing numbers of one-parent families receiving income support; between 1971 and 1986, the number of such families on benefits rose from 246,000 to 606,000.<sup>784</sup> In Scotland, lone parents on supplementary benefit rose by 40% between 1979 and 1982 alone.<sup>785</sup> These statistics were used by the Government to claim that welfare was creating state dependency, and that men were abandoning their responsibilities to the taxpayer.

By enshrining the principle that parents should financially support their biological children, 'regardless of whether they have ever lived together, whether the relationship between them has broken down, or whether new relationships have been formed', the CSA promoted biological rather than social parenthood, and explicitly

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<sup>779</sup> Although Scotland had a separate system of family law, the Child Support Act 1991 was applied with only slight differences.

<sup>780</sup> Westwood, 'Feckless Fathers', p. 25.

<sup>781</sup> The desire to enforce financial paternal responsibility was not a new one. See e.g. T. Evans, 'Is it futile to try to get non-resident fathers to maintain their children?' (2006), [www.historyandpolicy.org](http://www.historyandpolicy.org), accessed 1 Aug 2014; Abrams, 'There was Nobody.'

<sup>782</sup> Hansard, Child Maintenance (1990).

<sup>783</sup> R. E. Dobash and F. Wasoff, *The Financial Aspects of Divorce* (Stirling, 1986); B. Doig, *The Nature and Scale of Ailment and Financial Provision on Divorce in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1982) quoted in J. Bradshaw and J. Millar, *Lone Parent Families in the UK* (London, 1991), p. 78.

<sup>784</sup> Bradshaw and Millar, *Lone Parent Families in the UK*, p. 64.

<sup>785</sup> Records of OPFS, Box 5: 'Single Parents in Scotland: Social Policy Issues' (1989)



placed emphasis on fathers' obligation to provide 'cash' rather than 'care'.<sup>786</sup> Fathers were to be economically responsible for their 'first' families.<sup>787</sup> While the Children and Family Law Acts acknowledged diverse family forms, men's caring role and parenting outside marriage, the CSA reforms were attempts to, as Gill Jagger and Caroline Wright have argued, ensure an 'economic form of the nuclear family [was] reconstituted even after divorce or relationship breakdown'.<sup>788</sup> Using father absence to explain the poverty of single mother families also reinforced the economic responsibilities of fathers.<sup>789</sup>

The idea that men should financially support their children was supported. Since 1991, *British Social Attitudes* has found that around 88% of the public have consistently believed that non-resident fathers should pay maintenance for their child(ren).<sup>790</sup> Problems arose, however, over the implementation of the legislation.<sup>791</sup> Within five years of operation, the Agency had failed to deliver on all its objectives, had undergone an amendment Act, witnessed the departure of two chief executives, and was subject to five Parliamentary Select Committee enquiries, alongside media and public criticism, including protests by fathers and organisations.<sup>792</sup> The Agency's success at increasing the financial support that non-resident fathers made for their children was also limited.<sup>793</sup> By 1998, one in three lone parents were receiving child support benefits, the same proportion as prior to the implementation of the Act.<sup>794</sup>

The conception and operation of the CSA was problematic in a number of ways. Although the legislation inflexibly covered all types of parents and parent-child relationships, the language employed, distinguishing between the 'absent parent' and 'caring parent', stigmatised non-resident parents without acknowledging the possibility that care can be shared even though children may be more often resident with one parent more than the other.<sup>795</sup> It implied some form of failure, or neglect, when many non-resident parents could not, for one reason or another, live with their children,

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<sup>786</sup> House of Commons Library, 'Child Support' Research Paper 94/20 (1994), p.1.

<sup>787</sup> Sarre, *A Place for Fathers*, p. 40; Lewis, 'The Problem of Fathers.'

<sup>788</sup> Jagger and Wright, 'End of Century, End of Family?', p. 26.

<sup>789</sup> Collier and Sheldon, *Fragmenting Fatherhood*.

<sup>790</sup> C. Bryson, I. Ellman, S. McKay and J. Miles, 'Child maintenance: How much the state should require fathers to pay when families separate' in A. Park, C. Bryson, E. Clery, J. Curtice, M. Philips (eds.), *British Social Attitudes: the 30<sup>th</sup> Report* (London, 2013), p. 3.

<sup>791</sup> Ibid, p. 4; J. Thomson, *Family Law in Scotland* (West Sussex, 2006), p. 255.

<sup>792</sup> Bradshaw et al, *Absent Fathers?*

<sup>793</sup> Hansard, Child Support Agency (HC 02 December 1993 vol 233 cc1265-74); Child Maintenance; 'Child Support White Paper' (1999) [www.publications.parliament.uk](http://www.publications.parliament.uk), accessed 1 Aug 2014.

<sup>794</sup> Lewis, 'The Problem of Fathers', p. 142.

<sup>795</sup> Burgess and Buxton, *Men and their Children*.

and/or were very 'present' in their lives. There was almost no research into the characteristics of so called 'absent' dads and their family circumstances before the legislation was introduced. Moreover, because the legislation was retrospective, it overturned existing arrangements and in order to meet targets, the Agency began by focusing on cases with 'potential', which meant pursuing fathers who were already regularly paying maintenance.<sup>796</sup>

Rather than deliberately avoiding paying maintenance, subsequent research also found many non-resident fathers were not capable of paying; large numbers were unemployed, poorly paid, or had further calls on their finances. The rigid formula established to calculate maintenance did not take into account a man's ability to support two families, debts, expenses incurred in travelling considerable geographic distances to and from work or to spend time with his children. Some fathers found the demands of the CSA made it harder to maintain close father-child relationships.<sup>797</sup> Of Bradshaw et al's sample, for example, 63% of the non-payers simply could not pay and only 9% were classified as having 'certain paying potential', though only a third of these had any contact with their child and half saw their child rarely or never.<sup>798</sup>

Linked to the capacity to pay maintenance was therefore the willingness to pay. While the Act was based on the principle that biological fathers have an absolute responsibility to provide financial support, a more complex issue involved the meaning of child support for such fathers, with many less willing to pay if they were unable to have contact with their children.<sup>799</sup> As Chapter Two highlighted, providing was used as a way in which men could express their love and commitment to their children. A number of studies found fathers unwilling to act as 'invisible benefactors', with the symbolic meaning of provision lost if transferred to the mother, or incorporated into household expenses. Paying child support could also reduce the opportunity to aid intimacy through gifts, treats, holidays and entertainment.<sup>800</sup> In Bradshaw et al's study, most 'non-payers' made informal payments to their children averaging at £15.99 a week. The CSA, rather problematically, separated financial provision from the wider father-child relationship:

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<sup>796</sup> Hansard, Child Support Act 1991 (HL 09 February 1994 vol 551 cc1657-88 1657).

<sup>797</sup> Hansard, Child Support Agency (HC 10 February 1994 vol 237 cc483-556 483).

<sup>798</sup> Bradshaw et al, *Absent Fathers?* p. 144.

<sup>799</sup> K. Natalier and B. Hewitt, "It's Not Just About the Money: Non-Resident Fathers' Perspectives on Paying Child Support", *Sociology*, 44(3), (2010), p. 500.

<sup>800</sup> Bradshaw et al, *Absent Fathers?*, p. 217.

It is because they care about maintaining their role as fathers and because they continue to want a close, intimate and fulfilling relationship with their children, that they can become reluctant to pay maintenance. The majority want to fulfil all their parental obligations, social, emotional and financial, but it seems that one is unsatisfactory without the others.<sup>801</sup>

Legal and social policies attempted to ‘reassert’ the importance of fathers in ambiguous and fragmented ways during this period. While the Department of Social Security was responsible for the implementation of the Child Support Act, the Scottish Office implemented the Family Law (Scotland) 1986 Act and the Children (Scotland) 1995 Act. These government departments, which share responsibility for family matters, often have conflicting agendas.<sup>802</sup> Ambiguity also surrounded the legal definition of fatherhood.<sup>803</sup> By emphasising that biological fathers were required to pay child support and by encouraging divorced fathers to remain involved, these Acts shifted the father-child relationship from one based on marriage with the children’s mother, into a direct, genetic relationship with children. The following section explores the lived experience of non-resident fatherhood. It argues that despite a dominant political focus on the financial responsibilities of post-divorce fatherhood, most non-resident fathers were primarily concerned with the father-child relationship.

### ***Lived experience of Non-Resident Fatherhood***

Becoming a non-resident father, can, as one man I interviewed described, change ‘the whole dynamics of being a parent.’<sup>804</sup> Parenting and being a ‘good’ father after divorce or separation may involve a shift in behaviours and responsibilities from those undertaken during marriage or in a relationship with the mother. The lived experience of post-divorce parenting is also multifaceted, liable to change over time. Despite the Children Act’s rhetoric of joint parenting, for example, the reality of achieving this was far more complex. As Bob Simpson et al’s in-depth interviews with ninety-one *Fathers After Divorce* in the period 1985-1992 demonstrate, it requires parents to separate the relationships that they would rather discontinue from those they are highly committed

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<sup>801</sup> Ibid, p. 232.

<sup>802</sup> A. Bissett-Johnson and C. Barton, ‘The Similarities and Differences in Scottish and English Family Law in dealing with Changing Family Patterns’, *Journal of Social Welfare and Family Law*, 21(1), (1999), pp. 1-21.

<sup>803</sup> R. Collier, ‘Fathers’ Rights, Gender and Welfare: Some Questions for Family Law’, *Journal of Social Welfare and Family Law*, 31(4), (2009), pp. 357-371.

<sup>804</sup> [SOHCA/054/08] Watson.

to maintaining with their children.<sup>805</sup> Carole Smart and Bren Neale's mid-1990s study similarly examined the diverse and fluid patterns of parenthood negotiated and re-negotiated in the aftermath of separation.<sup>806</sup> These studies suggested that establishing and maintaining successful parenting across households is often very challenging and that relationships between non-resident fathers and their children can be extremely difficult to maintain, precisely because of the range of practical, financial and emotional difficulties that it entails.<sup>807</sup>

Mothers, for example, may undertake more work in disciplining, organising and resourcing the basic needs of children, while non-resident fathers typically face challenges of time, money and missing out on daily interactions. For the men in Bradshaw's sample, the loss of continuity, and the absence of frequent and daily contact was the most critical difference in being a non-resident father and many were found to treat seemingly mundane events with far more importance than they would have done in permanent residence.<sup>808</sup> Relationships with ex-partners, rooted in perhaps unresolved feelings, are also subject to considerable challenges in which re-partnering and the presence of stepparents, siblings and children can be significant turning points. Bradshaw et al found men reported that their new partnerships often resulted in tensions in co-parenting relationships and in parent-child contact, while Simpson et al described the arrival of a new partner as the 'decisive event in the demise of a father's relationship with his children.'<sup>809</sup> Contact with the child/children was found to be dependent on the relationship with the mother and this was more likely to be amicable if the father had not re-partnered. Moreover, although the Children Act emphasised joint, equal parenting after divorce, including care of children, welfare and employment policies during this period made this unlikely during marriage.<sup>810</sup> The Child Support Act, as noted, attempted to reaffirm traditional gender roles after relationship breakdown, and relied on the existence of a 'family wage.'<sup>811</sup> The way fatherhood was enacted before separation therefore had major implications for

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<sup>805</sup> B. Simpson, P. McCarthy and J. Walker, *Being there: Fathers After Divorce* (Newcastle, 1995).

<sup>806</sup> Smart and Neale, *Family Fragments?*, p. 56.

<sup>807</sup> For an overview see e.g. G. B. Wilson, 'The Non-Resident Parental Role for Separated Fathers: A Review', *International Journal of Law, Policy and the Family*, 20(3), (2006), pp. 286-316; Lund, 'The Non-Custodial Father', pp. 212-224.

<sup>808</sup> Bradshaw et al, *Absent Fathers?*, p. 121.

<sup>809</sup> Ibid, p. 111; Simpson et al, *Being there*, p. 31.

<sup>810</sup> C. Smart, 'The 'New' Parenthood: Fathers and Mothers after Divorce' in E. B. Silva and C. Smart (eds.), *The New Family?* (London, 2004), p. 100-115.

<sup>811</sup> Lewis, 'The Problem of Fathers.'

fathering after divorce. While Smart described pre-divorce fatherhood as 'poor training' for post-divorce fatherhood, at the extreme, Backett's 1970s research in Scotland suggested that because mothers took on greater responsibility for caring for children, fatherhood was mediated through motherhood, and men were unable to relate to children on an individual level.<sup>812</sup>

The changes to fatherhood post-divorce or separation could, however, offer new possibilities for fathering identities, roles, and relationships. Bradshaw et al found some men enjoyed an intensified identification with parenthood, while Simpson et al similarly found that divorce could result in a redefinition of what it meant to be a father, providing men with a 'heightened sense of child focus.'<sup>813</sup> Smart and Neale's study also found that becoming a divorced father could improve father-child relationships. Of their sample, nine out of the twenty-nine fathers they interviewed were willing to either abandon their identities as workers or to reduce their commitment to their careers, while six of the fathers, all in manual or broadly working-class employment, 'switched' identity by giving up paid work, having not been involved in childcare to any great extent before divorce or separation.<sup>814</sup> As a consequence of being solely responsible for their children and undertaking different roles and responsibilities, these fathers gradually developed new fathering identities and 'rewrote their parental script.'<sup>815</sup>

Despite negative stereotypes of fathers being unwilling or uninterested in maintaining relationships with their children, a more complicated picture therefore emerges of the ways in which father-child contact is affected by a number of factors, both practical and emotional. These can largely be described as 'problems *for* fathers rather than problems *with* fathers.'<sup>816</sup> The emotional costs of maintaining contact with children, often in a climate of hostility or non-communication, can be high. Simpson et al found feelings of loneliness, personal failure and problems of personal wellbeing among those men who had maintained contact with their children.<sup>817</sup> Bradshaw et al similarly found a 'great sadness and sense of loss' among the men they interviewed.<sup>818</sup>

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<sup>812</sup> Smart, 'The 'New' Parenthood', p. 107; Backett, 'The Negotiation of Fatherhood.'

<sup>813</sup> Bradshaw et al, *Absent Fathers?*; Simpson et al, *Being there*, p. 65.

<sup>814</sup> Smart and Neale, *Family Fragments?*, p. 53.

<sup>815</sup> Ibid, p. 55.

<sup>816</sup> Wilson, 'The Non-Resident Parental Role', p. 310.

<sup>817</sup> Simpson et al, *Being There*, p. 25; J. Tirilo and M. Coleman, "I don't know how much more of this I can take": How Divorced Non-Residential Fathers Manage Barriers to Involvement', *Fathering*, 11(2), (2013), pp. 159-178.

<sup>818</sup> Bradshaw et al, *Absent Fathers?*, p. 22.

As Burgess maintains, such research highlights that ‘among the many factors leading to fathers’ disengagement, indifference may be the very least.’<sup>819</sup> The following section explores the oral testimonies of six men who became non-resident parents during the late twentieth century. While these recorded narratives do not represent the memories of mothers and children, they provide new insights into the experience of divorce and separation involving children from the perspective of fathers. A key strength of oral history lies in its ability to chart change over time; many of the difficult emotions surrounding this experience endure for men, and have a continuing impact on some of their present day family relationships.

Leslie’s memories of fathering were distinguished between being a ‘full-time father’ and ‘a part-time father.’<sup>820</sup> Currently a Learning and Development Officer, his two sons, born in 1990 and 1994, were ten and six when Leslie and his wife separated. During marriage, Leslie worked full-time in various roles in insurance and banking, while his wife worked part-time. As a result, he identified as being the financial provider, but did have a practical caring role. Following divorce, Leslie continued to live in the same village in Ayrshire as his children, having them overnight at weekends and taking them two or three times a week to their sporting commitments. He recalls becoming non-resident, however, as a significant turning point for the father-child relationship and emphasises a diminished form of parenting during this period: ‘I wisnae their full-time father anymore.’ For Leslie, ‘your relationship with your sons change when you’re a part-time father rather than a full-time father because yer no...because the relationship I had with ma ex-wife at the time, which wasnae the greatest, I feel I missed out on a quite a bit’:

Aimee: You keep using the term ‘part-time dad’, is that how you felt?

Leslie: That’s how I felt, that’s how I saw myself, aye. Especially as years went on cause I came from being a full-time dad and being involved in their entire life to after about three or four years after we separated, we had very little day to day involvement in life and I wisnae getting told things that were going on. The two of them were just like any other young boys growing up, they get up to mischief and do things they werenae supposed to do. I think once for ma youngest son, he hit somebody at the school...and it was about nearly a year later I found oot about that. It wisnae that she forgot to tell me, she deliberately withheld that information from me, which I didnae think was fair. But that’s the drawback tae being a father that’s non...disnae live with his sons, is you very much rely on

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<sup>819</sup> Burgess, *Fatherhood Reclaimed*, p. 200-203.

<sup>820</sup> [SOHCA/054/08] Watson.

your ex-wife to tell ye things and she disnae, how are ye gonnae know? [...] After I found out...the headmistress at the school was the wife of a golfing buddy of mine, and I went to her hoose, and I apologised...and I said to her, “is there any way if there’s anything in future happens, ye could tell me?” She says “I’m no allowed tae” ...I just thought that was so unfair cause that affected them just as much as it affected me cause I don’t know whether they ever got...I mean I did try and speak to them at one point, it was a difficult conversation to have but I always used tae think, do they think I don’t care because I’m no getting involved in things? Because she wisnae telling me anything ye know...I think [oldest son] woulda been about fifteen and I tried to have a conversation wae him, I kinda mair or less asked him, “do you think that I don’t care aboot ye or I don’t wanna get involved?”<sup>821</sup>

Leslie’s memories highlight a number of important themes. Most significantly, it demonstrates the way in which becoming non-resident from their children can significantly affect men, and their fathering identities. It shows that fathers’ contact with children may also be highly dependent on their relationships with their ex-partners, as well as the difficulties associated with post-divorce parenting relationships, despite best intentions. As Leslie recalls, ‘we didnae just separate on the spur of a moment, it was something we sat doon and talked about and this is how we’re gonnae move forward wae it and that lasted aboot six month. And then she changed the goal posts for whatever reason ye know [...] the only thing I can think of is our relationship seemed to change when I got a girlfriend, that’s when the amicable separation wisnae amicable anymore.’ Leslie felt that contact with his sons was significantly affected by these tensions with his ex-wife, which worsened over time. He believes she ‘used tae deliberately hide things’ and he would often ‘hear things third hand.’<sup>822</sup> Over time, he was no longer invited to events such as parent’s evenings. Many fathers in Simpson et al’s study regularly complained that they often received information about important events in children’s lives only after the event, if at all, whether intentionally or through neglect.<sup>823</sup> As well as indicating change over time, Leslie’s narrative shows that he was not only deeply concerned about the quality of relationship he had with his children after divorce, but also about how they perceived this relationship. He wanted to be viewed by them as an ‘involved’ father, despite the significant difficulties which he faced in doing so.

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<sup>821</sup> [SOHCA/054/08] Watson.

<sup>822</sup> [SOHCA/054/08] Watson.

<sup>823</sup> Simpson et al, *Being there*, p. 56.

David, born in Glasgow in 1956, similarly highlighted a significant change in fathering, and men's understandings of the 'self as father' following divorce. He emphasised, in particular, the reduction of everyday family routine, interaction and communication. For David, who married in 1976 and became a father in 1979 and 1981, recalling memories of divorce in 1990 continued to be 'painful' and 'raw': 'it was a horrendous wrench for them and that was a really bad time...they didn't like that, nobody did.'<sup>824</sup> Like Leslie, David continued to live locally to his children, seeing them every other weekend, and at weekly swimming lessons, though relations with his ex-wife remained largely amicable. They were able to be flexible with arrangements, and also communicate regarding parenting decisions, and continue to do so: 'they're your children forever [laughs] although they're thirty-five, they're still my children but my wife's got her own life, I've got my life, but the only time we ever really talk is when something affects them.' What emerges from David's memories of fathering during this period, nevertheless, is a real sense of loss in everyday intimacy. Recalling the relationship with his children prior to divorce, fathering afterwards fell short of his expectations of being both 'breadwinner' and 'involved' father:

I used to see my children all the time, although I worked very long hours, I saw them every day. When we divorced, I didn't see them every day, I saw them every Tuesday and every other weekend and I hated that, I absolutely hated it cause every time I saw the children it was as if I hadn't seen them. They were like strangers because they had been doing things that I didn't know anything about and then they were meeting new friends that I didn't know, they would talk about these people and I didn't know them, so I found that really unpleasant, I hated it. So when I used to pick them up on a Tuesday to go to the swimming training, I wasn't really talking to them, they were going in to train...so it was only afterwards we would come back to the flat and we'd get some dinner and stuff and have a wee catch up with them and then I was taking them home, and it was like visitors rather than my children. I hated it [...] So the relationship changed and when that happened, I felt I wasn't really getting to know them very well, they were sort of moving away from me a wee bit cause I didn't know what they were doing on a daily basis, I didn't know who their friends were, that changed quite a lot.<sup>825</sup>

David's narrative above highlights that even when contact was relatively regular, fathers could still find this dissatisfying and emotionally difficult. His use of 'strangers' and 'visitors' demonstrates the way in which intimacy in family relationships are largely

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<sup>824</sup> [SOHCA/054/01] Walker.

