Does young motherhood put the family 'in crisis'?

An ethnographic investigation into the impact of young motherhood on intergenerational relations within families.

by

Cissie Catherine Buxton

Canterbury Christ Church University

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Abstract

Young motherhood is often framed as a 'social problem' by policy, society and media, posing a threat to established ideas about 'the family'. This framing focuses on young mothers as individual (stereo)types, and does not capture the intergenerational relationships that provide an important context for young motherhood, forming a significant source of tension and/or support. This thesis contributes to an under-researched area, by focussing on relationships between young mothers and their own mothers, in the context of the wider social and moral circumstances of families, reasons behind young motherhood, and the role played by stigma in the construction of young mothers' identities. This is a qualitative study based on focus group narratives by women who had a child under the age of 21, and their mothers, across the Isle of Thanet. The findings from the MA thesis suggest that intergenerational relationships evolved prior to and following pregnancy, with the child becoming the locus for reimagining life courses. 'Family' was reconstructed as 'new nuclear', moving away from traditional family constructs, with intimate daily practices crucial to its recasting. Young motherhood is thus considered as an individual experience, where a child can be the reason as a turning point for young women, which can be enhanced by a strong intergenerational support network. The study highlights the importance of family support networks, and contributes to existing research challenging assumptions and young motherhood outcomes and experiences.

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‘Internal strength versus external influences, victim or victor?’ Kano (2016)

This thesis would not have existed without my mother Sharon and my grandmother Iris- without your round the clock care for our Tallulah, unquestionable support and the opportunities you have given me to watch and learn from such strong women, I would not be where I am now. They might not want to see us win, Nan, but I will do my upmost to represent who we are, what we stand for and where we come from, in everything I do.

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Introduction

Despite rates of young pregnancy having significantly fallen over the last two decades, and with much of the reduction attributed to the New Labour Government's 10 year Teenage Pregnancy Strategy, which aimed to halve the UK's under-18 conception rate and reduce social exclusion (Social Exclusion Unit 1999-2010; Skinner and Marino 2016; Wellings et al. 2016), being pregnant and giving birth at what is considered a 'young' age is still considered a 'social problem' that threatens the institution of 'the family' (Ellis-Sloan 2014), for example by adversely impacting on children's educational attainment and effective socialisation (Ermisch et al. 2001), and contributing to the disbandment of the nuclear family, leading to reconfiguration of traditional social arrangements and family structures (Demo and Cox 2000).

The recommendation to support young mothers' return to work and education through the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy (Social Exclusion Unit 1999) has been found to crucially omit structural and contextual barriers to inclusion (Kidger 2004), failing to engage with the social and moral circumstances of the everyday lives of families. Economic conditions of modern family have led to a shift in support that is available to the young mother, which, despite aims to move beyond stereotypical views and structures of class (Ellis-Sloan 2014) young parents are still stigmatised as 'architects of their own fate and undeserving of support' (Ellis-Sloan 2014). While there has been much research on the phenomenon of young motherhood, research on intergenerational relationships is currently under-explored. The aim of this thesis is to investigate the impact of young motherhood on the 'family' from an intergenerational perspective (Vanderbeck 2007), focussing in particular on the qualitative dimension of relationships between young mothers and their own mothers.

The driving force behind this research came from my own experience of falling pregnant at 19 and entering motherhood at 20, and the support networks of my family, who, with their time and dedication, have allowed me to pursue my career and life goals. Reflecting on my own experiences fuelled my motivation to investigate the ways that young motherhood had impacted families other than my own. This study uses an ethnographical research approach to understand in more depth intergenerational relations in the context of young motherhood. It will take into account reflexive considerations of my own

autobiographical account, establishing my positionality within the fieldwork, and reflecting on weaknesses and strengths of such a position throughout the research process.

Employing the qualitative research method of focus groups, and drawing on perspectives from feminist methodologies on the best way to produce research findings by women, and for women, the study collects narratives from three families of two generations, and one family of three generations, all of which include a woman who had her child under the age of 21. The narratives are thematically analysed, with findings from the fieldwork presented and discussed in two empirical chapters. The methods employed will attempt to uncover the lived life experiences of families, focussing on findings of intergenerational relations between a young mother and her own mother before and after a young pregnancy. It will look at to what extent the support given to the young mother has impacted on her parenting experiences, and the ways in which families navigate support with other responsibilities. How the families acknowledge, interpret and handle stigmatisations will be investigated, and the impact that experiences of stigmatisations have had on ideas about 'good' mothering; reflected in the advice that these families would give to a young woman considering becoming a mother herself.