<sup>825</sup> [SOHCA/054/01] Walker.



constituted through every day, mundane experiences, and without this continuity, interaction could take on an almost artificial nature. For David, the emotions he experienced over this period did not necessarily improve over time, ‘it never got better’ and ‘it was always rotten’, and he expressed a feeling of helplessness in this regard:

The time changes it, just circumstances change, both [son] and [daughter’s] circumstances changed and that meant that I was then taken out of it [laughs]. They didn’t want to come and see me every other weekend because by that time they were away at university [...] I never got used to it, I hated it, I really hated it. I actually feel cheated, that’s how I feel, I still feel like that today. I feel I was cheated out of their...that period between the age of about eleven to the age of sixteen, that I lost something there [pause] definitely. Cause I could take them on holiday and I could see them but I always, as I say felt as though visitors or I wasn’t getting to know them, I wasn’t as close to them as I wanted to be.<sup>826</sup>

Research on non-resident fathers, often carried out in the aftermath of separation, highlighted the sense of loss many men felt. What is significant about these oral history testimonies is how very poignant and vivid these feelings are some twenty years later, particularly when David, for example, remains very much in contact and involved in his children’s lives. David’s memory above also shows that fathering, and non-resident fathering, can change over time, specifically in relation to frequency of contact. As children grow older, become independent, develop friendships and interests and perhaps move away from home, this could impact upon the amount of time non-resident fathers were able to spend with their children, which can in turn shift again when they become adults and parents themselves. Leslie similarly recalls the impact of being non-resident as his children grew older:

The boys get to a certain age where ye say, “let’s just stop this, you must come and stay here on a Friday night, you must come and stay here on a Saturday”, it was a case of “ye know where I am.” I live in the same village as their mum so I says the “door’s always open, come and go as you please” and that’s what they started doing. I can see [son] sometimes every day for a week and then no see him for three weeks, that’s what it’s like...I think we done awricht considering, I mean I was out of his full-time life fae he was six, and we still get on alright.<sup>827</sup>

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<sup>826</sup> [SOHCA/054/01] Walker.

<sup>827</sup> [SOHCA/054/08] Watson.

That both Leslie and David emphasised having ‘done alright’, highlights their desires and attempts to be ‘good’ fathers as well as maintain intimacy and close relationships with their children despite the challenges posed by non-resident fatherhood. David similarly noted, for example: ‘the fact that they still like to see me and come and see me, and meet up, and they seem to enjoy my company, must be ok, I must have done something right.’<sup>828</sup>

Not only could contact and the father-child relationship change over time, it could also vary between different children. Anthony was born in Paisley in 1949. After leaving school, he briefly joined the Police before carrying out a number of varied jobs before co-founding a cleaning company in 1984. Anthony married in 1970 and became a dad in 1976 and 1981, to a son and daughter respectively. By the late 1980s, Anthony and his wife were, as he describes, ‘living apart almost in the same house.’<sup>829</sup> He nevertheless wanted to remain together for the sake of the children, whilst they were young, noting, ‘I was gonnae stay there for as long as...albeit it was very difficult but I felt it was my job, my duty, as father to do that but it was my wife that decided otherwise [...] that might sound a bit kinda sacrificial but that was my concept of being a dad, to be there.’ Following legal separation in 1990, when his children were aged nine and fourteen, he recalls, ‘I did everything I could to be in touch with them, and to show them that I loved them.’ Anthony’s memories of fathering ‘from a distance’ demonstrates the way in which men largely reflected upon the impact that the separation had on their children, and on the father-child relationship. For Anthony, this affected both his son and his daughter differently, at various times. Initially he continued to see his daughter on a weekly basis but spent less time with his son, a teenager at the time:

I think it affected my son more...cause he was bit older, a teenager by that point [...] Affected him emotionally I meant, I don’t know if it affected my daughter emotionally in as much as it didn’t affect her outlook in life but it allied her to her mother more [...] I saw my daughter on a weekly basis. Ma son, of course, girlfriends by this time, he was a young man about town [laughs] so he wasn’t interested in going out to McDonalds with his dad or going to the pictures with his dad, god “somebody might see me!” [laughs] but I did keep in touch with them and I kept more touch with my daughter actually but...my son I wouldn’t spend a lot of time with my son to be honest because I say, he had his own lifestyle then...he’d be out learning

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<sup>828</sup> [SOHCA/054/01] Walker.

<sup>829</sup> [SOHCA/054/14] ‘Anthony.’

about life, parties and aw the rest of it, his father's not part of that regime  
[laughs]<sup>830</sup>

Despite the more frequent contact with his daughter in the years following separation, their relationship neared breakdown when she was in her late teens and early twenties, when Anthony began living with his current partner. This indicates that frequency of contact may not be a useful indicator of the quality of interaction and again of the significant impact new partnerships can have upon post-separation relationships between fathers and their children. According to Anthony, whether he remained in the relationship was used almost as 'a lever or a bargaining tool' to determine contact, and relations with his daughter remain 'not very good':

I don't think she's ever forgiven me for leaving the house, seriously. My son, he's quite amicable with me now, I don't have any problem with my son at all but my daughter [pause] once I had moved in with a partner, she told me this before she got married, she said "you'll never see my children, I'll never allow them to see you." I said "well there's no much more to be said is there?" [laughs] What can I say? "These are children that are no even born yet and you're saying I've no to see them." So once her first daughter was born [pause]...I had sent her a present for the baby and she said she would like her daughter to have a relationship with her grandfather...Ever since then and ever since her second daughter was born, father's day cards are always from my granddaughters. Sad that isn't it? Christmas cards, birthday cards, it's always from the two granddaughters, not from my daughter so [pause] there you go. What do I do? Do I say no, that's not good enough? I'm in danger of not seeing my granddaughters then.<sup>831</sup>

Anthony's narrative above signifies his fears of disrupting an already fragile situation, and the way in which his relationship with his daughter is sustained only through a separate relationship with his grandchildren. When asked about the key elements of a 'good' father, Anthony was not convinced he had been a 'good dad at all', but that quite possibly he had 'been seen to be a bad dad', particularly from his daughter's point of view. This highlights the significant tensions between men's varied relationships and identities, with both father and daughter suggesting in a sense that the identity of father should take priority over that of lover or partner.

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<sup>830</sup> [SOHCA/054/14] 'Anthony.'

<sup>831</sup> [SOHCA/054/14] 'Anthony.'

Jake, born in 1968 in Glasgow, also experienced relationship breakdown with his daughter as a result of becoming non-resident. He became a father for the first time in 1989 to a son, and the couple married one year later and had a daughter in 1993. Jake describes separation from his wife as being both a significant shock but also overdue: 'the marriage probably should have ended before it did...but it's one of these things where you've got two kids. You don't want to walk away from that...we'd just become two people who lived in a house. Roommates, to a point.'<sup>832</sup> Initially, Jake's ex-wife left the family home where he remained with the children, aged nineteen and fourteen. As has been demonstrated, however, post-divorce parenting arrangements and relations between parents, and children, are liable to shift over time:

The way it went at first they were always in the house with me...at that point she maybe stayed with her mum one night a week and then eventually that increased as the time went on [pause] It was a horrible situation to happen with my daughter as time went on, after that. But basically because I met someone else, is what I make of it. That was like a year later when we met. So then things really started to change more with my daughter, not with my son, we've always been very close.<sup>833</sup>

Jake's narrative further demonstrates the diverse relationships fathers can have with various children after separation. Like Anthony, his memories indicate a distancing between father and daughter, rather than father and son, and despite initially having more frequent contact with his daughter, Jake's relationship with her began 'deteriorating.' Significantly, Simpson et al's study found fathers were three times as likely to have lost contact with their children if those children were all daughters.<sup>834</sup> This perhaps reflects the gendered interaction and leisure time spent with boys and girls, as explored in the previous chapter. Jake's memory below demonstrates that relationships can change gradually over time, but they can also be impacted significantly by one event, notably the introduction of a new partner. As he describes, 'it kind of just boom, right there, stopped', and 'fell down quickly':

I met my girlfriend, there was a lot to do between my ex, which was not nice...but maybe she was a bit annoyed, jealous, I don't know. The way she made me feel was as if we'd split up because I met someone else, but I didn't, because it was a year later, you know? And maybe she poisoned my

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<sup>832</sup> [SOHCA/054/24] 'Jake.'

<sup>833</sup> [SOHCA/054/24] 'Jake.'

<sup>834</sup> Simpson et al, *Being there*, p. 20.

daughter's mind a little bit...There's things I could have done better, to be honest...I met someone else, I wanted that relationship to work, and maybe I became a bit selfish over that. I probably did [...] I'll always say that...But my wife was inflexible in such a way that when I was to see my daughter, it had to be this day, and between this time and that time, so that was quite tough. I tried to get some flexibility, then arguments came, and I don't know if my daughter felt at that point that I didn't want to see her, or I wanted to be somewhere else rather than there...I remember a conversation...speaking to her on the phone and saying, "is it okay next week if I change it to the Sunday instead of Saturday?" ...and she seemed all right with that. But my ex came on screaming; "oh she's not happy with that. It has to be this or that." I said "I've already arranged it" and this all blew up in a horrible argument. And it was almost as if, you're more interested in you than her, and maybe she got that impression, and it kind of broke from there.<sup>835</sup>

Jake's choice of the word 'broke' is important. While he remains in regular contact with his son, his relationship with his daughter has not improved. At the time of the interview they had not spoken for six years. The narrative below suggests the difficult emotions experienced by some non-resident fathers can endure over significant periods of time:

I send texts; messages, birthday cards, presents at Christmas, Easter, and all these kind of things and messages just to say, "it would be nice to talk with you now and again", or "even phone me or something." But I never get any response...the only way I get to see what's happening in her life is through Facebook, I can see her face on Facebook and what she's doing and who she's with and all that sort of stuff [...] It's horrible. It's absolutely horrible. It's hard, because what more am I meant to do? Am I meant to walk around really miserable, you know, die? And yes it hurts, of course it hurts, but I've got to try and stay sane, rise above that...but no, it's not easy. And would I want that to change? Of course I would, in a flash...but, yeah, I've just got to keep myself sane. I think about her every day. You can only...I went to a counsellor once before about it as well and he said, you can only do what you can do. There's no point in getting pushy and challenging and chapping on the door and stuff because you can just make things worse. All you can do is send the texts, send cards, messages, and send gifts, it's all you can do.<sup>836</sup>

Though Jake emphasised what he believed to be the central role of his ex-wife in the demise of the relationship with his daughter, he also acknowledged that there were things he 'could have done better', that his own actions in terms of prioritising his new

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<sup>835</sup> [SOHCA/054/24] 'Jake.'

<sup>836</sup> [SOHCA/054/24] 'Jake.'

relationship were perhaps important. Though Leslie similarly felt his ex-wife made his parenting more difficult by withholding information and being inflexible, he also conceded this was a two-way process, in that he ‘could have done more’:

I could have mibbe pushed masel more than I did, and I didnae. Mibbe spent some of the time walking about feeling, aww she’s this, that and the next thing and I dunno if I’d...it just seemed to me the harder I tried, the bigger the barrier she put up. I would phone wanting to speak to one of the boys or something like that, and they wouldnae be in...and I’d leave a message for them and they’d never get back to me. Then eventually I’d get a hold of them and I would say “wit ye no phone me back for?” “When did ye phone?” Wouldnae even tell them, things like that [...] I do think, initially there wisnae a lot of change but then I was say for mibbe two or three years there was a spell where we grew further apart but then as they got older we got closer together again. I didnae have the input I shoulda had thought no fault of ma own, well...ye think back, mibbe I coulda done more...probably wae hindsight I’d been more...I’d done more mibbe.<sup>837</sup>

This feeling by some fathers that they could have ‘done more’ and ‘done better’ in their fathering upon becoming non-resident also extended to the aspirations they held for their children. Some reflected they had diminished influence over their children’s lives, and that their input regarding decision-making in terms of education, schooling and health was weakened. Leslie spoke of his sons’ education, and the wish that he had been able to encourage them more: ‘when ye think back noo some days it does quite sadden ye a wee bit cause ye think [inhales]... both boys got a bit lost when they went tae secondary school and didnae achieve what they coulda achieved [...] I think if I had been their full-time father at secondary school age I would have probably driven them on more.’<sup>838</sup> He put this down to lack of opportunity: ‘ye don’t have the same opportunities to encourage them and then ye don’t have the same opportunity to see whether they’ve actually put into practice what you’re telling them.’ Anthony emphasised the difficulties of parenting across households in terms of decision making, particularly when they were not necessarily as he would have preferred: ‘I’ve disqualified myself from making those decisions because I’ve moved out of the house.’<sup>839</sup> His narrative below highlights that despite being responsible for financial provisioning, he no longer had full control of the ways in which that provision was used:

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<sup>837</sup> [SOHCA/054/08] Watson.

<sup>838</sup> [SOHCA/054/08] Watson.

<sup>839</sup> [SOHCA/054/14] ‘Anthony.’

I had taken out insurance for both the children so that when they were older they would have money, my wife blabbed this to my son, just at a time when he was looking for a car so “I want that money now, I want to buy a car.” Seventeen. So I wasn’t very happy about that. “Why did you tell him that?” “Oh well I just thought he should know about it.” So I tried to explain and say “look son this is for the future”, “I want it now, I need it now.”

As has been demonstrated in much of the discussion above, however, participants rarely reflected upon the financial responsibilities or difficulties of being a non-resident father, but upon their *relationships* and *interactions* with their children. This perhaps reflects the fact that none of these men had further children with those they re-partnered with, and so did not have significant difficulties in providing for two families. Leslie’s desire to be involved and have close relationships with his sons, for example, was significantly highlighted in his attitudes towards financial provision as a non-resident father. As noted, fathers, and often non-resident fathers, viewed financial provision and gift giving as a way in which to actively demonstrate care. Though Leslie would spend additional money aside from child support payments, he did not, however, want to be seen as the ‘treat guy.’ Instead, he emphasised spending time *with* his sons, rather than spending money *on* them. In the narrative below, he distances himself from ‘part-time’ or ‘Saturday’ dads:

What was quite difficult to begin with was the fact that...the tendency was that you’d spoil them cause ye’d think, well I’ve got the boys so I’ll do something wae them, like something ye wouldnae normally do so ye try and stop yourself doing that cause ye didnae want you to be seen as the treat, the guy that gave him all the treats and the mum was aw the bad yins cause she’d be day to day sorta thing but we managed a fairly balanced...I mean I still did loads of things wae them but I just tried to keep their life in a proper manner so they werenae spoiled if you like cause I’ve seen that over the years where dad gets them on a Saturday and takes them to the pictures or takes them somewhere wae spending money on them and they get tae used to that [...] I tried ma best no to spoil them cause it’s easy tae, as a part-time dad, just to throw a lot of money at them and think “oh well”, I tried to avoid that.<sup>840</sup>

Negative connotations have been attached to non-resident fathers’ leisure interactions with their children, specifically that such fathers sporadically ‘buy’ the love and

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<sup>840</sup> [SOHCA/054/08] Watson.

affection of their children in-between periods of absence.<sup>841</sup> These stereotypes often fail to acknowledge the significant difficulties faced in maintaining contact. Some non-resident fathers may rely on ‘doing things’ because it is the only way they are able to maintain contact with their children; their time may be limited or rigid, particularly if there is considerable geographic distance, and also because it may alleviate any stress and guilt associated with separation.<sup>842</sup> Entertaining is also a significant role undertaken by fathers when in residence, and they may view activities as a way to create lasting memories for their children.<sup>843</sup> Mary Lund’s 1980s study of thirty families two years post-divorce, for example, found that though fathers did not want to be perceived as ‘kindly, treat-bestowing uncles’, they feared disciplining children in the event it would disrupt precious time together.<sup>844</sup> For some fathers, limited resources in the wake of divorce and payment of child maintenance could mean they could not entertain their children by paying for recreational activities out with the home.

James, born in 1957 in Glasgow, was unmarried when he became a father, having two children born to two different mothers in 1987 and 1991. His biography epitomises the ways in which men can father both biological and non-biological children, across various households. James has, at various stages, and sometimes simultaneously, been a cohabitating father, a non-resident father, a lone-stay at home father, and a stepfather. After being married and divorced in his early twenties, James became a dad for the first time at the age of thirty. As he recalls, ‘there was no plan, it just happened and, we just made the decision that we wanted to go with it...It was kinda casual and it hadn’t really started that long but we quite soon after did live together.’<sup>845</sup> James and his ex-partner, who separated when their daughter was three, continued to live together following separation, until he was going to become a father for a second time. Becoming non-resident would not, however, affect contact or relations with his eldest daughter: ‘nothing would have changed any focus on...still being a dad and being around.’ When James’ second daughter was born, as the mother already had two children of her own, ‘it wasnae gonnae be a situation where we were

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<sup>841</sup> Jenkins and Lyons, ‘Non-resident Fathers’ Leisure with their Children’, p. 227.

<sup>842</sup> S. M. Stewart, ‘Disneyland Dads, Disneyland Moms? How Non-resident Parents Spend time with Absent Children’, *Journal of Family Issues*, 20(4), (1999), pp. 539-556.

<sup>843</sup> Tirilo and Coleman, ‘How Divorced Non-Residential Fathers Manage Barriers to Involvement’, pp. 159-178.

<sup>844</sup> Lund, ‘The Non-Custodial Father’, p. 220.

<sup>845</sup> [SOHCA/054/15] Oakes.



gonnae live with each other closely...I've got children, she had children...[but] no less involved in bringing up the children.'<sup>846</sup>

Both of James' daughters stayed with him regularly and he was very keen for them to grow up 'as sisters', and this aspiration was facilitated by positive relationships between those involved. He reflects 'it was quite a mature transition', the parents were 'good at supporting each other.' On two occasions, both his daughters and ex-partners coincidentally lived in the same street as James. Furthermore, when his youngest daughter was four, James became a lone-stay-at-home father for a period of four years. These fluid parenting arrangements indicate the way in which parents negotiate parenting roles and responsibilities across different households over time following separation. Currently living with his youngest daughter, James has a partner of over ten years whom he does not live with because she also has three children of her own: 'we wanted our children to know each other but not to expect them all just to live in one place together.' James is therefore both a biological and social father: 'it kind of adds to the picture of extending some of my responsibilities as a dad. I more or less became...I don't see myself conventionally as "a step-dad" but I suppose I am':

Because [partner's children's father] maintained his relationship with his children and still him and Karen got on really well, and interacted with the children, and there was no animosity between me and him. I didn't see myself as replacing him so I didn't see myself as a step-dad at all. It was more when Karen's children had grown up and referred to me and describing me to other people as their step-dad, I realized, "oh! I never thought of myself as a step-dad." I don't, because that would be thinking that their dad wasn't around or something. So it's only kinda by how the, Karen's children have referenced me.<sup>847</sup>

This narrative demonstrates the ways in which kin relationships can be viewed differently by those involved in them. While his partner's children consider and refer to James as a 'step-dad', he does not necessarily identify with that label himself. Overall, James' biography epitomises 'blended' families and the various 'family fragments' across households, outside of marriage, as well as the positive outcomes of these.

In 2004, the Scottish Executive acknowledged in *Family Matters: Improving Family Law* that the law had 'fallen behind the way adults, very often with children, form and

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<sup>846</sup> [SOHCA/054/15] Oakes.

<sup>847</sup> [SOHCA/054/15] Oakes.

maintain relationships.’<sup>848</sup> In 2001, there were 411,952 cohabiting couple family households, 221,622 of which had one or more dependent children and around 40% of children were also born to unmarried parents, the majority of whom recorded the same address and could be assumed to be in stable relationships.<sup>849</sup> Shifting attitudes and practices towards family life and parenting were not reflected in law and policy, however. Nearly half (49%) of those asked in the 2000 *Scottish Social Attitudes* survey thought that married and unmarried fathers have the same rights in relation to consent of children’s medical treatment, and in 2004, there was overwhelming support (98%) for unmarried fathers to have the same rights.<sup>850</sup> The survey also found that while there was strong support for marriage as the preferred basis on which to bring up children, only 26% of respondents agreed that married couples make ‘better parents’ than unmarried couples.<sup>851</sup> Thereafter, under the Family Law Reform Act 2006, unmarried fathers who jointly register the birth of a child with the child’s mother automatically obtain parental rights and responsibilities.

On Father’s Day in 2011, nevertheless, the Prime Minister David Cameron drew upon familiar political discourses surrounding ‘father absence’, likening ‘runaway fathers’ to drink drivers.<sup>852</sup> Praising his government’s ‘family friendly’ reforms as a way to ‘bring fathers back into the lives of all our children’, Cameron emphasised that ‘when fathers aren’t there for their kids’ the future of the country is at stake, and for this, they should be condemned: ‘we need to make Britain a genuinely hostile place for fathers who go AWOL. It’s high time runaway dads were stigmatised, and the full force of shame was heaped upon them. They should be looked at like drink drivers, people who are beyond the pale.’<sup>853</sup> Non-resident fathers therefore continue to be presented in a largely negative way, without acknowledgement of the often-considerable difficulties they can face.

The Scottish Parliament’s Fathers and Parenting Enquiry in 2014, for example, found that they continue to have issues regarding access to information; cases were reported of unanswered emails and phone calls to schools, and of hospitals or GPs

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<sup>848</sup> Scottish Executive, *Family Matters: Improving Family Law in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 2004), p. 2.

<sup>849</sup> Ibid, p. 6.