Chapter 1: Critical theoretical framework

Introduction

The strongest memory of my pregnancy is, 'how am I going to tell my mother?'. At 19, the immediate thought that dominated my mind was worry; that she might not support my decision, that I would be alone in raising a child and that the experience would be a struggle without her, specifically. The initial doubts were an effect of the nuanced discourses of young motherhood I was exposed to, and how young pregnancy was positioned socially - as a tragic mistake, a 'wrong' choice, and one borne from 'careless' behaviour (Varadi et al. 2020). As it happened, my child became our child, who blended into our daily lives, with support planned for and dealt with as and when it occurred. My concern with perceptions of motherhood developed into complex frustrations linked to my own experiences - such as frequent comments: 'you're too young to be her mum!'; experiencing assumptions of traditional life course expectations and reactions of shock that I was, as a young mother, 'still' in a relationship with my daughter's father, had a job, and was attending college.

With time, the focus shifted from my own life to those of 'other' young mothers, their experiences, and how they felt they were received in society. From conversations with mothers I knew, I found they felt as I did and had lived similar experiences, with a view that nothing could be done to change normative assumptions of young mothers, and their consequences- despite there being evidence to suggest the way in which these women conducted their lives contradicting socially perceived views.

I began to expand on my own positionality by investigating where young mothers are situated in the academic literature, most specifically in relation to assumptions of consequences, what policy and government strategies suggest for the young mother, and young mother and intergenerational relationship studies. I found hegemonic discourses were only the beginning of the complexities and (mis)understandings of the phenomenon of young motherhood, leading to investigation of nuanced discourses of young motherhood to expand my understanding.

This introductory chapter documents this journey through a theoretical lens, summarising the various discourses of young motherhood and their impact as the foundation for my research design and the conduct and interpretation of fieldwork. I thus situate my own study within current research on young motherhood and intergenerational relationships, and seek to discover new knowledge to contribute to the field.

The first part of chapter 1 will begin by acknowledging the vast body of the literature relating to dominant discourses of young motherhood. It will discuss the risk factors which are associated with the young mother as well as policy suggestions and strategy derived from quantitative data. The second section will provide a thematic review of six alternative discourses about young motherhood, which are of particular relevance to this thesis topic of discussion: relational aspects of young motherhood.

This review aims to build on insights from the existing literature and provide evidence to support, or challenge, the findings from my own fieldwork. A more thorough investigation into strengths and limitations of methodological approaches in young motherhood studies will be outlined in Chapter 2. Chapter 1 will conclude with an outline of the upcoming thesis, summarising what each section covers as the research progresses.

Dominant discourses of young motherhood

Young pregnancy and motherhood are not novel areas for academic investigation, with a wealth of research existing that considers problems that surround young parenthood, most notably risk factors and poor outcomes that are associated with young motherhood (Shea 2016; Duncan 2007; Gillies 2007; Macvarish 2010). Such research, which largely relies on qualitative methods, allows for the insight of young mothers and families and contribute to the development of parenting identities of young mothers and their families.

Policy recommendations are generally informed by quantitative data, used to determine susceptibility to young pregnancy and frame the phenomenon as a social problem. A key focus in the UK (Teenage Pregnancy Report (Social Exclusion Unit 1999) and the

subsequent Teenage Pregnancy Strategy (Social Exclusion Unit 1999), supported methods focused on young motherhood reduction and eradication (Social Exclusion Unit 1999), with an aim to reduce under-18 conception by half over ten years, and to reduce social exclusion (Social Exclusion Unit 1999-2010). Such strategies have been criticised for omitting the voice of the young mother and her actual experiences of pregnancy and motherhood, thus creating a gap in knowledge and understanding of the young mother's perspective (Duncan 2007). The young mother's voice (Duncan et al. 2010) has been highlighted as important in communicating with policy makers the experiences of young parenthood, with Duncan (2007) suggesting lived life reflections of the group needing to be heard, in order for them to be represented (Kehily and Swann 2003) by informing policy, with a requirement of less emphasis on traditional life course pathways is needed.

Subsequent research also questions the direction policy takes (see Kidger 2004; Pillow 2004; Arai 2009; Carabine 2001) as well as examining the sociological factors involved in the problematisation of teenage motherhood (Duncan 2007, 2010; Bonnell 1990; Arai 2009). Ellis-Sloan (2014) indicates policy as being grounded on both teenage pregnancy being a social problem, and negative outcomes such as poverty (Berthaud and Robson 2001) are used to inform social policies, while Carabine (2001) indicates historical representations of lone mothers which 'persist' influence welfare polices to take on a 'normalising and regulatory role in relation to sexuality', outlining how policy makers impose their own moral values, dismissing the 'moral, economic and sexual rationalities of welfare subjects' (Carabine 2001 p. 292).

Alternative discourses of young motherhood

The existing literature reveals that the discussion about young motherhood excites social research for a number of reasons:

- It has a metaphorical dimension, providing a gateway to discussing wider social changes to do with family forms and ideals. This is particularly evident in policy discussions that tend to frame the phenomenon of young motherhood as a social problem.