<sup>850</sup> Scottish Government, *Scottish Social Attitudes Survey 2004 Family Module Report* (Edinburgh, 2005), p. 19.

<sup>851</sup> Scottish Executive, *Family Formation and Dissolution*, p. 43.

<sup>852</sup> ‘David Cameron: Dad’s gift to me was his optimism’ *The Telegraph*, 19<sup>th</sup> Jun 2011, [www.telegraph.co.uk](http://www.telegraph.co.uk), accessed 27 Jan 2016.

<sup>853</sup> Ibid.

refusing to provide non-resident fathers with information about their child's health.<sup>854</sup> Housing allocation practices were noted as being unsympathetic, viewing non-resident fathers as 'single men', while new welfare policies such as the 'bedroom tax' were reported as impacting upon fathers' overnight visits or shared residence arrangements. Financial implications were also highlighted. Some fathers felt benefits were paid unfairly, particularly the failure of the CSA to take into account mothers' income, even where time/residence and incomes are fairly equal. There were also a number of personal submissions from fathers experiencing difficulties in establishing access to their children, highlighting the sense of loss and emotion evoked by separation. Collectively they focused upon the problems of maintaining amicable relations with the child's mother, as well as the long, expensive and often painful nature of legal action in attempts to gain custody or access to their children.<sup>855</sup>

## ***Conclusions***

During the late twentieth century, the legal status, responsibilities, rights and roles of fathers became subject to high profile public and political debate, as a result of changing family patterns and shifting gender roles. Divorce, remarriage and births outside of marriage and an increase in lone-parent families resulted in rising numbers of fathers no longer living with their children on a full-time basis. As a result, fatherhood was largely conceived within political narratives as 'absence.' Most significantly, 'fatherless families' were seen by the Conservative Government to be creating 'an underclass of young men who are detached from the socialising obligations of the family.'<sup>856</sup> As well as powerful economic concerns, such political and cultural discourses pointed to a crisis surrounding the very notion of fatherhood. With fathers conceived as both the cause and solution of a number of social problems, there were a variety of attempts to 'reassert' paternal responsibility in family law and social policy. While both the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 and the Child Support Act 1991 aimed to keep fathers connected to their children, mainly through a genetic link, they emphasised different versions of the 'good' father. The former employed a vision of 'involved' fathering and assumed significant convergence in the lives of women and

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<sup>854</sup> Scottish Parliament, 'Enquiry into Fathers and Parenting' (2014) [www.parliament.scot](http://www.parliament.scot), accessed 20 Sept 2015.

<sup>855</sup> Scottish Parliament, 'Fathers and Parenting: Summary of Evidence Submissions.'

<sup>856</sup> Hansard, Fathers in the Family (1999).

men in relation to working and caring, while the latter emphasised fathers' economic and authoritarian responsibilities. The competing and contradictory approaches during this period show the way in which different 'types' of fathers were being celebrated and scrutinised.

There is a clear distinction, however, between the cultures of fatherhood (the diverse, often inconsistent beliefs about fathers) and fathering practices and identities (what fathers actually do and feel). Personal narratives highlight that despite the dominant perceptions of post-divorce and unmarried fathers, absence was the very thing many were striving to avoid. Indeed, a variety of diverse relationships, experiences, behaviours and identities are encompassed by the term 'non-resident father.' The realities of parenting across households can be complex and difficult, especially when relationships are fraught and personal circumstances change. For non-resident fathers in particular, there are a number of emotional and practical factors which influence whether contact is maintained, alongside the frequency and quality of that contact. My interviewees emphasised the practical changes of becoming a non-resident father: attempting to live nearby and continuing in normal everyday activities, issues surrounding lack of information, change over time as children grow older, and in particular the difficulties of maintaining relationships with their ex-partners. For three of the six non-resident fathers I interviewed, re-partnering, even a year or more following separation and without marriage and children, was, among other factors, important in determining the quality and contact of the relationships with their ex-partners and children.

Most significantly, interviewees spoke of the emotional changes and sense of loss brought about by no longer parenting on a daily basis. They reflected upon the ways that divorce or separation impacted upon their children, upon the father-child relationship, and the ways they sought to maintain this connection, despite the significant difficulties. This, in turn, affected their identities, and how they viewed themselves as fathers. Conceptions of non-resident fatherhood as 'failure' could therefore be detected in the recorded narratives, but not because they abandoned their responsibilities or simply did not care, but because they were sometimes unable to live up to their own expectations and prior experiences of being a 'good' father. The oral histories recorded provide significant insight into the emotional dimensions of fatherhood and show that fathers felt a range of emotions upon becoming non-resident from their children, particularly pain and sadness, which have, for some, endured.

Oral history is a particularly illuminating methodology in this regard. These interviews show that prior to the 1995 Act, which emphasised the importance of maintaining the relationships between non-resident parents and their children, many men were already highly concerned with maintaining these links and were attempting to retain their parental roles and responsibilities while living in a different household. The final chapter explores the experience of fathers who, in contrast, had primary care of their dependent children.

## CHAPTER SIX ‘The only fella standing there’ Lone Fatherhood

In 1981, there were around 17,620 lone fathers with dependent children in Scotland, accounting for 18% of all lone parents.<sup>857</sup> Very little is known, however, about the experience of lone fatherhood during this period, before or since.<sup>858</sup> Unlike the significant body of historical scholarship on lone mothers, there is almost none on lone fathers.<sup>859</sup> Moreover, in 2014, the Scottish Parliament launched an enquiry into the some 30,000 single fathers across Scotland, claiming that while they headed more households than ever before, ‘there is no comprehensive picture of [their] experiences.’<sup>860</sup> The complex social, economic and demographic changes of the late twentieth century, however, mark the period as a significant one in which to explore this specific family form, as well as the norms around men’s parenting and masculinities.

Gender roles were shifting as more mothers entered the changing labour market, and the ideology and practice of sole male breadwinning was challenged, as highlighted in Chapter Three. Chapters Two and Four have demonstrated that caring and nurturing by men were becoming more accepted, and publically prized, dimensions of masculinity and expectations of ‘good’ fathering. Rising numbers of divorce and unmarried parents similarly impacted upon both the causes and nature of lone fatherhood.<sup>861</sup> As Victor George and Paul Wilding argued in the first major British study of lone father families in 1972, these changes were making it ‘less unthinkable for a man to contemplate trying to bring up a family on his own.’ ‘A generation ago’, they maintained, ‘it would have seemed almost out of the question.’<sup>862</sup>

This chapter explores lone fatherhood in late twentieth century Scotland. It begins by examining its wider social and political constructions during this period, and

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<sup>857</sup> Records of OPFS, Box 5: 1981 Census in ‘Lone Parents in Scotland: Some Statistics’ (1985).

<sup>858</sup> Bailey, ‘The History of Mum and Dad.’ For an exception see Abrams, ‘There was Nobody.’

<sup>859</sup> For historical studies of lone motherhood, mostly focused on England and Wales see e.g. K. Kiernan, H. Land and J. Lewis, *Lone Motherhood in Twentieth Century Britain* (Oxford, 1998); T. Evans, *‘Unfortunate Objects’: Lone Motherhood in Eighteenth-Century London* (Basingstoke, 2005); P. Thane and T. Evans, *Sinners? Scroungers? Saints? Unmarried Motherhood in Twentieth Century England* (Oxford, 2012); A. Gallwey, ‘Lone Motherhood in England, 1945-1990: Economy, Agency and Identity’ (PhD thesis, University of Warwick, 2012); A. McCullough, ‘Just an Ordinary Lassie’: Unmarried Motherhood in Post-war Scotland, c.1960-1985’ (MSc Dissertation, University of Strathclyde, 2013).

<sup>860</sup> ‘Do single dads get a fair deal?’ *BBC Scotland*, 11<sup>th</sup> Jan 2014, [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk), accessed 12 Oct 2016.

<sup>861</sup> M. O’Brien, ‘Lone Fathers: Transition from Married to Separated State’, *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 11(1), (1980), pp. 115-127.

<sup>862</sup> V. George and P. Wilding, *Motherless Families* (London, 1972), p. 3.

thereafter considers the recorded narratives of three men who assumed primary care of their children. It focuses on how these men experienced what remains a relatively rare parental role. In the period between 1971 and 1990, families headed by lone fathers accounted for only around 1.5% of all families with dependent children in Britain (this figure now stands at approximately 2%).<sup>863</sup> It explores how they negotiated and performed their fathering roles in the context of cultural attitudes and structures which, though shifting, assigned men a secondary role in the practical care of children and emphasised the centrality of paid work to masculine identity. O'Brien argued during the early 1980s, for example, that not only was lone fatherhood 'a highly unusual and unanticipated life event', but that on becoming lone fathers, men 'cross the boundaries of female and male terrains.'<sup>864</sup> The relative invisibility of lone fathers was therefore not only connected to their smaller numbers, but also because their roles and status continued to remain somewhat at odds with normative ideals of masculinity. According to O'Brien, the lone father was 'a unique sort of family man whose position invokes both support and disdain, admiration and suspicion.'<sup>865</sup>

It is argued here that dominant discourses parodying lone male carers as incompetent and their family life as a 'series of problems' undermined the complexity and diversity of lone fatherhood. Lone fathers could experience potential challenges, namely in the form of such stereotypes, as well as issues surrounding time, finance and personal well-being. The oral testimonies suggest that they also developed close relationships with their children, derived satisfaction in their roles, as well as experienced shifts in their gender identities. By exploring how society responded to a 'non-traditional' family role, and the individual experiences of men and their families, this chapter uncovers a hidden element of the history of fatherhood, and of working-class masculinities in Scotland.

### ***'Motherless?'***

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<sup>863</sup> J. Haskey, 'Lone Parenthood and Demographic Change' in M. Harley and G. Crow (eds.), *Lone Parenthood: Coping with Constraints and Making Opportunities* (Hertfordshire, 1991), p. 23.

<sup>864</sup> M. O'Brien, 'Patterns of Kinship and Friendship among Lone Fathers' in C. Lewis and M. O'Brien (eds.), *Reassessing Fatherhood: New Observations and the Modern Family* (London, 1987), p. 225; M. O'Brien, 'Becoming a Lone Father: Differential Patterns and Experiences' in L. McKee and M. O'Brien (eds.), *The Father Figure* (London, 1982), p. 184.

<sup>865</sup> O'Brien, 'Patterns of Kinship and Friendship among Lone Fathers', p. 239.

Lone parenthood was not a family form ‘new’ to the latter half of the twentieth century.<sup>866</sup> The growth in the number of lone parent families as a result of the increasing incidence of divorce, separation and births outside of marriage, rather than death or desertion, nevertheless impacted upon the routes to lone parenthood and significantly increased its visibility during this period. The 1981 Census in Scotland found one in seven families with children was headed by a lone parent, an increase from one in thirteen in 1971, and in many areas the proportion rose to one in five.<sup>867</sup> The Strathclyde region, for example, held the largest number of one-parent families in Britain, accounting for 48,690 out of a total of 96,857 one-parent families in Scotland in 1979-81.<sup>868</sup>

Lone fathers were not an homogenous group, however. There was much diversity in the nature and experience of lone fatherhood, and the routes by which men found themselves with primary care responsibility varied: separation, divorce, widowhood, through mutual negotiation, partner’s desertion, or by legal means.<sup>869</sup> Although researchers and demographers rarely acknowledged and recorded such distinctions (see table 6.1, for example), the Scottish census suggests that of lone fathers in 1981, 11,390 of these were separated and divorced, 4,170 widowed and 2,060 unmarried (figure 6.1).<sup>870</sup> The nature of lone fatherhood was further diversified with personal factors such as age, sex, and number of children, as well as employment, the availability of support networks and the nature of any continuing relationship with the child/ren’s mother. The increasing rate of remarriages and cohabitation also meant lone parenthood was often only a transient status.<sup>871</sup>

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<sup>866</sup> Davidoff et al, *Family Story*; Thane, ‘Happy Families?’; ‘A History of Working-Class Marriage in Scotland 1855-1976.’

<sup>867</sup> Records of OPFS, Box 9: ‘Lone Parents in Scotland: Some Statistics’ (1985); Information Leaflet ‘Changing Family Patterns: Key Points’ (1985).

<sup>868</sup> Records of OPFS, Box 38: ‘Great Britain and One-Parent Families’ (1982).

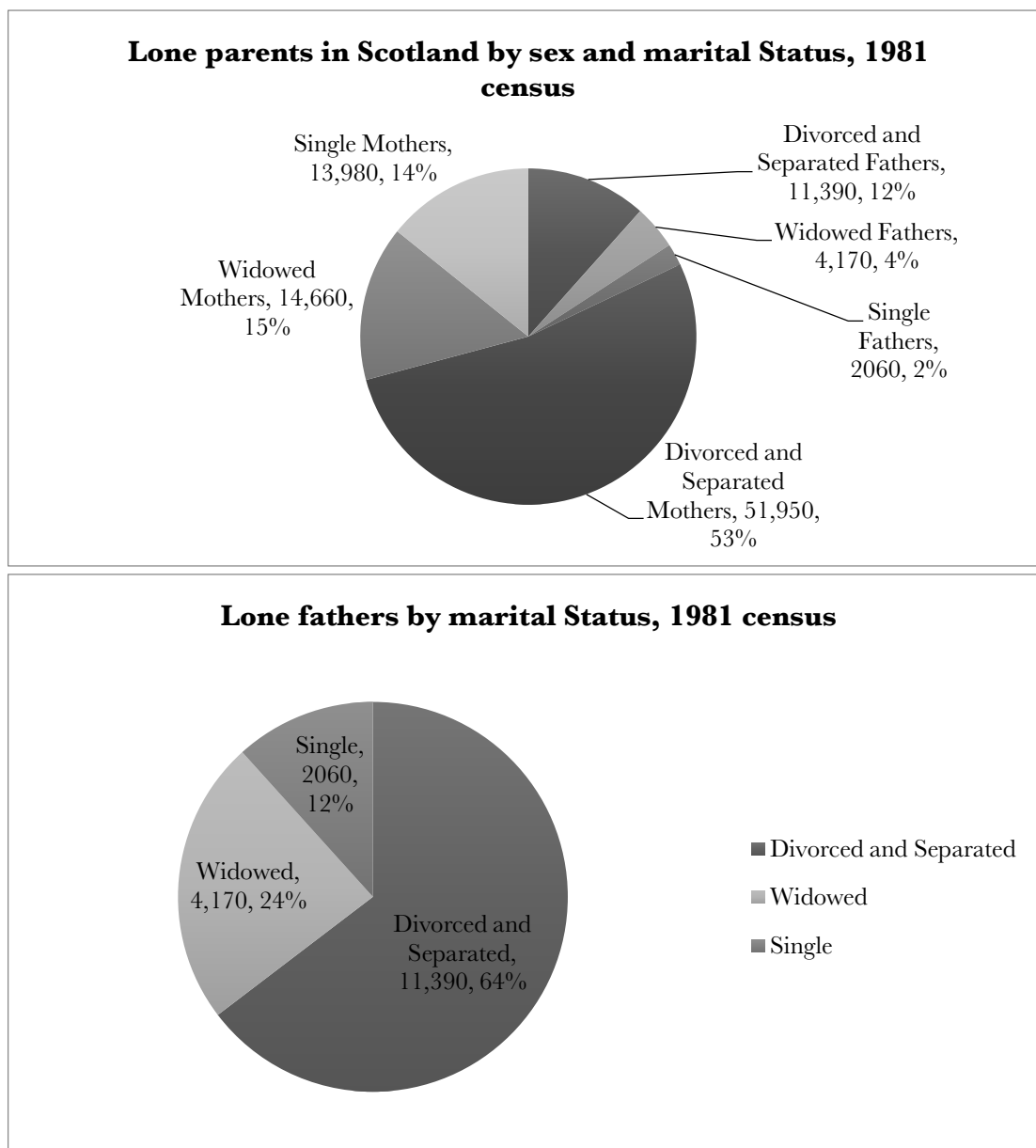
<sup>869</sup> T. Hipgrave, ‘Lone Fatherhood: A Problematic Status’ in L. McKee and M. O’Brien (eds.), *The Father Figure* (London, 1982), pp. 171-183.

<sup>870</sup> Records of OPFS, Box 5: ‘Lone Parents in Scotland: Some Statistics’ (1985).

<sup>871</sup> B. Jackson, ‘Single Parent Families’ in R.N. Rapoport, M.P. Fogarty and R. Rapoport (eds.), *Families in Britain* (London, 1982), pp. 159-178.



**Figure 6.1. Lone parents in Scotland by sex and marital status, 1981**  
**census**



Records of OPFS, Box 5: 'Lone Parents in Scotland: Some Statistics' (1985). Data sourced from 1981 Census Scotland: Household and Family Composition (10% sample).

While diverse family forms have long existed, for the New Right Conservative Government, such demographic change constituted a 'crisis' in the family.<sup>872</sup> As demonstrated in the previous chapter, lone parenthood was predominantly constructed as a social 'problem' during this period. Lone mothers, in previous decades viewed as 'promiscuous', 'neurotic' women, were presented as 'scroungers',

<sup>872</sup> Jagger and Wright, 'End of Century, End of Family?'

largely as a result of the perceived economic pressures on welfare.<sup>873</sup> As the numbers of lone mother families grew, ‘fatherlessness’ was politically linked to rising youth crime, educational disadvantage, and a growing ‘underclass.’<sup>874</sup> Lone parenthood therefore emerged as a high profile, politically contentious issue in the latter half of the twentieth century. The *Finer Report of the Royal Commission on One-Parent Families*, for example, considered the position of all such families, regardless of sex and marital status.<sup>875</sup> Published in 1974, the report estimated around 100,000 ‘motherless families’ in Britain, involving 160,000 children.<sup>876</sup> As demonstrated in table 6.1, more one-parent families were headed by men than by unmarried mothers, a family type that ironically attracted considerable attention, and condemnation.<sup>877</sup> As such, the Finer Report raised greater awareness of lone fathers and provided recognition of the paternal caring role, shown in figure 6.2. In 1977, for example, it was acknowledged by the Conservative Government that ‘modern fathers who have been...in a situation where there was joint partnership in caring for children want to take over the dual role’ when faced with lone parenthood.<sup>878</sup>

**Table 6.1**

<b>Lone parents in Britain, 1971</b>			
Sex and Marital Status of Parent	Number of Families	Percentage in Receipt of Supplementary Benefits	Number of Children
<b>Female</b>			
Single	90,000	68	120,000
Married	190,000	54	360000
Widowed	120,000	21	200000
Divorced	120,000	33	240000
Total	520,000	44	920000
<b>Male</b>	100,000	7	160000
<b>Grand Total</b>	620,000	38	1,08000

Source: M. Finer, *Report on the Committee on One-Parent Families* (London, 1974), p. 22.

Political representations of lone father families, nevertheless, remained highly gendered. Lone fatherhood was presented as inherently more challenging than lone

<sup>873</sup> Lewis, ‘The Problem of Lone-Mother Families’; Gillies, *Marginalised Mothers*.

<sup>874</sup> Murray, *The Emerging British Underclass*.

<sup>875</sup> Records of OPFS, Box 41: ‘Work with Unmarried Parents’ (1970).

<sup>876</sup> M. Finer, *Report on the Committee on One-Parent Families* (London, 1974), p. 22.

<sup>877</sup> McCullough, ‘Just an Ordinary Lassie’; Thane and Evans, *Sinners? Scroungers? Saints?*

<sup>878</sup> Hansard, One-Parent Families (HL 19 January 1977 vol 379 cc84-13184).

motherhood, and lone fathers, considered lacking in nurturing and domestic skills, were perceived to be ‘in the most difficult situation’ of all one parent families.<sup>879</sup> In particular, the importance of ‘natural’ and ‘superior’ maternal care for children, and its absence in the lone father family, was frequently debated. In 1974, during a House of Commons debate, Conservative politician Patrick Cormack argued that ‘a woman...is fitted by nature to look after the family and she has generations of inherited experience behind her. A man is not in that position.’<sup>880</sup> Such political discourses tended to emphasise the ‘odd’ and ‘unusual nature’ of men caring for children. In a further debate on lone parent families in the House of Lords in 1977, crossbencher Lady Kinloss argued that not only was the lone father ‘unaccustomed to dealing with the washing and ironing and cleaning of the house’ but he was also unfamiliar with ‘all the little things in the every-day life of a child, from a cut finger or a bruised knee to a broken toy.’<sup>881</sup> Notions of inadequacy extended not only to practical tasks of childcare but also to the emotional difficulties that could result from absence of the ‘nurturing’ female sex.<sup>882</sup> Kinloss, for example, maintained that day-care for lone father families was of ‘special importance’: ‘it may well provide the only contact with women that the children may have.’<sup>883</sup> Discourses emphasising the need for maternal care for the development of children suggested that in the absence of mothers, men and their families were ‘doomed to personal distress’ and ‘psychological disturbance.’<sup>884</sup>

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<sup>879</sup> Ibid.

<sup>880</sup> Hansard, One-Parent Families (HC 29 November 1974 vol 882 cc1013-601013).

<sup>881</sup> Hansard, One-Parent Families (1977).

<sup>882</sup> Ibid.

<sup>883</sup> Ibid.

<sup>884</sup> Hipgrave, ‘Lone Fatherhood: A Problematic Status’, p. 171.

**Figure 6.2. Image: cover of D. Barber, *One-parent Families* (1975)**



Source: D. Barber (eds.), *One Parent Families* (London, 1975)

Though sole practical care of children and the home may have proved challenging for some fathers, particularly if they had not been significantly involved in or responsible for these activities previously, it is easy to overstate that men had little to no involvement 'in the everyday life of a child.' Chapter Four has shown that despite prevailing divisions of labour, fathers were not excluded from childcare, and nor were they incapable of doing so. Analysis of the records of the Scottish Council for Single Parents (SCSP, and later One-Parent Families Scotland (OPSFS)) during the 1970s, for example, show that few fathers contacting the Council noted being unable to cope with physical childcare. Rather, they sought advice regarding additional day-care in the critical periods before and after school and during summer holidays; and for information regarding legal and custody rights and support groups.<sup>885</sup> Similarly, George and Wilding's 1970s study of around 350 people in Nottingham found confidence, particularly among working-class respondents, that fathers could 'care adequately for their children'; 70.4% in classes IV and V compared to only 42.5% of those in classes II and I.<sup>886</sup> Middle-class respondents (32%) were more likely than working-class respondents (10%) to believe that although a father could cater for a child's physical needs, he could not accommodate for emotional needs, while 80% in classes I and II also felt that the 'lack of a mothers love' was a problem, found in only 25% of classes IV and V.<sup>887</sup>

Assumptions about appropriate male and female parenting roles were nevertheless largely reflected in social research. Prior to the 1970s, little consideration had been given to lone fatherhood and by the 1980s, only a handful of British studies existed.<sup>888</sup> The most comprehensive of these, highlighted above, was George and Wilding's study of around 600 lone fathers in 1972.<sup>889</sup> Despite investigating men who

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<sup>885</sup> Records of OPFS, Box 10: SCSP Correspondence; Box 15-16: Case Referrals.

<sup>886</sup> George and Wilding, *Motherless Families*, p. 42.

<sup>887</sup> Ibid, p. 43.

<sup>888</sup> For sociological studies on lone motherhood see V. Wimperis, *The Unmarried Mother and her Child* (London, 1960); M. Wynn, *Fatherless Families* (London, 1964); J. Nicholson, *Mother and Baby Homes: A Survey of Homes for Unmarried Mothers* (London, 1968); D. Marsden, *Mothers Alone: Poverty and the Fatherless Family* (Harmonsmith, 1973); A. Hopkinson, *Single Mothers in the First Year: A Scottish Study of Mothers Bringing up Children on their Own* (Edinburgh, 1976); J. Lamotte, J. McQueen and A. Hopkinson, *The Home that Jill Built* (Edinburgh, 1981).

<sup>889</sup> Studies on lone fatherhood see e.g. George and Wilding, *Motherless Families*; E. Ferri, 'Characteristics of Motherless Families', *The British Journal of Social Work*, 3(1), (1973), pp. 91-100; A. Hunt, *Families and their Needs* (London, 1973); M. Murch, 'Motherless Families Project: Bristol Council of Social Service Report on First Year's Work', *British Journal of Social Work*, 3(3), (1973), pp. 365-376; Barber, *Unmarried Fathers*.

were caring for their children, the authors' nevertheless negatively defined households headed by a lone father, by labelling such families as 'motherless':

To the children it may mean a rougher, harsher lifestyle without a mother's gentleness and care. It may mean drabness and poverty. It may mean a father so busy with combining work and domestic duties that he is always tired and impatient and without time to relax with his children. For girls, it means an absence of a model in the family [...] Depending on the reason for motherlessness, public attitudes may vary from ostracism to sympathy, from admiration to condemnation.<sup>890</sup>

One decade later, Jackson, though paying greater attention to the diversity of lone fatherhood, also maintained that 'men neither inherit nor invisibly acquire the habits of nurturing a small child.' For the lone male parent, '*it all* has to be learned.'<sup>891</sup> In this sense, primary care by fathers was given higher status, and men were admired for the way they, as one 1975 study noted, 'managed to cope.'<sup>892</sup> The author, a social worker, 'confessed' to having 'felt confused when meeting fathers who had successfully adapted to being 'mothers' – not only doing practical tasks in the household but the emotional, nurturing role.'<sup>893</sup>

The implication that care by fathers was not a routine, everyday occurrence, and what is more, that men did not know 'instinctively' how to do so was also evident in popular culture. During this period, a number of films engaging with 'new' fathering emerged, such as *Kramer vs Kramer* (1979) *Mr Mom* (1983), *Three Men and a Baby* (1987), *Parenthood* (1989) and *Mrs Doubtfire* (1993). While these films do show great gentleness, affection and love by their male characters, who are portrayed positively in their desires and attempts to be 'good' fathers, a common theme throughout is that the men in question, mostly white, middle-class professionals, find themselves being main carers by accident rather than by active choice, and they are depicted as requiring the help of others in order to fulfil their new roles.<sup>894</sup> As Lupton and Barclay note, the dominant comedic genre of these films is significant: 'the spectacle of a grown man taking on the duties of caring for a child is amusing in its incongruity.'<sup>895</sup>

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<sup>890</sup> George and Wilding, *Motherless Families*, pp. 178-9; 7.

<sup>891</sup> Jackson, 'Single Parent Families', pp. 165-167.

<sup>892</sup> Murch, 'Motherless Families Project', p. 372.

<sup>893</sup> C. Passingham, 'Lone Fathers' in D. Barber (eds.), *One-Parent Families* (London, 1975), p. 38.

<sup>894</sup> Segal, *Slow Motion*, p. 29.

<sup>895</sup> Lupton and Barclay, *Constructing Fatherhood*, p. 69.



While the lone father family was not in itself ‘a problem’, studies during this period indicated that lone fathers did face potential challenges, though the extent to which individual men experienced these varied. Some lone fathers did not have the financial means, struggled to combine childcare with paid and unpaid work, lacked support networks and could be actively encouraged by neighbours, relatives, and welfare organisations to put their children into the care of others or the local authority.<sup>896</sup> There remained significant continuities throughout the twentieth century in this regard. Abrams found that ‘motherless’ children formed the largest proportion of the children of lone parents in Scottish children’s homes between the 1880s and 1930s.<sup>897</sup> Both Abrams and Strange have also demonstrated however, that while many men undoubtedly had little choice but to place their children into the care of others, many fathers strove to maintain the family unit as well as corresponded, visited and retrieved their children when their personal circumstances enabled them.<sup>898</sup> Lone working-class fathers were not therefore always able to keep their families together, but neither were they expected, helped or encouraged to do so. Joseph’s late father, for example, was widowed in 1958, when he, the eldest of three, was nine years old. He recalled the ‘family myth’ that his Aunt had, at the time, suggested that he and his siblings be ‘put in a home because there was nobody to look after us.’<sup>899</sup> Joseph’s ‘devastated’ father, a miner, instead ‘put his head down’ in work and ‘got into the habit of not being home’, and the children were ‘brought up there on with granny, granddad, various aunts’ and ‘didnae really see much of him.’<sup>900</sup> As sociologist Dennis Marsden argued in 1969, the ‘motherless child’ was such a ‘very rare phenomenon’, that ‘a father without a wife can usually call on female kin to bring up his children, or he can advertise with community approval for a woman housekeeper.’<sup>901</sup>

In the latter decades of the twentieth century, the changing position of women in the labour market, among other trends including psychological theories about the benefits of father involvement, meant care by ‘substitute mothers’ became less readily available or acceptable responses to lone fatherhood. Research by O’Brien in the late 1970s, for example, found that lone fathers had no more frequent contact with female

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<sup>896</sup> George and Wilding, *Motherless Families*.

<sup>897</sup> Abrams, ‘There was Nobody’; L. Abrams, *The Orphan Country: Children of Scotland’s Broken Homes 1945 to the Present* (Edinburgh, 1998).

<sup>898</sup> Strange, ‘Speechless with Grief.’

<sup>899</sup> [SOHCA/054/02] ‘Joseph.’

<sup>900</sup> [SOHCA/054/02] ‘Joseph.’

<sup>901</sup> Marsden, *Mothers Alone*, p. 241.

family members than married fathers.<sup>902</sup> Many local authorities could, however, as one early 1970s study found, offer little support to lone fathers beyond ‘the drastic offer of receiving the children into care’, while the Labour Government acknowledged that many actively encouraged ‘the father who is on his own’ to do so.<sup>903</sup> One Scottish widower, for example, wrote to his local MP in 1974, noting:

I was left with two little boys aged three and five. The Children's Welfare offered to put them in a home. I was broken hearted and am finding it hard to cope with the children as I want to work for the twofold purpose of keeping my head above water and the self-respect it brings not only to me but to my kids...All I want to do is keep what is left of my family unit together.<sup>904</sup>

The explicit advice that it was appropriate for lone fathers to place their children into authority care reinforced the perception that fathers were peripheral to their children’s care and well-being. Although politicians advocated that more should be done to ensure that fathers were encouraged and enabled to keep their families together during this period, they often propagated the problematic status of sole male parenting by, for example, claiming there was a shortage of *women* available for child-care to enable lone fathers to resume work. In the early 1980s, children in Scotland from lone father families were forty-eight times more likely than those from two parent families to be taken into care, in comparison to children living with a lone mother who were fourteen times more likely.<sup>905</sup>

The message was clear: a man’s place was at work, not at home caring for children, and lone fathers faced considerable pressures to be in full-time employment, but without the day care facilities to do so. In George and Wilding’s study, 86% of 350 people questioned by a random street survey considered that lone mothers should stay at home to care for children under school age; while 78% felt lone fathers in the same position should work.<sup>906</sup> When respondents acknowledged that some lone fathers should receive supplementary benefits, those with very young children or a large family for example, it was noted that this was done with ‘a feeling of resignation’: ‘it almost looked as if the respondents felt disappointed at not being able to tell the father that

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<sup>902</sup> O’Brien, ‘Patterns of Kinship and Friendship among Lone Fathers’, p. 241.

<sup>903</sup> Murch, ‘Motherless Families Project’, p. 365.

<sup>904</sup> Hansard, One-Parent Families (1974). There is no indication what social ‘class’ this man is.

<sup>905</sup> Records of OPFS, Box 005, SCSP Leaflet ‘Stress and the Lone Parent’ (approx. 1982).

<sup>906</sup> George and Wilding, *Motherless Families*, p. 38.



his place was not at home.<sup>907</sup> The higher the social class of the respondent the more likely he or she was to support this view. Paid work was therefore considered central to a man's 'self-respect' and 'dignity' and to normative ideals of masculinity, and the construction of the male breadwinner was reflected negatively in men who did not work, regardless of the fact they had dependent children.

Cultural attitudes surrounding the importance of work for men manifested in policy and in welfare, and male lone parents were only able to claim social security benefits on equal terms with women from 1974.<sup>908</sup> Prior to the *Finer Report*, lone fathers were required to register for work if they had dependent children and received benefits only upon satisfying the Commission officers 'there is no reasonable alternative to his remaining at home to look after his children himself.'<sup>909</sup> As the report noted, this policy was based on the view that 'it is usually better for children to look to a father who conforms to the normal role of breadwinner' and that it was 'better for [fathers], financially and psychologically, to do so.'<sup>910</sup> Even when fathers had satisfied the Commission that they were entitled to benefits in order to care for their children, the notion that a man's 'proper' place was in the public sphere of work remained pervasive. The majority of fathers in George and Wilding's research did not feel comfortable receiving benefits (63%), 'most felt they *ought* to be at work. Without a job, they were less than men.'<sup>911</sup> Furthermore, 9.6% of their sample felt pressured by officers to re-enter paid employment, 'a little judicious encouragement' the authors claimed to be reasonable.<sup>912</sup> Lone fathers were therefore expected to undertake paid employment and thus have potential difficulties in childcare, while lone mothers were expected to undertake unpaid childcare but have potential difficulties in gaining paid employment. The SCSP identified this paradox in their 1980s information leaflet 'Basic Problems Facing Single Parent Families':

If you are a male single parent, there is a pressure on you to work from society when you may wish to stay at home with the children. If you are a

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<sup>907</sup> A. MacKay, P. Wilding, and V. George, 'Stereotypes of Male and Female roles and their influence on people's attitudes to one-parent families', *Sociological Review*, 20(1), (1972), p. 85.

<sup>908</sup> Jackson, 'Single Parent Families', p. 167.

<sup>909</sup> George and Wilding, *Motherless Families*, p. 210.

<sup>910</sup> *Finer Report*, p. 338.

<sup>911</sup> George and Wilding, *Motherless Families*, p. 83.

<sup>912</sup> *Ibid*, p. 81-82.

woman and want to work it will be difficult to get a good job because employers are not prepared to be flexible with working hours.<sup>913</sup>

These pressures were reflected in the employment patterns of lone parents; around five out of six lone fathers in Britain were in work during this period.<sup>914</sup> As demonstrated in figure 6.3, 67% of lone fathers in Scotland were in employment in 1981 (66% full-time, 1% part-time) in comparison to 43% of lone mothers (25% full-time, 18% part-time).<sup>915</sup> Working-class fathers were, nevertheless, more likely to be unemployed and caring full-time for their children than men of professional occupations. While the former worked longer, more irregular hours and were less able to pay for additional childcare, the greater incomes, flexibility and employment rights of the latter made it more possible to combine work and care of children. Asked what a father should do when 'left to bring up children', 93% of fathers in classes I and II in George and Wilding's study responded work, in comparison to 78% of those in class IV and V or 50% of those unemployed.<sup>916</sup> Although the majority of lone fathers continued working, around one third of their sample had given up work at some point to care for their children, a finding similar in other studies carried out during this period.<sup>917</sup>

While early sociological research on lone father families focused upon issues surrounding the 'problem' of lone fatherhood, and largely reflected normative gender attitudes, studies from the late 1980s increasingly challenged the notion that lone fathers were 'bound to have problems' and instead explored how men negotiated masculinities when undertaking areas of work and identity largely defined as 'feminine.'<sup>918</sup> One finding of this research, influenced by the growing academic study of masculinities, was that men who became primary carers for children could experience significant shifts in their gender identities and attitudes as well as in their relationships. O'Brien's study found that for some lone fathers, feelings of the 'self as father' gained precedence over 'self as worker', while research by Richard Barker in

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<sup>913</sup> Records of OPFS, Box 1: SCSP Leaflet 'Some Inadequacies: Basic Problems Facing Single Parent Families' (1980s).

<sup>914</sup> Hipgrave, 'Lone Fatherhood: A Problematic Status', p. 175.

<sup>915</sup> Records of OPFS, Box 5: 'Single Parents in Scotland: Social Policy Issues' (1989), p. 5; 'Lone Parents in Scotland: Some Statistics' (1985).

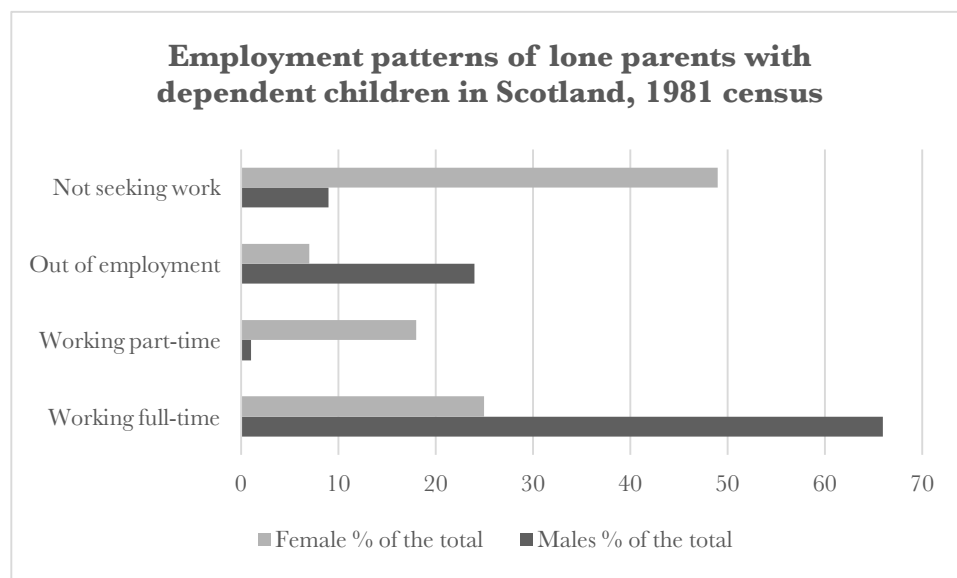
<sup>916</sup> George and Wilding, *Motherless Families*, pp. 48-49.

<sup>917</sup> Hipgrave, 'Lone Fatherhood: A Problematic Status', p. 370.

<sup>918</sup> Hipgrave, 'Lone Fatherhood: A Problematic Status'; O'Brien, 'Becoming a Lone Father'; R. W. Barker, *Lone Fathers and Masculinities* (Aldershot, 1994); E. Fox, 'Lone fatherhood: Experience and Perception, Choice and Constraint', (PhD Thesis, University of Nottingham, 2002); Doucet, *Do Men Mother?*

the 1980s argued that lone fatherhood provided men with the opportunity to act as ‘pioneers of a new gender role’: ‘they experienced and lived a form of masculinity which did not have as its foundation employment.’<sup>919</sup> Elizabeth Fox’s research with thirty lone fathers at the turn of the twenty-first century similarly found that it transformed fatherhood for men. For a significant number, care, rather than paid work, became the most important element of their fathering.<sup>920</sup>

**Figure 6.3**



Source: Records of OPFS, Box 5: ‘Single Parents in Scotland: Social Policy Issues’ (1989). Data sourced Census 1981 Scotland: Household and Family Composition (10% sample).

The links between fatherhood, masculinity and providing meant, however, that primary caregiving fatherhood was, for most men, not a ‘readily available social role or status.’<sup>921</sup> In the context of heterosexual partnerships, role reversal was extremely uncommon, and cultural acceptance was also limited. Though lone fathers could inspire some sympathy, men who *opted to* be primary carers while their partners worked were, as George and Wilding noted, ‘considered odd to say the very least.’<sup>922</sup> This was reflected in my own interviewees. Alistair, born in 1949, commented that when he became a father in the mid-1970s ‘men were expected...to earn the money...It wasn’t a question of “well you’ll need to get a job and I’ll stay at home and look after the kids”,

<sup>919</sup> O’Brien, ‘Becoming a Lone Father’, p.185; Barker, *Lone Fathers and Masculinities*, p. 147.

<sup>920</sup> Fox, ‘Lone fatherhood’, p. 153.

<sup>921</sup> Hipgrave, ‘Lone Fatherhood: A Problematic Status’, p. 173.

<sup>922</sup> George and Wilding, *Motherless Families*, p. 40.

*there was no way in god's earth*, nobody I knew did that.<sup>923</sup> Ken noted 'househusbands' were 'non-existent' when he first became a father to twin boys in 1972.<sup>924</sup> Born in 1940, he reflected that not only was role reversal not a consideration, but it was also potentially 'risky':

In the 1970s, it would have been even more difficult for a man *to have spent...to have done that* [...] Men can bring up children and do domestic stuff but if you've got the macho view which is this is, "my god this is unacceptable, you're not a man, you must be gay or something if you feel comfortable in that environment," which is not the case of course [...] It happens more now and it's accepted more now, but in my time if a man had opted to do that, they'd think there was something wrong with him. It's just no done; you'd say "well why not?" Well they wouldn't be able to explain it, other than inferring there was something up with you, but to foster such thoughts, was a bit...that's risky stuff.<sup>925</sup>

Gerry, born in 1967, similarly reflected that stay-at-home fathers were in the minority and also held a particularly ambiguous position well into the 1990s and beyond. 'There was very few ae them', he recalls, 'it wisnae really anything that men gave consideration tae, it was just expected that the man worked and the woman watched the kids.'<sup>926</sup> A father of two, his sons were born in 1990 and 1992:

I know one *guy who was a...know...who was in that position* and I only know him because I work wae his wife but even then you thought, mmm, that's strange, how...I always wondered how must he feel? Sitting in the hoose watching the wean when his wife's providing for him, you know, how can ye...? In ma head that just doesnae ring true and is no logical, she shouldnae be providing for him, and he shouldnae feel comfortable wae that. But whether they did or no, I don't know but it certainly wisnae...very few and far between.

[...] Aimee: Do you think people thought that guy, for example, wasn't as capable?

Gerry: Naw, *it wisnae the capability issue of it, it was more the status* I think than anything else. I felt even in our house, although [wife] was the one in the house wae the kids, there was nothing she could do for the kids that I couldnae do. I was just as capable of bathing them and changing them and watching them as what she is...so it wisnae so much he wisnae capable of doing it, it was just why would he want to do it? Why would he no want to be the breadwinner?<sup>927</sup>

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<sup>923</sup> [SOHCA/054/06] 'Alistair.'

<sup>924</sup> [SOHCA/054/07] Doran.

<sup>925</sup> [SOHCA/054/07] Doran.

<sup>926</sup> [SOHCA/054/22] Farrell.

<sup>927</sup> [SOHCA/054/22] Farrell.

For these interviewees, the prospect of primary care-giving fatherhood was not problematic because of men's inability to undertake childcare and/or nurturing domestic work, but largely because it undermined and threatened the masculine status, privilege and self-respect derived from paid work and financial provision for the family. Interviewees believed that men *could* provide primary care, but questioned why would they have *wanted* to do so on a full-time basis, within heterosexual partnerships at least.