- In response to this metaphorical framing, research has investigated the qualitative experience of young mothers at a personal, individual level – complicating many of the presumptions about this social phenomenon.
- A more limited body of work has pointed to the importance of the relational aspect of young motherhood – that is, intergenerational relationships between young mothers and their wider families, and young mothers and the fathers of their babies.

This is briefly summarised in the six thematic sections below: 1) young motherhood as a social problem; 2) young motherhood and changing family forms; 3) construction and performance of 'good motherhood'; 4) young mothers' experiences; 5) intergenerational relationships and 6) fatherhood.

1) Young motherhood as a social problem

The Social Exclusion Unit (1999) highlights the way that media perceptions contribute to framing young mothers as a social problem. This was also found by McDermott and Graham (2005) in their research paper reviewing qualitative research which explores resilient mothering practices, and Macvarish (2010), who attempted to understand the importance of teenage pregnancy by contextualising it in contemporary 'cultures of parenting' (Macvarish 2010). A review of the literature also found promotion of young mothers as a social problem by the media, fuelling assumptions that socioeconomic differences between women determine their capabilities of raising a child (Clarke 2004; Byrne 2006; Tyler 2008). Such assumptions lead the young mother to be wholly accountable for the 'problems' which surround fertility and birth (Teitler 2002), but without consideration of youth behaviours that 'foreshadow' timing decisions when having children (Teitler 2002 p. 135).

A more specific investigation of media constructions of youth behaviour was found in Blackman and Rogers's (2017 p. 81- 101) discussion of '*Normalisation of youth austerity through entertainment: critically addressing media representations of youth marginality in Britain'*. Blackman and Rogers (2017) describe marginalised groups as being separated into two, where young adults are presented as 'scroungers', relying upon social

welfare opportunities, and, where the young adult is shown in media representations as in a state of 'advanced marginality' (Wacqant 2008 in Blackman and Rogers 2017 p. 81), put forward and interpreted with little sympathy (Paterson et al. 2015). As noted above, media commentary which positions the mother as a 'distinct population' (Teitler 2002) suggests she is worthy of debate. Another conversation which surrounds motherhood is that of 'ideal' age, or when should be the correct time to have a child in line with age norms in life course (Neugarten et al. 1965; Furstenberg et al. 2004). Policy suggests that rates of young motherhood need to decrease (Social Exclusion Unit 1999; Hadley et al. 2016), which is proposed to be done by putting in place young pregnancy prevention programs which focus on sexual education, support with education and vocational work (Kirkman et al. 2009). Furthermore, such programs are found to encourage young women to abstain from sexual activity (Brubaker and Wright 2006, Mann et al. 2015).

Policy and intervention recommendations, coupled with portrayals in television programmes and in media headlines as stereotypes which fuels a culture of voyeurism by positioning young women as having 'overly abundant sexuality' (Skeggs 1997, 2004) suggests young mothers' outcome of pregnancy to be 'natural, deserved consequences of careless behaviour' (Bay-Cheng 2015, 285). However, the reality of reproductive choices suggest otherwise, which Mann et al. (2015) cite that there are 'other dimensions' of causes and consequences of early motherhood which are often neglected, which, through narrative of experiences from young mothers, can develop deeper understanding of the causal effects of young motherhood, and their outcomes.

A term which captures a stereotype associated with young mothers is 'pramface' as discussed by Nayak and Kehily in their work on *'Chavs, Chavettes and pramface girls': teenage mothers, marginalised young men and the management of stigma'* (2014). This label is used to represent marginalised young women, and further encourage divide of women on class-based criteria in the UK (Haywood and Yar 2006, Jones 2012, Skeggs and Loveday 2012). Furthermore, the young woman can be thought of in media as associated with 'chav culture' which is thought to be evidenced in the way in which they dress themselves and their children (Nayak and Kehily 2014), and how they 'show off' their lives on their own social media platforms. The suggestion that the young mother embodies a 'style of feminine excess' (Skeggs, 1997, 2004) can further separate her from women experiencing motherhood at the same time she is, placing a divide between the young mother and women who have children 'older'. This can be seen in advertising,

where normative constructions of motherhood are posed by 'older' women, leading to a view of motherhood as a celebrated achievement carried out by, as Lewis (1992 p. 10) describes '(a) professional woman in her thirties, married to another professional, having her first child and able to pay for a nanny', leaving the young mother vulnerable to being viewed as 'the teenage unmarried mother, unable to escape from dependence on state benefit'. The professional woman herself is also at risk of criticism, as Brown (2016) finds she is associated with having a child in later life can lead to a 'lost opportunity' for motherhood. It is then motherhood altogether is placed in a position where one cannot 'win', with there being no alternative than the young are 'poorly educated' are having 'too many' children, whereas those who are 'clever' are not 'having enough' (Brown 2016).

Should the young mother then use changes to consumer practices to emulate that of the 'professional woman in her thirties' who is stylish and prepared for motherhood, she runs the risk of coming across as garish (Ponsford 2011) and abandoning her identity as a mother (Feasey 2017), exposing herself to financial risk that she cannot afford, and further alienating herself when she is attempting to show 'positive mothering', and establishing her identity as a mother. A suggestion from Nayak and Kehily (2014) is for future studies to engage with working-class people in order to obtain counter narratives from those who directly belong to marginalised groups, and from working-class communities, to avoid reliance on media representations which fuel the divide between older and younger mothers, and 'serve to construct them as distant Others' (Nayak and Kehily 2014). Furthermore, such research may lead to the notion of motherhood (which is a shared experience of women) being 'recast', and re-established as a potential position of solidarity between women, and help to alleviate negative associations of the young mother in media and societal constructs.

There is a wealth of knowledge on the concept of cycles of young motherhood which has been acknowledged in study for some years (see Pearson et al. 1899 cited in Wise and Condie 1975, Barber 2001 cited in De Genna et al. 2011; Kearney and Levine 2012; Brown 2016; Murray 1990) and the impact of intergenerational transmission between parents and children, with the modern family as an intergenerational provider of support (James et al. 1998, Murray and Barnes 2010, Chase and Rogers 2001). Intergenerational support from siblings was also a key finding in the literature, where an older sister's reproductive choices had more influence on a younger sister than maternal influence, indicating that intergenerational effects can reach further than maternal influence alone

(Whitehead et al. 2009; Wall-Wieler et al. 2019). This could suggest that siblings are able to provide advice and support (Logsdon et al. 2005) due to 'relatedness' of a shared experience (Carsten 1995, 1997), and provide positive parenting experiences based on her own (Belsky et al. 1996). With a young woman having both her mother and sister as young mothers can raise the odds of young mother cycles repeating at a ratio of 5:1 (East in Wall-Wieler et al. 2019), which Wall-Wieler et al. (2019) found could suggest intergenerational modelling of young motherhood has a greater influence for the cycle to be repeated than that of the established risk factor that young pregnancy occurs in poor demographics.

2) Young motherhood and changing family forms

When giving context to young motherhood, conversations of intergenerational relationships extended thinking to what 'family' is, how it is considered by those who exist within it, and to what extent already established relationships and family practices define family (see Phoenix and Brannen 2014).

Research conducted by Morgan (2011) into 'the reformulation of what is thought of as 'family'' was found to have family studies at its core. Morgan (1996, 2004) suggests the use of the term 'family practices' when investigating the family itself, to uncover ideas of 'doing' family when embarking on family analysis, and at the same time acknowledging that family are an 'important feature of everyday life' (Morgan 2011 p. 9) An emphasis on the active, a sense of the everyday, a sense of the regular, a sense of fluidity and a linking of history and biography, and, when used together in academic enquiry, may facilitate exploration of what is meant by the term 'family practices' in family studies (Morgan 2011 p. 6-7), and to do 'justice to the many ways in which family life is understood and experienced' (Morgan 2011 p. 10). Furthermore, Morgan (2011) advised that in order to document changes that exist within family, we should strive to look beyond nuclear family models which are embedded in classical theory which work on the basis of familial 'norms' (see Bernard 1974; Durkheim 1895 cited in Herman, 1995, 1982 cited in Guth et al. 2002; Bynder 1969. Morgan (2011) recommends researcher accountability to consider intersected and inter-related family practices such as care or work, in order to evolve understanding of what family practices consist of, as well

accounting for the wider set of people who are involved within them- from this form of enquiry, it could replace 'family' in a broad sense to being thought of in a 'less loaded term' (Morgan 2011). These ideas give this thesis focus, with the lived lives and practices of young mothers and their families at its fore. As an aim, the thesis intends to engage with how young mothers are both 'being' and 'doing' family (Morgan 2011, Smart 2007 p. 4), how they incorporate practices of intimacy and to what extent nuclear families are 'less relevant' (Clark 1996) than traditionalist models (Parsons 1956).

In order to think beyond nuclear family models as Morgan (2011) suggests, Jamieson's (1998 p. 8) view on reframing intimacy was also researched, especially in relation to extending and overlapping familial practices with 'loving, caring and sharing'. By intersecting family practices with practices of intimacy, the idea of what constitutes family could lead to a redefinition of family which can be further understood by collecting biographies concerned with memories and embeddedness of everyday actions (Smart 2007 p. 37). However, families who develop their own practices have been noted in research as being open to criticism. Bristow (2016 p.5) discusses the normative operations of reproductive choices, finding they are subject to 'bureaucratic norms and rules'. Therefore, when families who include a young mother function on their own set of practices, this could be seen a non-conformity to family planning and life course norms which do not adhere to societal constructs of what motherhood should be, or when it should begin.