In light of these dominant gendered discourses and attitudes, public and community scrutiny of lone fathers remained prominent. While George and Wilding's study found fathers were 'extremely sensitive about their position and...to people's feelings and reactions', with a significant number recording 'unsympathetic and unfriendly attitudes', Jackson noted that the male single parent 'may have to cope with an atmosphere in which his decision and his lifestyle are sensed as odd and peculiar.'<sup>928</sup> One divorced lone father with three children, for example, contacted the SCSP in 1976 primarily to 'talk to someone'; he felt that his neighbours were watching him in the event he left the children alone. It was noted that the man 'sounded very capable but realised the need to off load on somebody who understands.'<sup>929</sup> Sensitivity about what people think about their situation, and the quality of care they are giving to their children, stemmed not only from the notion that fathers should be working, but also because men felt threatened that their children might be removed from their care. As one study in 1975 argued, many lone fathers 'fear that, no matter how well they care for their children, no matter how much they love them and are loved and needed in return, at some time in the future a judge will decide that the children would be better off with their mother.'<sup>930</sup> Research in the early 1980s concluded, for example, that in custody cases and decisions regarding with whom and where children should live, there was an anxiety about entrusting fathers with the care of children, that courts were more likely to overturn the status quo when children were living with fathers, as well as request a welfare report.<sup>931</sup>

While it was popularly assumed family and communities would 'rally around' the lone father, feelings of isolation, or being treated with suspicion could therefore be

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<sup>928</sup> George and Wilding, *Motherless Families*, p. 131; Jackson, 'Single Parent Families', p. 166.

<sup>929</sup> Records of OPFS, Box 10: Correspondence (1976).

<sup>930</sup> Passingham, 'Lone Fathers', p. 42.

<sup>931</sup> Love, 'The Legal Status of Fathers', p. 31.

commonplace.<sup>932</sup> In George and Wilding's study, feelings of loneliness and depression were prominent among a significant number of their respondents: 37.9% felt such feelings occasionally and 29.6% all the time.<sup>933</sup> Working-class fathers were particularly affected. As noted, middle-class fathers were less likely to be restricted by financial and domestic burdens as they had greater ability to combine work and childcare, as well as socialise at work.<sup>934</sup> Being more likely to be in employment, their role as primary carer was also considered more socially acceptable. As sociologist Andrea Doucet has more recently argued, the father who is not working while being a primary carer 'represents a form of double jeopardy.' He is judged simultaneously as being a 'failed male (not a breadwinner)', and as a 'deviant man (primary caregiver)'.<sup>935</sup>

Despite evidence of the potential challenges faced by some lone fathers, such needs were barely acknowledged or met by society. Services and formal support networks, for example, were practically non-existent. Given the significantly higher proportion of lone mother families, one-parent family organisations such as the SCSP and Gingerbread remained female focused. During the early 1980s, for example, a community development project for lone parents, the 'Strathclyde Project' was established in Easterhouse, Glasgow.<sup>936</sup> Though 'the group attracted from the beginning men in ones and twos', the final project evaluation noted that as most single parents were women, attendees felt that social activities should be female only: 'inviting men would only cause problems.'<sup>937</sup> Moreover, during an executive meeting in 1989, the SCSP also questioned whether it helped 'single parent fathers enough', and only then raised 'the possibility of a publication for fathers.'<sup>938</sup> Sociological studies also confirmed the lack of formal networks. Barker, who interviewed thirty lone fathers in the 1980s, found only three had attended Gingerbread, while an overwhelming majority of Doucet's study of around 100 stay at home and single fathers expressed feeling like outsiders as well as threats to the 'inner female worlds of parenting.'<sup>939</sup>

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<sup>932</sup> Murch, 'Motherless Families Project', p. 366; C.D. Smith, "'Men Don't Do this Sort of Thing": A Case Study of the Social Isolation of Househusbands', *Men and Masculinities*, 1(138), (1998), pp. 138-172.

<sup>933</sup> George and Wilding, *Motherless Families*, p. 125.

<sup>934</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 131.

<sup>935</sup> A. Doucet, "Estrogen-filled worlds": Fathers as Primary Caregivers and Embodiment', *The Sociological Review*, 54(4), (2006), p. 708.

<sup>936</sup> Records of OPFS, Box 14: 'Strathclyde Project Draft Report of Easterhouse Project - Reaching a Balance, The Social and Political Elements of Single Parents Groups' (1983).

<sup>937</sup> Records of OPFS, Box 25: 'Strathclyde Social Work Department: Final evaluation of SCSP "Strathclyde project" - Report by Supervising Officer' (1983).

<sup>938</sup> Records of OPFS, Box 25: 'Minutes of Executive Meeting' 12<sup>th</sup> January (1989).

<sup>939</sup> Barker, *Lone Fathers and Masculinities*, p. 201; Doucet, 'Estrogen-filled worlds', p. 703.

They emphasised tensions created through cross-gender friendships because of the perceived potential for intimate (heterosexual) relationships.<sup>940</sup>

Overall, fatherhood was a significant feature of political debate in the late twentieth century. Though often overshadowed by lone motherhood and non-resident fatherhood, lone fathers were also a focus of political and popular discussions surrounding gender and family life that emerged during this period. Fatherhood was increasingly portrayed as an opportunity for men to be nurturing, take an equal role in childcare and develop close relationships with children, challenging traditional notions of masculinity as a result. As men increased their practical care of children and more mothers entered the labour market, explicit political discourses surrounding lone fathers as incapable and incompetent declined somewhat. The principal of shared caring, as well as the benefits of father involvement following divorce, also served to undermine such stereotypes.<sup>941</sup> An examination of lone fatherhood highlights, however, that there remained significant limitations to such shifts. Continuing emphasis on the psychological and nurturing importance of mothers showed remarkable continuity, as did a dominant focus on the economic role of the father. Baroness Faithfull, for example, claimed during a 1984 debate, ironically about the barriers to women at work and home, that ‘when children are very young they should have a constant, continuing and secure relationship...with their mother or *substitute mother*.’<sup>942</sup> By implication, fathers remained positioned as secondary carers, and lone fatherhood or role reversal viewed as ‘unusual.’ The following section takes a case-study approach to examine in-depth the recorded narratives of men who become lone primary care-giving fathers. It explores how they experienced, negotiated and performed their masculine and fathering identities during a period in which such contradictory ideals surrounding men’s parenting and masculinities were pervasive.

## ***Joseph***

Joseph was born in 1949 in North Lanarkshire. He joined the Royal Navy at the age of fifteen where he trained to become an engineer as he ‘wanted to get away’ from the domestic responsibility for his two younger siblings placed upon him by his widowed

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<sup>940</sup> Doucet, *Do Men Mother?*, p. 140

<sup>941</sup> R. D. Day and M. E. Lamb (eds.), *Conceptualising and Measuring Father Involvement* (New Jersey, 2004).

<sup>942</sup> Hansard, Barriers to Women at Work and at Home (1984). Emphasis added.

father.<sup>943</sup> He first became a dad in 1974 and settled in London with his wife, a full-time mother. They had two more children, born in 1978 and 1982. In 1986, Joseph took sole care of his three daughters, then aged eleven, seven and three, following marital separation and returned to Scotland. This was a mutual agreement; Joseph claimed that both parents ‘knew they would be better off with me than they would be with her.’<sup>944</sup> He recalls that though his wife loved the children dearly, she ‘preferred doing her own thing’ and ‘didn’t find it easy to look after the girls [...] she didnae feel as if she had the time for them.’ He further reflected that his wife was dissatisfied with her domestic role, noting that she ‘felt she was missing out on an awful lot’ and ‘wanted life beyond sitting in a house looking after weans.’<sup>945</sup> Though the routes to lone fatherhood are varied and diverse, Joseph’s experience is demonstrative of the most common reason that men became lone fathers during this period: divorce and separation as well as mothers’ inability, or unwillingness, to care.<sup>946</sup>

Unlike his widowed father, who had continued to provide financially but relied on family to provide practical care for his children during the late 1950s, Joseph gave up full-time employment and became a stay at home father for seven years. His childhood experiences were clearly significant in his decision to do so: ‘I made sure I did the opposite, unconsciously I think.’<sup>947</sup> It also demonstrates changing understandings and responses to lone fatherhood across generations; in which shifting gender roles and relations made care by female family members less tenable. Joseph’s father, for example, had suggested that he get a *female* relative to look after the children and return to work, ‘my dad was the only one that actually said to me, again that’s his generation, that’s how he’d felt when he was in a similar situation.’<sup>948</sup> That this ‘never occurred’ to him highlights the co-existence of diverse ideas about fathering among men within the same family. For Joseph, lone fatherhood was the preferred outcome: ‘who else wanted to? They were my children, I wasnae asking anybody else to, not on a full-time basis anyway. I wanted to parent masel.’<sup>949</sup>

Becoming a lone father could involve a number of adjustments: becoming single

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<sup>943</sup> [SOHCA/054/02] ‘Joseph.’

<sup>944</sup> [SOHCA/054/02] ‘Joseph.’

<sup>945</sup> [SOHCA/054/02] ‘Joseph.’

<sup>946</sup> Fox, ‘Lone fatherhood’, p.92. Lone parenthood was ‘thrust upon’ her sample through a complex interplay of factors.

<sup>947</sup> [SOHCA/054/02] ‘Joseph.’

<sup>948</sup> [SOHCA/054/02] ‘Joseph.’

<sup>949</sup> [SOHCA/054/02] ‘Joseph.’



through separation, becoming the sole main carer, giving up full-time employment, and in Joseph's case, relocating to the places and people which made these adjustments somewhat easier. His decision to relocate 'home', where 'it was easier to bring the girls up' points to a working-class family support network.<sup>950</sup> As he notes, he had a family that he 'could always rely on and call back on, my brother used to come up and see me aw the time and my sister less so but she was always there when I needed her.' Despite a complicated relationship with his own father, Joseph and his daughters initially lived in his vacant house with a cousin and her children, who were also experiencing divorce. His return to Scotland also indicates that his status as a lone father was a permanent one; his ex-wife, who remained in London, would not share care of the children.

For Joseph, transitioning to primary carer was, in a practical sense, unproblematic. His childhood experiences, career in the navy, family support and 'hands on' parenting made it a natural transition. He described taking to it 'like a duck to water', as opposed to being 'chucked in at the deep end and left to get on with it':

Being used to looking after myself to an extent, washing dishes, ironing, washing clothes, aw just came naturally anyway, it wasn't something I had to make a conscious effort to learn how to do, I just did it. As I say, that goes back again to looking after my brother and sister before I left home so it was there all the way through anyway. So it was just something I fell intae [...] it was not completely new but relatively new to me coming up here to look after the children full-time. I took to it like a duck to water in fact, it didnae bother me. Being in the navy helped...so you're self-sufficient anyway so that stood me in good stead. So when it came to look after a home I didnae have a problem. I just fell into it, it wisnae a problem at all, I never found it difficult.

Joseph's narrative of becoming a full-time carer with relative ease challenges political and cultural discourses that this role was inherently challenging for men because they were unaccustomed to care or domestic labour. Joseph remained a stay-at-home father until his youngest daughter was eleven years old.

Becoming a lone father could, nevertheless, impact upon men's social and gender identities. Prior to taking sole care, Joseph's fathering identity had been predominantly based on being the family breadwinner. Recalling early family life in the mid-1970s

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<sup>950</sup> [SOHCA/054/02] 'Joseph.'

and early 1980s and his work as a maintenance electrician in a factory, he claims, ‘I was working every day, literally everyday some weeks’, there was ‘a lot of work and you did it so I was out the house a lot of the time.’<sup>951</sup> While he noted it was ‘a given that you would be emotionally involved, you’d love them and be there’ for children, his main expectations as a father were ‘to work and provide’: ‘I suppose you just thought...you just had to work and just had to provide basically and that was it. That was your main role, and you thought that was your main role [...] I must say I didn’t think of anything else beyond that.’ The experience of lone fatherhood, however, broadened Joseph’s conceptions of fathering: ‘I never had any plans or expectations as such. Much later on I did, obviously once I had the girls...it actually became my job then to look after them.’<sup>952</sup> This highlights the way in which men may transition between or adopt different fathering and masculine identities over their life course, in response to various family and work circumstances.

Joseph’s position as a lone father therefore had a significant impact on both his relationship to the labour market and to his conceptions of masculinity. This became particularly apparent when he returned to work, initially part-time with his brother, ‘shovelling coal, delivering coal, loading coal. Hard physical labour.’ Chapter Three demonstrated that certain industries, though declining, retained elements of a ‘machismo’ culture, where men ‘performed’ gender in various ways through, for example, risk taking behaviour, cynical humour and sexism.<sup>953</sup> Though he had described himself as ‘soft’, ‘wee bit hippy’, and not ‘really into the macho man thing’ having lived in London ‘through the flower power time’, he reflects that the specific experience of caring full-time for his three daughters caused him to reassess this culture. ‘Coming out of childcare and going into the workforce’, Joseph struggled to adapt:

Probably one of the things that was strange with me being in the domestic situation with the girls, was going back into the workplace and finding it hard to adapt to that situation again, I did notice a difference there. I found it a wee bit awkward, cause you’re so used to a softer life if you like, a softer way of living and suddenly you’re in the workplace and they’re effing and blinding and joking and aw the rest of it [...] Just conscious of a much rougher life if you know what I mean, without being physically rough, just a rougher attitude towards things and a rougher attitude

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<sup>951</sup> [SOHCA/054/02] ‘Joseph.’

<sup>952</sup> [SOHCA/054/02] ‘Joseph.’

<sup>953</sup> McIvor, *Working Lives*; Johnston and McIvor, ‘Dangerous Work, Hard Men and Broken Bodies.’

towards women. I found being a father of three girls, having been so close to them and involved wae them all their lives, I found it very hard when people spoke the way they did, I found that hard to take... I could never understand why people who loved women spoke about it the way they did and I'd only felt like cause of my experience with my daughters, do you see what I mean? It was difficult to come to terms with that but you did, you just came to terms with it and that was it, you just slid into it but at the time you thought that's not very nice [...] Just nastiness, just a general denigration of women in many ways. It was quite a lot you know, and joking about it. Just talk I suppose but I was very conscious of it coming from what I'd done. If I'd never had that experience being in the house with them for so long, I probably wouldnae have noticed, I dare say it was like before I started looking after the children and then it would have carried on and I would never have thought twice about it.<sup>954</sup>

Becoming a lone father, and specifically, the experience of caring for three female children, changed Joseph, impacting on his sense of masculinity. His experience of re-entering the workplace also demonstrates the power relations between hegemonic and subordinated masculinities. Joseph choose to ignore misogynistic language and behaviour: 'you just swallowed it, you just took it, you just accepted it.'<sup>955</sup> He recalled that in many ways, he 'felt a wee bit different': 'you never really fitted in...I've always felt that wee bit removed because of that.'<sup>956</sup>

The cultural expectation that men should be providing out with the home, rather than caring for their children within it, meant that some lone fathers did face public scrutiny. Joseph reflected upon being acutely aware of his status as a lone, male stay-at-home parent, and the feeling it was perceived as being not 'quite right, quite natural or quite normal':

I was aware of people thinking it was a bit odd at times [pause] aye people did think it was a bit odd. There was occasional remarks made but there was positive remarks made as well about it. There were occasional remarks made people thinking it was a bit strange that I was a guy looking after three lassies but so what you know it didnae really matter. There was never anything nasty said, but there was a few sort of glances, side long glances possibly [...] My dad funnily enough, thought it was odd. He thought it was strange. He says "you'll have to just get back into work", and "get [sister] or somebody to look after the weans" but it never occurred to me to do that at the time but my dad was very much "aye you can just get on working with [brother] in the coal business and do that", but naw I never did...There was never any overt nastiness or anything but you aware that

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<sup>954</sup> [SOHCA/054/02] 'Joseph.'

<sup>955</sup> [SOHCA/054/02] 'Joseph.'

<sup>956</sup> [SOHCA/054/02] 'Joseph.'

people thought it was odd, *it was just a feeling if you like, maybe it was just me feeling that I don't know* but aye there definitely was. Cause I used to go and collect Fiona [pseud] from school and you'd been down there wae aw the mothers, and you're the only fella standing there at a time. There was one woman in particular and she used to think...she would hardly talk to me...there was others who chatted away quite the thing but this one woman always looked oddly at me, strange isn't it? And I was aware of it then, that's when I mostly aware of it when I was picking up Fiona from school. And on Mother's day Fiona used to get wee cards, I dunno what she said to them but she always brought me home cards for mothers [laughs] Aye that was when I felt it was school [...] There was other times were there was guys there as well but I was there aw the time, that was the difference. It's hard to describe it quite honestly, you were just aware that people thought it wisnae quite right, quite natural or quite normal but we didnae let it bother us, simple as that.<sup>957</sup>

Joseph's narrative raises a number of key themes. Despite a context in which the public display of fatherhood was increasingly prized, 'involved' fathering involving the full-time care and nurturing of children continued to clash with prevailing ideals of masculinity based on paid work. Joseph was conscious of transgressing normative gender and parenting roles, and his masculine identity and lifestyle could be destabilised or questioned in public. Gender was further significant in relation to the children; it was considered 'odd' partly because Joseph was caring for *female* children, indicating the perceived importance of maternal care and role models for girls. Moreover, community and physical spaces impacted upon the experiences of lone fatherhood, as fathers could face significant difficulty in integrating into female dominated areas such as playgroups and playgrounds. Such cultural attitudes and community scrutiny could also have very practical implications. Joseph recalled some initial financial difficulties because his ex-wife retained the child benefit book. Upon applying for a local council house, he was also told that the family were not 'entitled to anything, and no getting anything.' The employee dealing with his case argued that 'he had voluntarily left home': 'she couldn't believe this was the case, and she just wouldn't have it, so she was very awkward about it. She was really, just not gonnae budge.'<sup>958</sup> He had to lobby two councillors in order to secure a permanent home.

Joseph's reflection that there were also 'positive remarks made' highlights the way in which lone fathers could be seen as 'special cases', 'doing well' in what was

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<sup>957</sup> [SOHCA/054/02] 'Joseph.'

<sup>958</sup> [SOHCA/054/02] 'Joseph.'

taken for granted if done by a mother.<sup>959</sup> Joseph recalls one such commendation:

I remember one person in the pub and there was this guy in there and he was saying tae me “well I think what you’re doing is a wonderful thing”, he said, “I couldnae do it” ...that’s the one that stuck in my mind. I thought well that’s nice and other people said the same thing, you know “you’re doing well” and aw the rest of it which helped. I wisnae really bothered but it did give you a wee lift to know you were succeeding or you felt you were doing awricht.<sup>960</sup>

While praise could be source of affirmation, as in Joseph’s case, it could also cement the notion that lone father families were abnormal, and doomed to a series of problems. As Warren, whose experiences are explored below, noted, that fathers were able to successfully care for and bring up children on their own evoked a sense of disbelief: ‘folk would go “oh aye, you’ve been a single dad for aw this time, oh you’ve done really well with them...you’ve done awfy well” “naw, they’ve done awfy well.”’<sup>961</sup>

The perceived unusualness of male primary care giving was reflected in Joseph’s construction and composure of his masculine and fathering identity. Though he transitioned to full-time carer with relative ease and for a long period of time, expressed satisfaction and contentment in his role and clearly prioritised his identity as a father over that of worker, tensions with hegemonic notions of the father as provider were still evident in his account:

It was still odd; it was still considered odd. You were supposed to be the breadwinner rather than the carer...At the time I just thought to myself I this is what I’ve got to do and this is it. I felt myself, well this is something that’s unusual, it is unusual that I’m doing this but I felt at the time I had to do it, I had no choice anyway, and I wanted to do it so it didn’t really matter what anyone else said or thought.<sup>962</sup>

Joseph was eager to highlight that he was unaffected by such public perceptions, as well as present his fathering as ‘a success.’ He noted, for example, ‘they could think what they liked, as long as I knew we were awricht, I didnae really matter’; and ‘at the end of the day it really worked and I’ve got three girls that appreciate me and I appreciate them and that’s all that matters.’<sup>963</sup> Joseph’s use of the inclusive ‘we’

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<sup>959</sup> Barker, *Lone Fathers and Masculinities*, p. 214.

<sup>960</sup> [SOHCA/054/02] ‘Joseph.’

<sup>961</sup> [SOHCA/054/13] ‘Warren.’

<sup>962</sup> [SOHCA/054/02] ‘Joseph.’