Familial relationships remain fluid, and, with the shifts and social changes that occur, so do the positions of those who orbit the young mother's world. It is here the importance of friendships, or non-familial ties (Weeks et al. 2001) as a physical and emotional support (Oakley 1992 p. 29) network are considered, with research conducted by Moore and Rosenthal (1993, 1994) noting a move from familial influence for women in early adulthood to peer influence. They identify the benefit of friendships for women, especially when family structures have broken down, and, without family or non- familial ties, add to the list of risk factors which can leave the young mother facing social exclusion (Moore and Rosenthal 1993, 1994). Ellis-Sloan and Tamplin (2019) in their paper on friendships as protection against relational exclusion (Ellis-Sloan and Tamplin 2019) for young mothers endorses the idea that friendships have the capacity to alleviate isolation of young mothers. Intergenerational research acknowledges friendships as not necessarily taking the place of family relationships, but instead complimenting them

(Willmott 1987), and it is here Jamieson's (1998 p.8) suggestion of reframing intimacy could be applied, in a context of considering friendships being the family you choose for yourself (Pahl and Spencer 2010), which also contributes to separations of 'doing' and 'being' family, with what the young mother considers to be friends and family merged together (Spencer and Pahl 2006).

3) Constructions and performance of 'good motherhood'

Family is considered to be unique structure (Edholm 1982; Silva 1996), and, in a context of young motherhood, family culture constructs are required to be relevant to the young mother, which inform thinking of identities, and how the young mother carves out her own space for herself (Lawler 2000 p. 169). The literature finds a strong relationship between media perceptions and the construction of young mothers' identities (Shea et al. 2016).

If identity is considered to be constructed from 'internal narratives', as discussed by Hallman (2007), Haynes (2006) and McMahon (1995), the young woman may utilise these to resist negative influence from, for example, media representations which suggest questionable 'suitabilities' of parenting (Hanna 2001 p. 457) as discussed in section 1 of this chapter. This can lead to young women interpreting motherhood in their own ways, such as by making choices about the individual's right to become a mother (Ellis-Sloan 2014) rather than forming an identity based on traditionalist structures of motherhood (see Pember-Reeves 1913). Decision making for young mothers can then be seen in practice, with non-conformity to 'regulatory regimes' (Butler 2008 p. 166) which Kirkman et al. (2001) argue is a contribution to society itself. More traditionalist forms of motherhood, and contemporary 'intensive mothering' (Hays 1996 cited in Hallstein 2006) whereby 'child comes first, can help establish young mothers' feminine identity (Plumwood 1993) and can support young mothers to be viewed as reinventing their lives with positive effects (Minaker 2019). This can iconize the young mother as inspiring, allowing her to work against 'norms' (Mollborn and Sennott 2015 p. 1283-85) which indicate mothers as 'bad', and lead to a more 'compassionate view of mothering' (Aparicio et al. 2018).

Research conducted by Mitchell and Green (2002) investigated motherhood, identities of mothers and intergenerational support networks, as well as finding the importance of kinship in late modernity as 'in decline as the family changes and adapts' (Mitchell and Green 2002 p. 1). A key finding suggested young mothers try and establish themselves as a 'good' mum by comparing themselves to others, choosing to distance themselves from those they felt did not meet their perceptions of what a 'good' mum is. Notions of 'good' motherhood in the literature have been found to derive from intergenerational transmissions, passed down from parent to child (McLeod 2001). With parents playing a key role in developing their children's value systems and ideas of justice, suggesting intergenerational support a factor when constructing a 'good' mother. It would indicate, then, that familial support is crucial to young mothers developing themselves as good' mums, helping the young women to overcome fears of motherhood and deciding themselves as 'bad' for having them (Parker 1995). Although, ideas of motherhood in theory and practice were found to be two separate beings, with further research from Choi et al. (2005) finding that new mothers felt hemmed in by being at home, working against perceptions that when a child is born, women adapt and become selfless to the needs of the child (Woolett and Marshall 2001), indicating that motherhood ideals and expectations contrast significantly to the lived reality.

Devine et al. (2000) found those who are not a 'prototypical representative of the group' are subject to traditional forms of prejudice. More specifically, McDermott and Graham (2005) and Speak et al. (1995) found young women had experienced prejudice when accessing social support services. As suggested by Devine et al. (2000), the judgement of women belonging to marginalised groups could stem from the individual's ideas on normalised notions of motherhood, i.e., they are white, middle- class, have gone into further education, are in a partnership with two incomes and have careers (Unicef 2001:5-6 in Wilson and Huntington 2005). However, when the family attempt to support the young mother with experiences of judgement, it could be perceived that they are resisting support methods, such as those suggested by Sarah Teather (Department for Education 2011) which guide parenting practices. Family support in the context of societal judgement can then be misinterpreted as poor parenting, and fall into the category of needing 'corrective measures'.

Such judgement can also be based on 'performative' behaviour, where if a young woman does not 'perform' her gender as it ought to be, she is subject to scrutiny, and stigma (Bordo 1993; Butler 1990). My research intends to develop an extension of Goffman's (1963; 2009) idea that struggles of marginalised groups need to be documented in their rawest form in order to reduce division, and to consider young motherhood not as a 'spoiled identity that needs to be cleansed' (Goffman 1963; 2009, in Nayak and Kehily 2014). This will be achieved by illustrating narratives of young mothers' experiences, as well as reflections on how young mothers and their families 'assimilate, reject and negotiate' (Kehily 2017 in Blackman and Rogers 2017) situations of judgement.

4) Young mothers' experiences

For the young mother herself, responsibilities of care and caring for others are thought to be, in theoretical and empirical terms, associated with ideas that both care and gender are interconnected (Brannen et al. 2000 p3; Holdsworth 2007). When thought of in a context of practices of care which require skill, action and sentiment (Morgan 1996), it would seem from the literature (see Bhopal et al. 2000 p 2; Finch and Groves 1983; Land and Rose 1985; Ungerson 1990; Graham 1991) that the individuals' attitude as to what they constitute as care requires careful consideration of how the impact of said care affects the recipient. The literature also suggests that grandmothers and mothers navigate care in their own ways, highlighting the resilience of families when supporting young mothers (Luthar and Cicchetti 2000, p.258). This thesis investigates this observation via the research question 'how do families support young mothers?'. Thomas (1993 p. 663) suggests that theories of care and caring are unclear epistemologically, due to lack of inclusion of social contextual factors (Merrill and West 2009 p.10, East 1999), and offer limited understanding of care practices between young mothers and grandmothers as a shared experience.

Discussed in relation to care strategies of families and young mothers, inclusion of childcare with 'everyday' practices (see Cheal 2002 p. 12; DeCertau and Mayol 1998; Randall and Hunn; 1984; Felski 1999; Henri 1984), life responsibilities have been found to be facilitated by the use of different frameworks, which strive for the continued care of a child. As Hoffman (1998 p. 236) suggests, young mothers can end up doing 'rather

well' in relation to outcomes of young motherhood, which contrasts with SmithBattle's research (2000), where young mothers largely contribute to a negative image (Arai 2009). Watts et al. (2015) add to Hoffman's (1998 p. 236) claim that young mothers do not fit a 'one size fits all' model, but are made up of their own individual experiences and are found to be influenced positively by the society they live in. The stereotype that those who have a baby young have done so in order to gain access to social housing and welfare benefits (Arai 2009) was investigated, as well as the proposition that a risk factor for early pregnancy is disengagement with education. These risk factors prompted the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy (Social Exclusion Unit 1999) to include 'intensive support for parents and child'- however, this has been criticised for lacking inclusion of young mothers' perspectives (Middleton 2011) into how they need to be supported.

In investigating individual experiences of young motherhood, this thesis explores how families handle childcare needs, living arrangements, and attitudes to education and employment, with the latter using Rolfe's (2008 p. 299) framework of 'hardship and reward' to uncover identities of young mothers. It also investigates reasons to go ahead with pregnancy, unveiling the contexts of choice to have a child (for example, if family input or pressure informed the decision, and if the pregnancy was planned (Grace et al. 2016). This establishes the history of the individual mother's life course, and gives rich context to the findings, as well as informing the methodology.

Adjusting care practices may lead to the young mother's reconsideration of her life course. This is discussed by Chohan and Langa (2011), as falling pregnant at what is considered a 'young' age may not be a reason for an erratic or convoluted lifestyle, but as an opportunity for the young woman to reassess what kind of life she would like for herself and her child. Existing research found motherhood to be a key reason why women have made significant adaptations to their lifestyles (see Duncan et al. 2010; Seamark and Lings 2004; Clarke 2015), and, according to Kaufman et al. (2001), this can be achieved by the young woman by coming to terms with the idea that her life pre-pregnancy has come to an end, but not in a detrimental way. Bowman (2013) and Watts et al. (2015) find that young motherhood leads to a new outlook on life, and, for the family as a whole, leads to a positive impact of change (Seamark and Lings 2004).

5) Intergenerational relationships

The dimensions of intergenerational relationships are multi-faceted, with consideration to parenting styles, conversations of sexuality, socio-dynamic constructs, structural factors of families, and biological characteristics necessary to fully develop an understanding of mother-daughter relationships (Miller 2001). One intergenerational aspect that gives context to young motherhood is that of the relationship between mother and daughter. Relationships that develop between mother and daughter during the transition from childhood through adolescence to adulthood are deemed to be complex (Bojczyk et al. 2011), and can involve tension (Chodorow 1974; Thompson and Walker 1984). This has been the basis for research on maternal parenting, which has suggested that the strength of relationship between mother and mother daughter, the degree of parental supervision, and the strictness of parenting practices (Baumrind 1991), reduce adolescent pregnancy risk. On the other hand, research conducted by Inazu and Fox (1980) found that mother-daughter relationships do influence adolescent woman's decisions to engage in sexual activity, but suggest that maternal supervision is unrelated to daughter's opting to engage in intercourse. Furthermore, literature finds East (1996) uncovering that sexual intercourse and parental strictness to be unrelated, Resnick et al. (1997) suggesting that parental presence in the home setting is not related to adolescent intercourse, and with Gibb et al. (2001) concluding that the literature surrounding links between parenting and adolescent sexual activity as 'inconsistent', due to methodological complexities. It is from Gibb et al.'s (2001) observation that this research will attempt to contribute to such inconsistences in intergenerational methodology.