<sup>963</sup> [SOHCA/054/02] ‘Joseph.’

emphasises a confidence and security within the family unit, and of close father-child relationships. This indicates that creating an identity as a lone stay-at-home father was perhaps more secure in private, family spaces, having the potential to be destabilised in public forums:

The girls were better off up here, they knew that and their mum knew that as well, it was much more stable up here, big family round them, so they had plenty more to rely on...So it worked out well in the end [...] Thoroughly enjoyed it. They seemed to enjoy it, they enjoyed the security of it, felt it was something they didnae have down at home for a wee while...I don't want to sort of blacken my wife's name or anything because she loved the children, but she didn't spend as much time with them as she should have done really. That was the problem whereas up here they knew they could come home and there was somebody there, and for those few years I was always in for them when they came at night. And we all got on fine, Sunday night dry their hair in front of the fire; two of them had really long hair. They were nice times; we all look back on it fondly. I feel I made a success at it, I really did. And they seem to think so, so that's all that matters really.<sup>964</sup>

### ***Warren***

Born in 1951 in Glasgow, Warren became a father for the first time in 1980, and again in 1985. He thereafter took sole care of his children, aged ten and five, following marital separation in 1990. As a child, Warren's mother and father, a bricklayer and factory worker, worked full-time and he lived with his grandmother until the age of sixteen. This remained an unresolved issue for Warren. He reflected that this had a significant effect on him, describing his relationship with his parents as 'for many years, disappointing': 'because I didnae know who they were.'<sup>965</sup> Following school, Warren joined the Merchant Navy before, at the age of twenty-one, studying engineering and teacher training at University. Thereafter, he undertook a range of jobs within education, and in 1987, the family relocated to Saudi Arabia where Warren had secured a teaching position. Following the outbreak of the Gulf War, Warren and his family were forced to return to Scotland, by which time his wife had fallen pregnant to another man. It was negotiated that he would take sole care of their children: 'she

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<sup>964</sup> [SOHCA/054/02] 'Joseph.'

<sup>965</sup> [SOHCA/054/13] 'Warren.'

eventually went “oh aye, they’ll be better wae you” and away she went.<sup>966</sup> As he recalls, she ‘wasn’t actually that interested in the children.’<sup>967</sup>

Warren’s experiences of becoming a lone father are similar to Joseph’s in a number of ways. Both men became main carers because their wives no longer wanted to do so, having acknowledged that the children would be ‘better’ cared for by their husbands. Like Joseph, Warren also returned ‘home’ to a support network, despite some tensions within these kin relationships. O’Brien’s late 1970s study similarly found there was a tendency for lone working-class fathers to attach more importance to family support in comparison to their middle-class counterparts.<sup>968</sup> Initially living with his parents in their two-bedroom multi-storey flat in Sighthill, Glasgow, Warren contacted a homelessness organisation in order to secure accommodation in the aftermath of not only divorce, but also displacement:

When the war broke out, you couldnae take anything with ye, yer money was still there, everything was still there and I remember I had the two of them and we were looking for this Homeless Unit and we were standing at a crossroads and the three of us were standing there soaking in the pouring rain and you could see the Unit across the road and this thought suddenly popped in ma head that said “how did that happen?” A minute ago I was a lecturer in a University, I was getting a good salary, I had a wife and two kids, a house and so on and lots of friends, and here’s the three of us standing in the pissing rain, wae no money, nowhere tae live, how did that suddenly happen?<sup>969</sup>

Warren’s narrative again reflects the significant shifts and adjustments in the lives of parents and their children following divorce and separation, albeit at an extreme, and symbolically evokes the sense of isolation, helplessness and distress that he felt during this period. Furthermore, neither Warren and Joseph had significant contact with their ex-partners following separation. While Warren notes that his ex-wife remarried a further two times and moved abroad, ‘she never had the slightest comment to them, she never phoned them, she never sent them a birthday card, a Christmas card, nothing’, Joseph recalled that while there was a continuing relationship between the children and their mother, this was minimal due to distance: ‘they used to phone each other and cards were exchanged [...] it was still very much their mum but she was

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<sup>966</sup> [SOHCA/054/13] ‘Warren.’

<sup>967</sup> [SOHCA/054/13] ‘Warren.’

<sup>968</sup> O’Brien, ‘Patterns of Kinship and Friendship among Lone Fathers’, p. 232.

<sup>969</sup> [SOHCA/054/13] ‘Warren.’

down there and we were up here.’<sup>970</sup> The family were housed in a flat beside his parents, and Warren began teaching in the local primary school.<sup>971</sup>

Unlike Joseph, Warren’s fathering identity remained associated with financial provision as a result, and interestingly he too seemed to indicate that stay-at-home fatherhood was rather unusual. He noted that the idea of ‘a househusband’ ‘sounded really weird, ye can still be oot at your work and still be a good dad.’<sup>972</sup> Despite his paid employment, Warren’s dominant memory of being a lone father was largely of isolation, and of the difficulties associated with socialising in what Doucet terms ‘estrogen-filled worlds’:

Loads of people will come and see a single wuman wae kids but they’ll no come and see a single man wae kids because the majority of people who go and visit are women, so the man doesnae want her tae go and talk to this guy who’s got two kids and let them play but he’ll no come with them either...They don’t go, “oh bring the kids round” and stuff like that so it was terribly isolating. And you would try these Fathers Alone [groups]...this was where they had no access to their kids whatsoever whereas I’ve got ma two and had them from day one...I was in the middle and then there was folk who were a full family but this was terribly isolating as well because nobody would come and see ye. Nobody would pop round for a coffee, nobody would pop in wae a cake and go “oh, put the kettle on” and it’s still like that today. Women, even if you take wee ones to a playgroup or a birthday party, they’ll no come and talk to ye, they’ll no come and...it’s almost like “oh, get away fae there” so that’s a really awkward one [...] It never dawned on me until it happened [laughs] absolutely ridiculous...I don’t know if it’s...you see it on films and television where he thinks you’re a threat.<sup>973</sup>

Warren’s observation, that the ordinary act of drinking coffee with a parent of a different sex could be treated with distrust and suspicion, highlights the difficulties associated with male parents entering female dominated parenting spaces and networks, particularly due to the perceived possibility of heterosexual relations. It also confirms the significant isolation some lone fathers could experience as a result, as well as the distinct lack of formal services aimed at them. None of the men I interviewed ever met or socialised with other lone fathers or men with primary care. Although Joseph noted ‘the loneliness was difficult at times’, being ‘self-sufficient’ and fortunate

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<sup>970</sup> [SOHCA/054/13] ‘Warren’; [SOHCA/054/02] ‘Joseph.’

<sup>971</sup> [SOHCA/054/13] ‘Warren.’

<sup>972</sup> [SOHCA/054/13] ‘Warren.’

<sup>973</sup> [SOHCA/054/13] ‘Warren.’



enough to have a family, he did not ‘really feel the need’ for support groups.<sup>974</sup> Warren, however, attended Gingerbread only briefly: ‘it was aw women in it and they didnae want to know. You could tell right away.’<sup>975</sup>

Other interviewees similarly noted the dominance of motherhood in social and community spaces and services for children, even when they were not lone or primary care-giving fathers themselves. Frank, born in 1957, became a father in 1984 and 1987. He reflected that during this period, fathers’ presence at playgroups was considered ‘odd’:

Frank: [pause] I wouldn’t have fancied taking them down to playgroup cause then, at that point in time, a guy going into playgroup with their weans would have been a bit odd.

Aimee: Why do you think that would have been considered odd?

Frank: Because it would have been odd cause fathers didn’t do that. A father would be out working, be out there as the provider...you would have been really unusual [...] I had two periods of redundancy when I was off work for a few months and I was taking them to school and picking them up and all the rest of it so I was doing all those duties but fortunately they were by the playgroup stage, I wouldn’t have fancied that at all [...] because you’d be in a situation where it’s a group of women who are congregating with their kids and they use that time to socialise and then put a guy in amongst it, I don’t think it would have been a great idea especially at that point in time.<sup>976</sup>

Early years settings were therefore not seen as spaces in which men were expected or considered appropriate, given the overwhelming number of female staff and attendees. Ken, whose own son is currently a primary carer, noted that it remains ‘difficult for a man to assume that role’: ‘a woman slips into it because they are good at going out making relationships, going to after school clubs and they socialise...when a man’s a househusband, it’s much more difficult to do that. There might be a couple of other guys out there but they never see them.’<sup>977</sup> Suspensions around fathers in childcare were and continue to be prominent, in relation to historical and contemporary child abuse. Ian, born in 1958, conceded ‘if I started up a childcare business tomorrow, I don’t think I’d get any kids’, while Anthony, born in 1949, commented upon a feeling of unease attending the activities of female children and grandchildren: ‘if you want to go and watch their weekly whatever, “who’s that guy? What’s he wanting?” “is it a pervert

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<sup>974</sup> [SOHCA/054/02] ‘Joseph.’

<sup>975</sup> [SOHCA/054/13] ‘Warren.’

<sup>976</sup> [SOHCA/054/16] McGeoghegan.

<sup>977</sup> [SOHCA/054/07] Doran.

or something?”<sup>978</sup> Charlie, born in 1952, reflected that during the late 1970s and 1990s when he had children, ‘you could see the strange looks sometimes, even if you were putting the kids intae the Sunday school crèche and you walked in wae them, rather than the mum. It was this kinda “well you shouldnae really be in here.”’<sup>979</sup> Following twenty years working in the shipyards and ten years with a printing company, Charlie, who first became a father in 1976, began working in childcare in the early 1990s. Now a Family Support Worker, he noted the continued distrust of men in this sector, particularly in relation to female children:

I started working wae childcare, it was a bit kinda...there was still that stigma there, fear about men working wae children and things like that. And I would still say there is a bit of it today. I used to work in residential homes and there was that bit about “why are you working there?” and “be careful with contact wae girls” and things like that. Well if this girl’s wanting a cuddle aff me, I’ll gie her a cuddle, how’s she gonnae learn? But there was always that “be careful, protect yourself” and it still goes on.

Aimee: Do you think that was said to women?

Charlie: No, I don’t think so, no.<sup>980</sup>

These narratives highlight remarkable continuities surrounding both masculinity and fatherhood in late twentieth century Scotland, and in contemporary society. While public and nurturing fathering was increasingly prized, there remained limitations to these shifts. In the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, only 2% of staff working with under-fives in Britain is male.<sup>981</sup> In Scotland, men constitute only 4% of nursery teachers and 0% of childminders.<sup>982</sup>

## ***James***

James was born in 1957 and grew up in Glasgow and Easterhouse. His father originally made stained glass windows, and sporadically worked in betting shops, while his mother undertook cleaning and factory work. After being married and divorced in his early twenties, James had two children to two different mothers, outside of

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<sup>978</sup> [SOHCA/054/04] Robb; [SOHCA/054/14] ‘Anthony.’

<sup>979</sup> [SOHCA/054/18] McKay.

<sup>980</sup> [SOHCA/054/18] McKay.

<sup>981</sup> ‘Early years’ development: why it is a job for the boys’ *The Guardian*, 9<sup>th</sup> Feb 2011, [www.theguardian.com](http://www.theguardian.com), accessed 23 Sep 2015.

<sup>982</sup> ‘Men urged to take up childcare career’ *The Scotsman*, 4<sup>th</sup> Dec 2015, [www.scotsman.com](http://www.scotsman.com), accessed 17 Nov 2016.

marriage, in 1987 and 1991. When his youngest daughter was four, James became a lone-stay at home father for four years, while her mother temporarily relocated to Europe. As James' recalls 'she'd met someone' and 'had a strong motivation to go there [...] wanted an adventure.'<sup>983</sup> For James, this also 'seemed like a big adventure', and as he reflects, 'I was quite happy to do it.'<sup>984</sup>

James described his fathering pre-lone fatherhood as 'hands-on' in terms of practical care and nurturing, noting 'I didn't want to be a stereotype dad. I wanted to share everything': 'you have to be totally immersed in the process.'<sup>985</sup> James therefore described becoming a lone stay at home parent as 'liberating', it 'evolved into quite an amazing way of living' and as he notes 'made me feel like I'd achieved something.'<sup>986</sup> Becoming full-time carer to his daughter also provided stability, as he was able to secure a permanent house and 'plan and live in the community':

I understood the kind of input you'd have to make being either a home dad or a hands-on dad using that time to make sure my two daughters bonded and grew up together. It was already happening so it was quite a natural transition and in some ways quite liberating. Because probably the welfare and benefits system was a big bit different back then, your status as a single parent was probably better so it wasn't absolutely essential for me to be in full-time employment because my full-time job was being a dad.<sup>987</sup>

James' narrative again questions discourses surrounding the 'challenge' of lone fatherhood, and instead highlights that this role was 'natural' and welcomed. Unlike Joseph and Warren, James neither experienced isolation or stigma as a lone stay at home father. Employing discourses surrounding 'absent' and 'dead-beat dads', he recalls that, 'people were quite responsive to someone taking that role [...] people came to respect that...I mean have more respect for making a better contribution than not bringing the children up or taking more responsibility.'<sup>988</sup> This may indicate change over time, or reflect James' fairly alternative and liberal lifestyle choices and identity.<sup>989</sup>

The restructuring of the economy from industry to services, the increase in

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<sup>983</sup> [SOHCA/054/15] Oakes.

<sup>984</sup> [SOHCA/054/15] Oakes.

<sup>985</sup> [SOHCA/054/15] Oakes.

<sup>986</sup> [SOHCA/054/15] Oakes.

<sup>987</sup> [SOHCA/054/15] Oakes.

<sup>988</sup> [SOHCA/054/15] Oakes.

<sup>989</sup> James was a vegetarian and interested in the arts. When his oldest daughter was an infant, James and her mother rented a farmhouse with another family, and she was given an alternative education at a Steiner school.

maternal employment, and the diminished role of fathers as sole breadwinners, provided opportunities for some men to pursue more caring and intimate fathering. For James, breadwinning had never been central to his fathering or masculine identity, and he positioned himself as parent before worker. He reflected on his then weak commitment to the labour market, noting 'I didn't think much about a career', 'since becoming a parent, I essentially think of that first and foremost. Then any integration of employment has kind of slowly evolved.'<sup>990</sup> After studying photography at college, James had spent most of his young adulthood working part-time, 'flexible enough' employment in arts centres or 'doing some garden work.' When the children were young, he recalls, 'I wasn't essentially thinking of working full-time.'<sup>991</sup>

Even when fathers did not experience a significant shift in working circumstances, the experience of lone fatherhood could nevertheless result in a change in outlook and identity in relation to gender. After four years, James' ex-partner returned, and as he recalls, 'expected to be the main parent.' His lone fathering experiences caused James to partly re-evaluate gendered assumptions around the relative importance of mothers and fathers. He reflected that it appeared unfair that he would automatically be regarded as the secondary parent: 'it seemed a wee bit different after being the main parent for that long and then...just to assume the role at the snap of her fingers.'<sup>992</sup> At the same time, James continued to refer to the perceived superior care provided by mothers, that 'mum is probably naturally a better nurturer', 'the most important parent', and 'the main parent' 'no matter you're own contribution'<sup>993</sup>:

Aimee: So why do you think they would say that they're the main parent?  
 James: [sigh] [long pause] Dunno, possibly the mixture of essentially women give birth, women are the boss as far as that's concerned and [pause] I would imagine if I had been less interested probably...when [ex-partner] was first pregnant I could imagine that she would have had the child herself. So I think a woman's probably integral in deciding how much you make a contribution. It's great but you know, I'm the main parent and I think that prevails [...] I think it's natural for women to think essentially that they must take responsibility first and foremost because they can't assume that [pause] a man is gonna...<sup>994</sup>

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<sup>990</sup> [SOHCA/054/15] Oakes.

<sup>991</sup> [SOHCA/054/15] Oakes.

<sup>992</sup> [SOHCA/054/15] Oakes.

<sup>993</sup> [SOHCA/054/15] Oakes.

<sup>994</sup> [SOHCA/054/15] Oakes.

James' testimony is demonstrative that while men are viewed as choosing to care and having a degree of volunteerism, for women it is an obligation. While mothers were seen as 'essential', fathers were considered 'value added.'

Overall, by accepting primary and sole responsibility of their children, all three fathers experienced significant changes in everyday life, in their father-child relationships, as well as shifts in their identities and attitudes. Lone fatherhood resulted in greater levels of intimacy with their children, for example. Warren currently cares for his three grandchildren each day and so continues to see his daughter on a daily basis, while James' daughter officially moved back in with him on her sixteenth birthday, and continues live with him:

It seemed as time went on, I think she stated a preference for staying with me. You know it was her own default place to go. She felt most comfortable, and I think it worked, I think I ended up being the most reliable parent for one thing or another. I think she was happier staying with me [...] It made me feel like I'd achieved something; that I'd made our home her natural home and that's where she's most comfortable and where she can be most relaxed and free.<sup>995</sup>

For Joseph, in particular, shifting from breadwinner to stay at home dad provided him with the opportunity to construct closer relationships. He reflected that he was 'closest to' and had 'more of a connection' with his youngest daughter, who was three when he took sole care: 'I've really brought her up myself basically' and 'she really remembers me more as a parent than she does her mum.'<sup>996</sup> Greater intimacy extended, however, to all three of his children:

I came much closer, much closer. Obviously I was there twenty-four hours a day wae them, oh became much closer. We had always been close, obviously natural you're close to your children but much closer afterwards. Being together and there's a bond there now might not have been there, well mibbe it would have been, I have nothing to compare it with but...they were always close to me, we didn't have any problems. Everybody has their rows but we always phone each and we don't fall out and we don't not talk to each other, you know, none of that nonsense. We always talk, and it was something I always instilled in them...if you don't talk, you cannae solve anything so we've always held to that and again, it sounds really trite but we always say don't go to bed arguing, we never did

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<sup>995</sup> [SOHCA/054/15] Oakes.

<sup>996</sup> [SOHCA/054/02] 'Joseph.'

that. And we've always been very affectionate, we always make sure we love each other and we always say it, to this day.<sup>997</sup>

These narratives, combined with the studies conducted during the late twentieth century, serve to emphasise that many lone fathers, rather than being overcome by problems, felt considerable pride, satisfaction and achievement in their identities and experiences.

### ***Scottish Parliamentary Enquiry into Fathers and Parenting (2014)***

In 2011, of Scotland's 291,000 lone parent families, 13% were headed by a male, accounting for 2% of all households with dependent children.<sup>998</sup> In recent years, the numbers of stay-at home dads in two-parent families have also increased, yet cultural acceptance varies and it remains 'a minority project.'<sup>999</sup> Fathers visibly caring in public can still be treated as a novelty, are asked if it's 'mummy's day off?', or admired for doing childcare tasks that mothers do as standard. Primary care giving by men continues to provoke debate in Britain more widely, with particular implications for masculinity. *The Guardian* and *The Telegraph*, for example, have regularly featured pieces discussing stay-at-home fathers; for example, that 'Most men don't have the balls to be a stay-at-home dad', or 'Being a stay-at-home dad makes me feel manly.'<sup>1000</sup> The media also generally presents primary care giving fathers as homogenous: middle-class, white, heterosexual men with professional and well-educated partners. Though many such fathers exist, these representations marginalise other fathers performing primary care, including lone fathers, gay men with biological/adoptive children, ethnic minority groups and unemployed, working-class fathers.

The Scottish Parliament enquiry into the experiences of fathers in Scotland also revealed important continuities in the experiences of lone fathering, and fatherhood more generally. Based on evidence from organisations and individual men, it found that fathers are not perceived as 'being equal in parenting skills or

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<sup>997</sup> [SOHCA/054/02] 'Joseph.'

<sup>998</sup> National Records of Scotland, 'Household Composition for Specific Groups of People in Scotland – Scotland's Census 2011' [www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk](http://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk), accessed 23 Jun 2016.

<sup>999</sup> Dermott and Miller, 'More Than the Sum of its Parts?', p. 186.

<sup>1000</sup> 'Most men don't have the balls to be a stay-at-home Dad' *The Telegraph*, 23<sup>rd</sup> Jan 2016, [www.telegraph.co.uk](http://www.telegraph.co.uk); 'Being a Stay-at-Home Dad makes me feel manly' *The Guardian*, 26<sup>th</sup> Dec 2015, [www.theguardian.com](http://www.theguardian.com), accessed 24 Jun 2016, accessed 24 Jun 2016.

responsibilities.<sup>1001</sup> Services designed specifically for fathers also remain relatively few. OPFS has only been running services for lone fathers since the turn of the century, and provision continues to be sporadic. Dad's Club in Edinburgh, otherwise known as the Edinburgh Lone Fathers Project, for example, was founded in 2001 in connection with OPFS, and describes its service as the 'longest running of its kind.'<sup>1002</sup> For the enquiry, OPFS gathered feedback from lone fathers who use such services. They felt, on the whole, alienated and devalued by society's attitude towards male carers. They reported having encountered nursery staff who assume that they are not as capable as mothers and being treated with suspicion by social workers. Jobcentres were found to be unsympathetic to their position as lone parents, assuming that there is a mother doing the majority of the childcare.<sup>1003</sup>

The evidence collected shows remarkable similarities in how men with primary care of children experience these attitudes. One lone father of two children, for example, noted the pressure to be in full-time paid employment, while another wrote that he gets two buses to attend Dad's Club as it is the only organisation of its kind.<sup>1004</sup> Fathers in two parent families also noted issues surrounding the female-oriented nature of children's services and parenting networks. One father claimed 'nobody speaks to the only dad in the room; not even the people who run the class speak to that person' while another noted, 'I get some strange looks from others, as if to say, "Why aren't you at work?" or, "What're you doing here?"'<sup>1005</sup> Some lone fathers also continue to feel isolated and in need of support. One father wrote to the enquiry that he 'felt alone, stigmatised and undervalued as both a parent and a person...that I should not be looking after my children as it is not natural. I was always ignored by the majority at the nursery and at the school gates.'<sup>1006</sup> These contemporary narratives emphasise the way in which public arenas and parenting spaces continue to destabilise lone fathers, despite continuing shifts in the public display of fathering.

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<sup>1001</sup> Scottish Parliament, Enquiry into Fathers and Parenting (2014) [www.parliament.scot](http://www.parliament.scot), accessed 20 Sept 2015.