If we consider family as a powerful influence on social development (Markham et al. 2010), mother-daughter relationships can be seen to influence a young woman's actions in relation to sexual behaviour and attitudes on contraception (Inazu and Fox 1980, Luster and Small 1994, Jaccard et al. 1996). However, the notion of family and its practices, as Morgan (2011) suggests, should be considered as fluid, and vary from family to family (Smart and Neale 1999; Silva and Smart 1998). When decisions have been made to continue with a young pregnancy are initially supported by families, the relationships could change once the reality of motherhood occurs (Gillies 2008). Relationship changes can also occur when the young mother transitions from adolescence to adulthood (Cramer and McDonald 1996) which can impact the family

structure. With pressure to adhere to societal norms (Mannay 2015) comes potential restriction for the young mother, leaving family and intergenerational relationships open to breakdown (Haralambos and Langley 2003). Furthermore, when the value system of the mother at pregnancy and early motherhood is readjusted (Whitehead 2009), this can lead to her questioning the performative nature of herself- i.e., should she present herself as an adolescent, or an adult (Bauman 1997 p.49). Should the young mother take the performative route of adult before she is ready, this can lead to feelings of lost adolescence, and rebellion can ensue, which may alter the relationship between mother and daughter to the point of breaking down (Fine 1988; Moore and Rosenthal 1993) and impact her access to familial and social support (Phoenix 1991; Speak et al. 1995; Kidger, 2004; McDermott and Graham 2005).

Investigations into family values such as connectedness, in work conducted by Barber (1997) suggest that the more connected mothers and daughters feel to one another, the more support is felt, therefore the less risk there is of young motherhood (Jessor et al 1983). However, the existing literature deems mother-daughter connectedness and sexual risk taking are unrelated to outcomes of young motherhood (Christopher et al 1993). Contrastingly, it was found in the literature that women's common experience of motherhood instead enriches closeness (Nelson 2013), as coined by Carsten (2000) as 'relatedness'. Despite relatedness enhancing mother-daughter relationships, the theme of conflict in family relationships is found to continue. Bunting and McAuley (2002) highlight this existing in a context of relatedness, parenting practices and child keeping (Stack 1974); Furstenburg (1981) and Fine et al. (1991) find disagreements occurring in respect of household space; Sheeran et al. (2015) note disputes over who has responsibility for taking care of the baby; and Cramer and McDonald (1996) suggesting conflicting interests between young mothers and kin support.

Mother-daughter relationships as a potential influential mediator of young motherhood gives us a background as to why young motherhood may occur, and how it can re-cast definitions of 'family', by considering the role that familial and non-familial ties can play to support the young mother. Practical support from grandparents has been found by Brooks-Gunn and Chase-Lansdale (1991) and Dellman-Jenkins et al. (1993) to be a crucial support network by young mothers, and feel they play a key role in their lives, providing support and advice (Furstenburg and Crawford 1978) to have a positive impact on parenting behaviour (Nitz et al. 1995). However, Bristow (2016 p. 2) highlights how

intergenerational offerings of support and advice can be problematic, suggesting that the knowledge being passed down, as well as those who are responsible for knowledge transitions, stand in question- for example, the way that knowledge is imparted surrounding mothering practised by older generations, in relation to food and advice on discipline can conflict with current, expert- sanctioned norms around 'good parenting'.

As a strategy to balance care and child rearing support, which can also spell conflict and struggle for some families, McKie et al. (2002) have developed a framework of 'caringscapes', where care is strategically 'mapped out' which could be a useful intergenerational tool to support the young mother. This allows the individual to take into consideration maternal thinking and care (Waerness 1996), and allows for care and paid work to be weighed up and organised (McKie et al. 2002) and brought together (Thomas 1993), which may ensure continued care and work can be managed successfully.

6) Fatherhood

Although this research focusses on motherhood experiences from women, an extensive review of the fatherhood literature was undertaken in preparation for possible focus group talk about father involvement and support, most notably, the literature discussions of young mothers perceptions of fathers (Bradshaw and Millar 1991; Ford et al. 1998; Ford et al. 1995; McKay and Marsh 1994; Marsh and McKay 1993).