<sup>1002</sup> Scottish Parliament, 'Submission from Dad's Club.'

<sup>1003</sup> Scottish Parliament, 'Submission from OPFS.'

<sup>1004</sup> Scottish Parliament, 'Oral Evidence.'

<sup>1005</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1006</sup> Scottish Parliament, 'Anonymous Submission.'

## ***Conclusions***

Though conceptions of traditional parenting roles were shifting and being challenged throughout the latter half of the twentieth century, men in primary or sole care of their children were in the minority. This chapter has sought to explore how such men negotiated their fathering roles when practices, identities and discourses of providing remained central to masculinity and men's lives, while those of caring remained strongly linked with femininity and women's lives. In the 1970s, the perceived superiority of maternal care, the widespread perception that 'real' men should be 'at work', and the relative low numbers of lone fathers in comparison to lone mothers, served to reinforce the notion that lone fatherhood was somewhat 'unusual', and at odds with hegemonic norms of masculinity. Lone fathers during this period were generally depicted as incapable and incompetent in raising their families alone, and there were suspicions and fear of harm toward children as a result. Such assumptions were reflected in policy, social research, employment patterns and were no more apparent than in the direct expectation that lone fathers should return to work and find alternative care arrangements for their children. They could face a number of potential challenges surrounding income, childcare and personal stress and, more significantly, they were not always provided with the means or encouragement to care for their children alone.

Change, however, is evident. Lone fathers entered the political agenda in response to demographic change, having experienced relative invisibility prior to the 1970s. They were no longer *required* to register for work, despite being *expected* to, and care by 'substitute mothers' within families also declined. The restructuring of the labour market, rising divorce, the increase in maternal employment, and men and women's changing roles in the family were all significant factors contributing to the changing nature of and responses to lone fatherhood during this period. As men increased their practical care of children in two parent families, more mothers entered paid work, and as political attention shifted towards divorced, non-resident fathers, explicit stereotypes of male carers weakened somewhat in the 1980s and 1990s. Sociological studies suggest that class divisions were also significant. Working-class lone fathers more frequently gave up employment to care for their children and were more likely to feel they were able to care adequately for them, practically and



emotionally, than middle-class fathers. They were also more likely to suffer from the problems of time, money, stress and community scrutiny, as well as rely on a kin support network.

The oral testimonies of lone fathers highlight the diversity and complexity of lone fatherhood, both as an identity and lived experience. Sole care of children involved a change not only in men's practical circumstances, but also in the nature of father-child relationships, their affiliation to the labour market and in their masculine identities. These fathers cared for their children with ease, experienced significant intimacy, and derived significant pride and accomplishment from their status as fathers. Discourses on 'appropriate' gendered parenting roles, particularly surrounding fathers as breadwinners, nevertheless impacted on the construction and composure of their masculine and fathering narratives. The history of lone fatherhood is significant in exploring shifts in the norms surrounding men's parenting and masculinity. It is, in many ways, a story of continuity. This chapter echoes the conclusions of sociological studies carried out during the late twentieth century. While there is little evidence that lone fathers cannot successfully care for their children, there is substantial evidence that 'society tends to make it difficult for them to do so.'<sup>1007</sup>

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<sup>1007</sup> Love, 'The Legal Status of Fathers', p. 36.

## CONCLUSIONS

This thesis has examined working-class fatherhood and masculinities in post-war Scotland. Using twenty-five newly conducted oral history interviews with men who become fathers during this period, as well as additional source materials, it has explored the ways in which their everyday lives, feelings and experiences were shaped by becoming and being fathers. In doing so, it addresses a number of ‘gaps’ and makes significant contributions to the histories of fatherhood, gender, family and everyday life in Scotland. As noted, British scholarship on working-class fathers is less well established than that of middle-class fathers, while the history of fatherhood in the late twentieth century is non-existent. In Scottish historical narratives, fatherhood is similarly neglected.

By exploring fatherhood as an individual experience, it has found that fathers were not on the margins of Scottish family and home life, contributing ‘remarkably little.’<sup>1008</sup> Instead, they were central to the family and prominent within the home, contributing to both its material and emotional life. What is more, fatherhood was central to men’s identities, and described as being a revelation, a major responsibility, and encompassing a range of roles - provider, protector, carer, playmate and friend. Fatherhood transformed men’s sense of self, alongside their relationships and everyday lives. It was, and often continues to be, demanding, worrying and stressful, as well as a source of pride, fulfilment, joy and love. ‘Good’ fathering was defined as providing materially and emotionally for one’s children, having close involvement and relationships, guiding and shaping their lives, giving them time and devotion, and most importantly, ‘being there.’

By providing a fresh perspective on men’s gendered identities and experiences of fatherhood, this thesis has questioned the notion of a dominant ‘hard man’ masculinity, based centrally around paid employment, and has challenged some of the more negative characterisations of male parenting in Scotland, in both the past and in contemporary society. This small cohort of men, and the majority of their fathers before them, were invested in their families, worked hard for them, and felt a variety of emotions as parents. Their oral testimonies support the findings of Abrams, Strange, King and Fisher, that ‘the experiences, functions and concerns of fatherhood’ were

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<sup>1008</sup> Macdonald, *Whaur Extremes Meet*, p. 160.

significant for many working-class men.<sup>1009</sup> This thesis has built upon such scholarship, but has provided new insights into fatherhood in the late twentieth century, during which important economic, social, cultural and demographic shifts took place.

Indeed, ideas and norms surrounding fatherhood underwent significant change during this period. The findings of this research mirrors Davis' analysis of motherhood as a contested subject in the period between 1945 and 2000, with mothers being both celebrated and scrutinised.<sup>1010</sup> Fatherhood was similarly contested within British public and political discourse. Fathers were celebrated as 'newly' involved in family life, spending more time and playing a greater role than previous generations. The 'new' father attended childbirth, took time off work following the arrival of children, and was a willing and equal partner in practical childcare and housework. He was emotionally close to his children, and he openly and publically displayed these emotions. On the other hand, fathers were considered to be losing their traditional roles in the family and wider society in the wake of deindustrialisation, second-wave feminism, increasing divorce and the growth of one-parent (mother-headed) families. Within this 'crisis' of fatherhood, men's feelings of responsibility to their families was deemed to be waning, with classed discourses surrounding 'absent', 'feckless' fathers. At the same time as men were believed to be 'closer' to their children, then, the fragility over men's relationship to their children was a pressing political issue.

A combination of factors led to a shift in ideals and practices of fatherhood. As demonstrated in Chapter Three, the decline of manual work and the heavy industries, growing unemployment, as well as the increasing participation of women, and mothers of young children, in the labour market since the 1970s significantly undermined the ideology and practice of sole male breadwinning, dominant in the period between c.1940-1970. For women, marriage and motherhood no longer meant permanent or long-term withdrawal from paid work, and in the majority of families, both mothers and fathers were providers and carers for their children. For many, the male-breadwinner female-homemaker model was only a reality for a short period in the family cycle - during early parenthood. Furthermore, although men have always been involved in domestic labour and childcare to some extent, second-wave feminism explicitly contested traditional divisions of labour by gender, subjected men's domestic involvement to greater scrutiny and called for fathers to be equal partners in childcare.

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<sup>1009</sup> Fisher, 'Fatherhood and the Experience of Working-Class Fathers', p. 292.

<sup>1010</sup> Davis, *Modern Motherhood*.

Prior to this, fathers were expected to ‘help’ with these activities, rather than be equally responsible.

Shifting ideas about the relationships between men and women, gender and the family during this period were accompanied by changing understandings of the relationships between parents and children, as well as child welfare. As a result, the connection between men and their children emerged as a high-profile issue, a theme highlighted in Chapter Five. New psychological ideas about the role of the father in child development, and pressure groups such as Families Need Fathers, for example, emphasised the importance of maintaining a link between fathers and children after divorce, and out with marriage. The increasing expenditure on lone-parent households and growing anxiety under the New Right Conservative Government about state dependency, crime and social disorder, especially among young men, further facilitated political and public interest in fathers, and underpinned attempts to ensure they remained ‘connected’ to their children.

In addressing these concerns, the Children Scotland Act 1995 (Children Act 1989 in England and Wales) stressed the child’s right to a relationship with the father, whether they lived together or apart, while the Child Support Act 1991 stipulated that this relationship was largely a financial one. By legislating that biological fathers were required to pay child support and by encouraging divorced fathers to remain involved, however, these Acts shifted the father-child relationship from one based on marriage with the child/ren’s mother into a direct relationship with children based on genetic links, as well as emphasised parental responsibilities as oppose to parental rights. While there was consensus that fathers play an important role in lives of their children, there was therefore less clarity about what sorts of fathers are best and what their roles and responsibilities to their children should be.

One of the most significant changes, moreover, was the increased emphasis on the emotional element of the father-child relationship, as well as the distinctions between public and private fathering. For the first half of the century, King, Fisher and Abrams have demonstrated that while some fathers frequently interacted with and were affectionate towards their children in public, they could face stigma from both men and women for doing so, particularly in working-class communities. From the 1970s, however, men were frequently praised for their public fathering. The dramatic rise in fathers attending childbirth, as demonstrated in Chapter One, reflects this shift, and highlights the increasing expectation and acceptability of men actively displaying

their fatherhood, and its associated emotions. This thesis has shown that fatherhood was reshaped during the late twentieth century, becoming the ‘very battleground’ around which a range of conversations surrounding these social developments were taking place.<sup>1011</sup>

Contradictions and tensions existed not only within images and representations of fatherhood but also between ideals and individual fathering identities, attitudes, expectations and practices. These were shaped by men’s own understandings of the ambiguous discourses outlined above, their experiences of being fathered, and by interactions with their partners, children, male peers, and the communities around them. Although public and political discourses indicate dominant ideas about how men are ‘supposed to’ father, the practical realities of everyday family life were often at odds with such ideals, and there was a wide variety of practices. Despite being popularly characterised as ‘absent’ and abandoning their responsibilities, for example, non-resident fathers faced a number of significant challenges and emotional hurdles in maintaining contact with their children. For many fathers, absence was the very thing they sought to avoid. Moreover, although fathers were expected to be equally responsible for childcare and housework (as well as being successful providers), there was less change in actual behaviours. In practice, mothers’ continued to be largely responsible for these activities, and seen as being the parent best placed to provide care in baby and infancy. Furthermore, although emotionally engaged and hands-on fatherhood was highlighted as an ideal and there was a significant shift in the acceptability of men displaying emotion and being more publically engaged in childcare, men’s primary providing roles remained normatively and practically reinforced by state policies.

Therefore, while fatherhood changed significantly in the last decades of the twentieth century, there were also significant continuities in the ways it was prescribed and experienced. This thesis has demonstrated the contested, rather than linear, nature of fatherhood in the late twentieth century as well as showing that the relationship between discourses on fatherhood and lived experience was ambiguous. The oral testimonies collected highlight the diversity and complexity of fatherhood, the vast range of relationships, behaviours, emotions and identities encompassed by being a father.

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<sup>1011</sup> Collier, ‘Men, Heterosexuality and the Changing Family’, p. 40.

The relationship between fatherhood and masculinity amongst working-class men was also complex during this period. As well as being a natural, and inevitable part of adult masculinity for the majority of men, fatherhood was a source of pride and fulfilment. Attending childbirth, for example, transcended the traditional breadwinning role, and represented a new set of norms around men's parenting and masculinities. Becoming a father, nevertheless, confirmed men's place in the world of work, particularly in early parenthood, and their role in the economic provision of the family remained central, although it could produce significant tensions between family and home life for men, as demonstrated in Chapter Three. As such, the ideal of the practically and emotionally 'involved' father existed alongside more traditional forms of masculinity, based around paid employment and providing. The final chapter on lone, stay-at-home fatherhood highlights the complexities of these shifts. Such fathers could face community and state scrutiny and encouragement to place their children into family or local authority care in order to resume employment, rather than care for their children full-time, well into the 1980s. They were simultaneously deemed 'unusual' and 'odd' as well as celebrated and congratulated as a result of being primary carers and undertaking activities considered mundane for mothers.

The period was, moreover, one of both continuity and change in relation to wider gender relations. The social developments of the late twentieth century, as noted, challenged rigid notions of masculine and feminine parenting responsibilities, and there was an overlap of mother and father functions. Both men and women were providing and caring for their families. This thesis, however, complements the work of King in the post-war period, whereby the changes in fatherhood by no means facilitated a 'steady or linear progression towards gender equality.'<sup>1012</sup> Convergence is not the only change that can occur within gender identities and relations, shifting emphasis can be placed on different elements of the father's role, and change can occur in one area without necessarily transforming the other.<sup>1013</sup> For example, the increasing emphasis placed on intimate-hands on fatherhood did not, as indicated in Chapter Four, radically alter divisions of labour. Interviewees identified with being 'involved' fathers without undertaking equal amounts of everyday domestic work and caring.

A number of factors continue to place strong limits on the transformation of fathering practices, and on gender convergence. As Jamieson notes, shifts in

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<sup>1012</sup> King, *Family Men*, p. 201.

<sup>1013</sup> Fisher, 'Fatherhood and the Experience of Working-Class Fathers', p. 50.

fatherhood alone cannot dismantle the ‘interconnection of gendered labour markets, gender distributions of income and wealth, and gendered divisions of domestic labour.’<sup>1014</sup> Men’s long working hours, women’s lower wages, lack of childcare provision and unequal parental leave policies all mediated the everyday reality of family life and relationships, as well as the possibilities and experiences of parenting available to both men and women. During this period, successive Conservative Governments were increasingly involved in the construction and control of fatherhood and the family, though legislation was by no means consistent. In 1982, researchers McKee and O’Brien argued for a number of ‘complementary practices’ to encourage active fatherhood, in order to facilitate equal divisions of childcare labour, and in turn, gender equality:

Positive rewarding of men who elect to care for their children either full or part-time...the shortening of the working day for parents of young children, establishment of support groups for non-sexist parenthood....the provision of facilities for expectant fathers in maternity hospitals, the guidance of fathers in the handling of small babies, an increase in the number of men working in settings with young children – day centres, infant schools and crèches, the exposure of discrimination against...lone or gay fathers.<sup>1015</sup>

Many of these factors remain pertinent in contemporary society, where profound inequality between men and women, particularly in relation to unpaid care work, remains. The Scottish Parliamentary enquiry in Fathers and Parenting in 2014 concluded that though ‘men increasingly want to spend time with their children and take a more active parenting role’, there remain a number of barriers which prohibit them from achieving this.<sup>1016</sup> Societal attitudes towards fathers, and the historical and cultural trend of mothers as primary caregivers, were identified as ‘root causes’ of men struggling to do so.<sup>1017</sup> Fathers were found not to receive the same flexibility in the workplace to address childcare requirements as women; support services and information resources available to ‘parents’ are directed at mothers in all but name; and services designed specifically for fathers continue to be relatively few. Overall, fathers noted that they wanted to be treated as parents who have the same skills and

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<sup>1014</sup> Jamieson, ‘Intimacy Transformed?’, p. 482.

<sup>1015</sup> McKee and O’Brien, *The Father Figure*, pp. 20-23.

<sup>1016</sup> Scottish Parliament, ‘1<sup>st</sup> Report, Fathers and Parenting’, p. 3.

<sup>1017</sup> *Ibid.*

face the same challenges that mothers do. The affordability, flexibility and provision of childcare was seen as a major issue, which, if improved, would make it easier for parents to share caring responsibilities more equally.

In response, the Scottish Government asserted that addressing the issues raised by the enquiry, including making policies and services more ‘dad friendly’, is a government priority. Specifically, it noted that ‘more can be done to support the idea of fathers being involved in childrearing as the norm’, with the National Parenting Strategy delivering several commitments to promote the active involvement of fathers, grandfathers and male carers in their children’s upbringing.<sup>1018</sup> This includes taking ‘more active steps’ to encourage men to become involved in the children’s workforce, setting up a National Fathers Advisory Board to advise on how national policy and practice impacts on fathers, and the establishment of a ‘Father’s Forum’ in NHS Scotland. While these interventions are undoubtedly positive, their very recent introduction highlights the significantly slow pace of change in terms of structural support for active fatherhood, particularly in terms of equally shared childcare. On Father’s day in 2012, Aileen Campbell, Scotland’s then Minister for Children and Young People, asserted:

Dads being fully involved in their children’s lives has all sorts of positive benefits for the wider family and community. However, we need to go further to ensure that as a society we truly value and support dads in the role that they play. As we celebrate Father’s Day, it’s a good time to reflect on what all this means for dads, because sometimes when we talk about parents, we tend to mean mums, and cut dads out of the picture. How does it feel to be a father in Scotland today?<sup>1019</sup>

Exploring fatherhood and the experiences of men in the past therefore has the potential to make an important impact in contemporary society. In challenging the persistent notion that men have only recently become ‘involved’ in family life or that they are less capable of caring in comparison to mothers, social policies might progress to more fully supporting families in choices about childcare and paid work.<sup>1020</sup> Echoing the themes raised in Chapter Two, Campbell noted, for example, that many

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<sup>1018</sup> Scottish Government, National Parenting Strategy, [www.gov.scot/resource/0040/00403769.pdf](http://www.gov.scot/resource/0040/00403769.pdf), accessed 27 Sept 2016.

<sup>1019</sup> ‘Society Should Make Fathers More Welcome’ Fathers Network Scotland, 18<sup>th</sup> Jun 2012, [www.fnscotland.org.uk](http://www.fnscotland.org.uk), accessed 4 Sep 2016.

<sup>1020</sup> King, ‘Supporting Active Fatherhood.’



men 'will ponder how different their experience is to that of their own fathers. Dads today tend to be a lot more hands on and there is a greater expectation they will be more actively involved in all aspects of their children's lives.'<sup>1021</sup> Further scholarship might examine understandings and expectations of fathering among men in different regions, classes and social groups within Scotland, as well as Britain more widely, in order to compare fathering practices and ideologies. This could involve further in-depth research into diverse groups of fathers, including lone fathers, unmarried fathers, divorced fathers, homosexual fathers and ethnic minority fathers. As noted, the meanings and experiences of both fatherhood and masculinity are culturally and historically specific, and this thesis has been limited to one, relatively small group of men, in one region of Scotland. Moreover, cultural discourses surrounding fatherhood in Scotland could be further explored, in popular culture such as films and novels, as well as in the media, such as newspapers.

In exploring family life in the late twentieth century from the perspective of men, oral history proved to be a useful and rewarding methodology. Men's narratives have been characterised by some authors as public performances, constructed around working lives and on personal actions, emphasising 'I.'<sup>1022</sup> The oral narratives collected in this research provided personal accounts of family relationships in childhood, parenthood and in the present. Becoming a father was a significant marker used by men to structure narratives of adulthood and manhood, and the emphasis on 'we' within participants' memories of family life suggests that interviewing mothers and fathers about parenting *together*, as well as fathers and adult-children, may prove another fruitful area for further research. Using oral history was, moreover, a productive way of exploring the diversity and fluidity of fathering practices. One significant finding was the changing expectations and experiences of fatherhood over time, in relation to life events and shifting family circumstances. The experience of being a father could vary significantly for one man across his life course, producing a variety of emotions. Divorce, for example, had profound implications for fathering and men's relationships with their children, and interviewees highlighted how enduring those emotions can be. Furthermore, the testimonies provided an insight to father-child relationships as well as the presence and roles of fathers in the lives of their

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<sup>1021</sup> Fathers Network Scotland, 'Society Should Make Fathers More Welcome.'

<sup>1022</sup> Abrams, *Oral History Theory*; see e.g. I. Bertaux-Wiame, 'The Life Story Approach to the Study of Internal Migration: How Men and Women Came to Paris between the Wars', in P. Thompson and N. Burchardt (eds.), *Our Common History* (London, 1982).

adult children. This thesis has taken a broad and subjective definition of ‘working-class’ due to the fluid and subjective nature of class identities, and the significant changes over interviewees’ life courses, including rising standards of living, social mobility, and consumerism. While participants remarked on national, wider societal trends, they also reflected on the communities in which they were embedded when making sense of their family and working lives or in recalling what was considered ‘normal’ at the time.

Oral history was also significant in exploring the ‘cultural circuit’ surrounding fatherhood, as men drew upon the ambiguous discourses surrounding the role of the father in both the past and present to construct and compose their experiences of fathering, often in complex ways. The popular assumption that men are becoming more involved in family life with each generation of fathers, for example, was prominent. Alistair’s narrative in particular was one framed around ‘evolution’ and ‘transition’ from his father’s generation (1950s), his own (1970s) and his daughter and son in laws (2010s).<sup>1023</sup> He locates his father at ‘the start of the transition, the change’:

It’s the sort of evolution of the role of the father but the role of the society in reflecting what fatherhood means, that there are now employers where as I said, my grandfather would never take time off, wouldn’t even mention it. My father might mention it but he never ever did it. I could get time off but it was an issue and it would a be a one off whereas my son in law, he’ll just say “well I’ve got kids going for an injection today, and I want to go to the doctors” and now my generation say, well yeah okay I accept that, I know where you’re coming from so it’s kinda evolved that way.<sup>1024</sup>

Alistair’s narrative is useful in once more highlighting the complex relationship between understandings and discourses surrounding fatherhood in specific socio-historical contexts, alongside men’s individual and personal experiences of being a father.

This thesis is a study in gender history, oral history, and Scottish history. In exploring family life and parenting from the perspective of men, it has added an important and neglected insight into the Scottish working-class family: the important role fathers played within family life and the relationship between fatherhood and masculinity during this period. It has challenged negative discourses and

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<sup>1023</sup> This was a similar finding in Davis, *Modern Motherhood*.

<sup>1024</sup> [SOHCA/054/06] ‘Alistair.’

generalisations of Scottish fatherhood in the past, principally that fathers were rarely associated with children directly, or their practical care; detached from the emotional life of the family, interested only in leisure pursuits outside of the home; and marginal to the family's needs beyond financial provision. The oral testimonies provide insights into the personal, intimate and private identities of fathers, past and present, and in doing so have revealed a lived experience of fatherhood and manhood more complex and nuanced than has been previously acknowledged within Scottish historiography. Fathers were important and mattered to families, and fatherhood in turn, mattered to working-class men.

## **APPENDIX ONE      Biographies of Oral History Interviewees**

### **David Walker (b. 1956)**

David was born and grew up in Govan. His father held various positions as an engineer, bus conductor and insurance salesman, while his mother was a full-time housewife and shop assistant. He has two brothers and one sister. After leaving school, David became an apprentice milling operator in the Netherlands between 1974-78 and thereafter held a number of jobs including engineer/fitter at London Transport, Strathclyde Passenger Transport Executive, Advertising & Publicity Assistant, Strathclyde Buses Limited, and Conservation Officer at Glasgow Museums. In 1998, David undertook an Honours degree in History at the University of Strathclyde, thereafter achieving a Masters and a PhD, from which he graduated in 2007. Since then he has worked as an Oral Historian and researcher at Glasgow Museums and the University of Strathclyde. He married in 1976 and became a father for the first time in 1979. He has one daughter, and one son, born in 1981. He divorced in 1990. David currently works as an oral historian and lives with his partner.

### **‘Joseph’ (pseud.) (b. 1949)**

Born in Bridge of Allan in 1949 and thereafter brought up in a small town in North Lanarkshire, John was the oldest of three. His father was a miner and his mother, a full-time housewife, passed away in 1958. At the age of fifteen, John joined the Merchant Navy, during which time he trained as an electrician. He married in 1974, and had his first child the same year at the age of twenty-five. Thereafter, John left the Navy and settled in London, working as an electrician in a Jewelry factory. He went on to have two more daughters, born in 1978 and 1982. Upon marital separation in 1986, John took sole and primary care of the children and moved back to Scotland. He remained a lone, stay at home father for eleven years, and remarried in 2000.

### **Ian Robb (b. 1958)**

Born in a village in Ayrshire, where he continues to live, Ian was an only child. His father, originally a motor mechanic, established a milk business, while his mother, originally a typist, also worked in the family business. Ian began an electrical apprenticeship with BT in 1974 at the age of sixteen, where he continues to work. Throughout this time, he has held various positions within the company. Ian married in 1980 at the age of twenty-two and had two children, a son and daughter, born in 1984 and 1986.

### **Robert Speedie (b. 1945)**

Robert was born in Johnstone in 1945. He was the only child to his father, a shipyard plumber, and his mother, a full-time housewife. Robert joined the Merchant Navy in 1963, and thereafter held a number of positions, both at land and sea, including Ships Officer and Captain. After coming ashore in 1979, he progressed to Manager; Managing Director and finally Chief Executive of group of ship management companies. Robert married in 1968 at the age of twenty-three and has two daughters, born in 1971 and 1973. Now retired, he lives with his wife Sandra.

**‘Alistair’ (pseud.) (b. 1949)**

Alistair was born in Glasgow, before moving to Castlemilk in 1959. The oldest of two boys, Alistair’s father worked as a asphalter’s supervisor, bus conductor and office clerk. His mother, a typist, returned to work full-time when Alistair was nine. Although originally studying Pharmacy at the University of Strathclyde, he left the course and joined the Civil Service Inland Revenue. He married in 1971 at the age of twenty-two and has two daughters, born in 1974 and 1978. Alistair is now retired and continues to live in Glasgow with his wife.

**SOHCA/054/07 Kenneth Doran (b. 1940)**

Kenneth was born in Glasgow in 1940. His Father was a welder, and his mother was a full-time housewife and mother to Ken, his older sister and younger brother. The family moved to Drumchapel in the mid 1950s, at the same time as which Ken, aged sixteen, began an apprenticeship with Rolls Royce. He progressed from Apprentice to Senior Buyer, and retired in 2002 after forty-six years with the company. He married in 1971, at the age of thirty-one, and first became a father to twin boys one year later in 1972. Thereafter he had another son, born in 1977. Ken continues to live in Glasgow with his wife.

**Leslie Watson (b. 1959)**

Leslie was born in Mauchline, Ayrshire, the second eldest of five siblings. His father was a lorry driver and his mother, a full-time housewife. After leaving school, Leslie spent eight years working for RBS, nine years working for the Prudential Assurance company and has since then undertaken a variety of jobs, including driving instructor and employment consultant. He married in 1987 and has two sons, born in 1990 and 1994. He divorced in 2000. Leslie is now a Learning and Development Officer with the Workers Educational Association, and continues to live in Mauchline with his partner.

**Patrick Corrigan (b. 1949)**

Patrick was born in 1949 in Bellshill, and grew up in a village outside of Airdrie. The youngest of a family of three sisters, his father was a steelworker and his mother, originally a shopworker, was a full-time housewife. Hailing from an Irish catholic background, he attended St Aloysius Junior Secondary and Primary, and thereafter studied Engineering at the University of Glasgow, becoming a consulting structural engineer. Patrick married in 1968 at the age of nineteen whilst in the second year of his university course, from which he graduated in 1971. He became a father for the first time at the age of twenty-five to a daughter, born in 1974 and a son in 1976. Now retired, Patrick continues to live in North Lanarkshire with his wife.

**Tam McGrail (b. 1956)**

Tam was born and brought up in Blantyre, by his mother, a factory worker, and his grandmother. He left school in 1972 at the age of sixteen and has held a variety of jobs throughout his adult working life, including surveyor, bus driver, taxi driver and transport manager. Tam married in 1983 and has three daughters, born in 1986 1988 and 1991. He divorced in 2012. Recently a grandfather, he currently lives in his childhood home with his youngest daughter and works part-time as janitor in his local community.

**Patrick Clark (b. 1956)**

Patrick was born in 1956 in Greenock, where he has lived all his life. His father was a ships plater (boiler maker) and his mother was a full-time housewife. He was the middle sibling, with an older sister and younger brother. Patrick left school at sixteen and became a plater like his father. After working in the shipyards for ten years, he completed a fully funded Social History and Industrial Relations course at the University of Strathclyde through an unemployment scheme. Thereafter, he worked as a community worker and since 1994, has been a Welfare Rights Officer. During this time, he married in 1985 at the age of twenty-nine and has three sons, born in 1986, 1990 and 1992. Patrick continues to live in Greenock with his wife and youngest son.

**James Burns (b. 1942)**

James was born and bred in Gartcosh, and has continued to live nearby throughout his lifetime. His father worked in the local steelworks, and his mother, originally a weaver from Dundee, was a fulltime housewife. Upon leaving school in 1964, James undertook a diploma in Physical Education and became a P.E. Teacher. He married in 1968 and has three children, born in 1971, 1972 and 1976. James' youngest son, Richard, had significant physical and mental difficulties, and passed away in 2012. Retired since 2006, James lives in Stepps with his wife.

**'Warren' (pseud.) (b. 1951)**

Warren was born in Glasgow and lived with his grandmother until the age of sixteen while both his parents, a brick layer and factory worker, worked full-time. Following school, Warren joined the Merchant Navy, before studying engineering and teaching at University as a mature student at the age of twenty-one. Thereafter, he undertook a range of jobs, mostly within the educational sector, as a primary school teacher, and briefly for example, working in Saudi Arabia as a teacher and scuba diving instructor. Warren married in 1979 and has a daughter, born in 1980 and a son, born in 1985. Upon marital separation in 1990, he took sole charge of his two children, becoming a lone father. Warren now lives in Cumbernauld. He took early retirement and looks after his three grandchildren each weekday.

**'Anthony' (pseud.) (b. 1949)**

Anthony was born in Paisley in 1949. His father, born in 1892, was an iron-turner and his mother, born in 1910, a full-time housewife. He has a younger sister as well as five step-siblings, from his father's previous marriage. Upon leaving school, Anthony joined the police in 1966 until 1972, then held a number of employment positions. He

was a salesman-supervisor at Cadburys (1972-1976), became Supervisor-General Manager at various cleaning companies and then co-founded and directed his own cleaning company from 1984 onwards. During this time, he married in 1970 at the age of twenty-one, and became a father in 1976 and in 1981 to son and daughter. Anthony was legally separated in 1990. Retired since 2004, he currently lives with his partner.

### **James Oakes (b. 1957)**

James was born and grew up in Glasgow and Easterhouse, the middle child of three. His father originally made stained glass windows, and then worked in betting shops on and off between ill health, while his mother undertook part-time cleaning jobs and factory work. He studied photography at college and thereafter spent most of his young adulthood life working part-time, ad-hoc jobs, before undertaking a basic qualification in IT and then a part-time degree in History at University as a mature student. After being married and divorced in his early twenties, James had two children to two different mothers, out with marriage, in 1987 and 1991. When his youngest daughter was four, James became a lone-stay at home father for four years. He currently lives in Glasgow with his daughter, and has a partner of ten years, who lives with her own children.

### **Frank McGeoghegan (b. 1957)**

Frank was born and grew up in Glasgow, the eldest of three brothers. His mother had a variety of jobs, while his father was a joiner. After leaving school, Frank joined the Civil Service, briefly had a joinery business and since 1992 has been a Management Account. He married in 1979 at the age of twenty-two, and has two sons, born in 1984 and 1987. He remains in Glasgow with his wife and youngest son.

### **John Duffy (b. 1959)**

John was born in Bothwell, South Lanarkshire, and grew up in Bellshill and Motherwell, where he has remained his entire life. The youngest of the family, he had three brothers and two sisters. His father was a miner, and his mother, a full-time housewife. He worked briefly as a miner in 1976, was a steelworker between 1977 and 1991, and has worked as a Lorry Driver since 1992. He was married at the age of seventeen, and became a father for the first at eighteen, both in 1977. He continues to live in Bellshill with his wife and is now a grandfather.

### **Charlie McKay (b. 1952)**

Charlie was born and bred in Port Glasgow, where he continues to live and work. His mother was a full-time housewife, and his father, a shipyard worker. He was the oldest of ten children. Charlie left school at the age of fifteen in 1967 and began working in Scotlithgows shipyard, where he remained until 1984. After working in a printing company for ten years, Charlie has worked within Inverclyde Council in Residential and Childcare since the early 1990s. He is currently a Family Support Worker. Charlie married in 1973 at the age of twenty-one. He has two biological daughters, born in 1976 and 1978, and two adopted daughters, sisters born in 1989 and 1991. Charlie continues to live in Port Glasgow with his wife.

**David Littlejohn (b. 1941)**

David was born in Motherwell, the second oldest of seven children. His father was a professional soldier and customs officer and his mother was a full-time housewife. Due to his father's occupation he spent some of his childhood in Maryhill Barracks and at the age of nine, opted to attend a military boarding school. David held a range of jobs upon leaving school. He became an apprentice instrument maker (1956-1963); joined the merchant navy (1964-71); and eventually became a quality engineer (1976-2002). He married in 1975 at the age of thirty-four and first became a dad in 1981. David and his wife adopted two children, a daughter, born in 1980 and adopted aged fifteen months, and a son, born in 1983, adopted aged five months. Retired since 2006, David is now a grandfather and continues to live in Lenzie with his wife.

**John McSherry (b. 1947)**

John was born and bred in Glasgow. His father was a docker and his mother was a housekeeper; he also had one older adopted sister. Upon leaving school, John started an engineering apprenticeship with Rolls Royce in Hillington in 1964, where he progressed to production engineer, engineering manager and then improvement manager. During his time in the company, he also pursued Higher Education qualifications. John married in 1968 at twenty-one and became a father for the first time one year later. His daughter was born in 1969 and his son in 1973. Retired since 2009, John is a grandfather and lives in Houston with his wife.

**Gerry Farrell (b. 1967)**

Gerry, the youngest interviewee, was born in 1967 in Motherwell, South Lanarkshire. His father, also interviewed for this project, was an iron monger and his mother, a full-time housewife. He has two brothers and three sisters. Upon leaving school, Gerry started a mechanical apprenticeship in 1983 and since 1997, has been a Mechanical Manager. Gerry married in 1989 at the age of twenty-two and has two sons, born in 1990 and 1992. Gerry continues to live in South Lanarkshire with his wife and youngest son. He has just recently been awarded a Degree, undertaken through his employment.

**Joe Farrell (b. 1938)**

Joe, the oldest interviewee, was born in 1938 in Motherwell, South Lanarkshire. He was the youngest and only son of a family of four sisters. His father was an invalided steel worker and his mother worked in a local hospital canteen. After leaving school in 1954, Joseph worked as an iron monger until retirement in 2002. Joseph married in 1963 at the age of twenty-five, and became a father for the first time one year later. He has six children, three daughters and three sons, including Gerry, born in 1964, 1966, 1967, 1969, 1972, and 1980. Now retired, he lives in Motherwell with his wife, youngest son and his partner.

**'Jake' (pseud.) (b. 1968)**



Jake was born in Glasgow, where he continues to live. An only child, his mother was a seamstress and his father, an ambulance driver. After leaving school, Jake undertook a youth training scheme for office, typing and computing and has undertaken a variety of jobs such as computing, customer assistant and in the car trade. Jake married in 1990 at the age of twenty-two. His first child, a son, was born the year before in 1989 and he also has a daughter, born in 1993. Jake was divorced in 2008. He continues to live in Glasgow with his current partner.

**Frank Fleming (b. 1944)**

Frank was born in Bellshill and grew up in various places in Lanarkshire. His father was a miner and his mother was a factory worker. Upon leaving school, Frank, the oldest of six siblings, studied to become a PE and Primary teacher. He spent over forty years teaching in schools within Lanarkshire. Frank married in 1971 and has four children, twin boys born in 1972, a daughter born in 1975 and a son, born in 1976. He retired in 2005 and continues to live in South Lanarkshire with his wife.

**Kenneth Paul (b. 1954)**

Ken was born in Glasgow, and grew up in Pollok. His father was a shipping clerk and buyer for an electrical company and his mother was a full-time housewife and mother; he was the youngest of four children. In 1969, Ken began work as an apprentice electrician and worked as an electrical estimator and engineer until 2008. Since 2009, he has worked for a pawn broking company. Ken married in 1973 at the age of nineteen and became a father for the first time two years later. He has two sons, born in 1975 and 1983, and one daughter, born in 1986. The family moved to Irvine in 1990, where he continues to live with his wife and grandson.

**‘Donald’ (pseud.), (b. 1947)**

Donald was born in Edinburgh, the eldest of three. His father worked as a van driver, in a paper mill and as a janitor and his mother was a housewife and cashier. Donald left school at fifteen and worked in the local paper mill for ten years. After the mill’s closure in 1975, he attended night school, and later joined the Civil Service as a clerk. Donald married in 1979 at the age of thirty and has two daughters, born in 1983 and 1985. In 1986, the family moved to Bellshill where Donald continues to live with his wife. He retired in 2007.

## APPENDIX TWO

## REFERENCE TABLE OF INTERVIEWEES

Reference Number	Name	Year of Birth	Father's Occupation	Mother's Occupation	Year of Birth of Children	Occupation(s)
SOHCA/054/01	David Walker	1956	Semi-skilled engineer, Bus Conductor, Insurance Salesman, Super-trooper Operator	Shop Assistant, Housewife	1979, 1981	Apprentice Milling Operator, Laagland b.v. Rotterdam, (1974-78); Work Study Officer, Greater London Council (1978); Engineer/Fitter, London Transport (1978/79); Engineer/Fitter, Strathclyde Passenger Transport Executive, Glasgow (1979-1985), Advertising & Publicity Assistant, Strathclyde Buses Limited, Glasgow (1985-1995), Conservation Officer, Glasgow Museums, (1995-1998); BA Hons Student, Strathclyde (1998-2002); Masters Glasgow University (2003); PhD, Strathclyde (2004-2007); Oral Historian, Glasgow Museums, 2008-2009; Oral Historian/Researcher, Strathclyde University, 2010-present
SOHCA/054/02	‘Joseph’	1949	Coal Miner	Housewife	1974, 1978, 1982	Merchant Navy, Engineer, Coal Industry, Retail worker
SOHCA/054/04	Ian Robb	1958	Motor Mechanic, Milk Business	Typist, Milk Business	1984, 1986	BT (1974-Present)
SOHCA/054/05	Robert Speedie	1945	Ships plumber	Shorthand Typist, Housewife	1971, 1973	Navy and Shipping (1963-2010) Ships Officer, Captain, Manager; Managing Director, Chief Executive
SOHCA/054/06	‘Alistair’	1949	Cashier	Secretary	1974, 1978	Civil Service Middle Management'

SOHCA/054/07	Kenneth Doran	1940	Welder	Housewife	1972, 1977	Rolls Royce (1956-2002) Apprentice, Technician, Draughtsman, Senior Buyer
SOHCA/054/08	Leslie Watson	1959	Lorry Driver	Housewife	1990, 1994	Sales Manager; Employment Consultant; Driving Instructor; Learning and Development Officer
SOHCA/054/09	Patrick Corrigan	1949	Steelworker	Factory Worker	1974, 1976	Engineer (1970-2003)
SOHCA/054/10	Tam McGrail	1956	Unknown	Shopworker	1986, 1988, 1991	Surveyor; Bus Driver; Taxi Driver; Transport Manager; Janitor
SOHCA/054/11	Patrick Clark	1956	Ships Plater (boilermaker)	Housewife	1986, 1990, 1992	Ship Plater (1972-1982); Student (1983-1987); Community Worker (1987-1994); Welfare Rights Officer (1994-Present)
SOHCA/054/12	James Burns	1942	Steelworker	Weaver, Housewife	1971, 1972, 1976	P.E. Teacher (1964-2006)
SOHCA/054/13	'Warren'	1951	Bricklayer	Factory Worker	1980, 1985	Engineering, Technical teacher, Scuba Diving Instructor
SOHCA/054/14	'Anthony'	1949	Foreman Ironturner	Hospital Staff Nurse	1976, 1981	Police (1966-1972); Salesman/Supervisor/Manager at various cleaning companies (1972-Cofounder and director of cleaning company (1984-2004)
SOHCA/054/15	James Oakes	1957	Betting Shop	Factory Worker	1987, 1991	Maryhill Arts Centre (1987); Various (1990-2000); Student; University of Glasgow Library/Print Unit (2002-present)
SOHCA/054/16	Frank McGeoghegan	1957	Joiner, Management Accountant	Nurse	1984, 1987	Civil Service Clerical officer (1974-1984) Partnership - Joinery? (1984-1992) Management Accountant (1992-Present)

SOHCA/054/17	John Duffy	1959	Coal Miner	Housewife	1977	Miner (1976); Steelworker (1978-1991); Bin Lorry Driver (1992-Present)
SOHCA/054/18	Charlie McKay	1952	Shipyards Welder	Housewife	1978, 1989, 1991	Shipyards Worker (1967-1984); Printer and Packaging (1984-1994); Residential and Childcare (1994-Present)
SOHCA/054/20	David Littlejohn	1941	Soldier, Customs Officer	Unknown	1981, 1983	Apprentice Instrument Maker (1956-1963); Merchant Navy (1964-71); Quality Engineer (1976-2002) Retired (2006)
SOHCA/054/21	John McSherry	1947	Dock Labourer	Housekeeper	1969, 1973	Rolls Royce (1964-2009) Apprentice, Production Engineer, Engineering Manager, Improvement Manager
SOHCA/054/22	Gerry Farrell	1967	Ironmonger	Shopkeeper, Housewife	1990, 1992	Mechanic (1983-1997); North Lanarkshire Council Mechanic Manager (1997-Present)
SOHCA/054/23	Joseph Farrell	1938	Steelworker	Hospital Maid	1964, 1966, 1969, 1972, 1980	Iron Monger (1952-2002) Manager 1982 onwards
SOHCA/054/24	'Jake'	1968	Ambulance Driver	Seamstress	1989, 1993	Slaters Menswear; Car Trade
SOHCA/054/25	Frank Fleming	1944	Coal Miner	Factory Worker	1972, 1975, 1976	P.E. Teacher
SOHCA/054/26	Kenneth Paul	1954	Shipping Clerk Buyer	French Polisher	1975, 1983, 1986	Electrician (1969-2008) Pawnbroker (2009-Present)
SOHCA/054/27	'Donald'	1947	Van Driver, Warehouse worker, Janitor	Cashier, Housewife	1983, 1985	Papermill 1962; Salesman 1972; Admin 1975-2007

This information is based upon a short 'participant questionnaire' completed at the time of the interview, in which participants can provide as much or as little detail as they wish.

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SOHCA/054/25 Interview with Frank Fleming, 19<sup>th</sup> March 2015.  
SOHCA/054/26 Interview with Kenneth Paul, 7<sup>th</sup> April 2015.  
SOHCA/054/27 Interview with 'Donald' (pseud.), 12<sup>th</sup> May 2015.

Two further interviews were conducted and deposited in the archive but have not been used in this thesis.

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