In order to be thoroughly informed, the literature on fathering and fatherhood (see Burghes et al. 1997; Popay et al. 1998), identity and transitions to parenthood (Hofner et al. 2011), refusing fatherhood (Ives 2007, Lawton 2016), masculinity and fatherhood (Dowd 2012), 'new' fatherhood (Powell 2006, Harris 1995, Ives 2007, LaRossa 1988, Demos 1982, Hanson and Bozett 1987), paternal involvement (Pleck 1997), division of domestic labour (Hawkins and Roberts 1992), changes in expectations of motherhood and fatherhood (LaRossa 1998), first-time fathers' experiences (Kowlessar et al. 2014) and experiences of male partners of women with postnatal mental health problems (Ruffell et al. 2019) were also investigated. This review found that paternal insights into parenting experiences are under-researched, as well as father's first-hand accounts of

fatherhood. However, as there is no scope within this study to explore this in depth, the thesis recommends this as a valuable area for future research.

Thesis outline

The remainder of this thesis is structured as follows:

Chapter 2- Methodology, research methods and ethics

Chapter 2 describes the methodological approach and discusses the rationale for the focus group research method, including a discussion of how this method has been used in existing young motherhood studies; ethical considerations for the study presented here; and researcher positionality.

Chapter 3- Family support and intergenerational intimacies

Chapter 3 explores the first set of findings from the collective narratives, discussing the extent to which intergenerational familial relationships have changed as a result of young motherhood and how this has impacted on the family. Relationships pre- and post-pregnancy are discussed, as well as how the families have navigated responsibilities and the provision of support, including friendships and their potential role of support. Reflections of the young mothers' perspectives of paternal support will be given, and how they feel fathers contributions offered to them and their child have shaped their experiences of motherhood.

Chapter 4- Motherhood ideals

Chapter 4 considers wider community relations, with the fieldwork reflecting on how the young mother and her family understand, repudiate, and debate both media and local community perceptions of young mothers. The findings presented here seek to understand how young mothers internalise motherhood ideals, through respondents' narratives about what advice they might give to a young woman considering having a child.

Chapter 5- Conclusions and recommendations

The concluding chapter provides a thematic review of the study's main findings. It describes the modest contribution made by this study to the existing literature on young motherhood and intergenerational relations, and brings the thesis to a close by offering recommendations for future research from the findings.

Chapter 2: Methodology, research methods and ethics

Introduction

This chapter will outline the chosen methodology for this thesis. It will begin with the location where the fieldwork took place, rationale for this research, and give the research questions. It will consider my autobiographical narrative and researcher reflexivity, and then give information on the sample and consideration of participants for contextual purposes. It will go on to discuss the rationale behind employing focus groups as a qualitative method, providing an evaluation of advantages and pitfalls when used in existing young motherhood research. As a prelude to the research design, researcher considerations of positionality (most notably insider positionality) and subjectivity will be given in order to reflect on how the researcher is situated in the investigation of young motherhood, and how these may impact and benefit the research. Reference to feminist methodologies in relation to the phenomenon of young motherhood and how they will inform the design is also provided. Reflections on the effectiveness of snowball recruitment strategy are considered as well as transcription processes. Finally, ethical considerations will be detailed. This chapter will conclude by summarising the methods used in this empirical study.

Rationale and research questions

This research took place on the Isle of Thanet in Kent, where I relocated from South East London in 2012. Thanet remains above average for teenage conceptions compared to Kent and South East regional (KCC 2016), has comparatively lower abortion rates (ONS 2014, Kent Public Health Observatory 2017) and is ranked as the most deprived local authority in Kent (KCC 2019). Low termination rates compared with high rate conceptions in Thanet are seen as a 'concern' (Kent Public Health Observatory 2017). Situating the young mother in a demographic where teenage pregnancy rates are high and abortion rates are low is one rationale for choosing Thanet, and a second in relation to recruiting participants who relate to its theme. This research is concerned with giving a voice to lived experiences, and the individual contextual meanings women give to

their *own* experiences of young motherhood, which will be guided by the following research questions:

1. How have methods of support for young mothers changed?
2. How do different generations in family support young mothers?
3. How does young motherhood change intergenerational relations in the family?
4. How does young motherhood impact on the way in which family members define family?

Reflexivity and sampling

The motivation to research young mothers came from my own biography after reflecting on family relationships after falling pregnant at 19 and having a child at 20, which correlates with personal experiences being synonymous with being able to represent others who had similar life courses (Spry 2001, 2011) but in a socially conscious way (Adams et al. 2008; Allen 2015). During early pregnancy, I thought I was bound to be 'just' be a mum, which would be up to me to carry out. However, I was given intensive support whilst pregnant and throughout my daughter's life, which contrasted my expectations.

Initially, changes in family relations and support for young mothers was the main idea that I wanted to investigate, but developed into the want to look at relational aspects of young motherhood, and which particular aspects to look at were supported by reflexive processes of my personal experiences (Jones 2005). Thought on other factors that shaped my identity as a young mother were given (Archer 2010 in Holmes 2010), such as transitioning from a young person to an adult, striving to be a 'good' mum and feelings of being stereotyped, which shaped the direction I wanted the thesis to take, and how my autobiographical reflection would support analysis processes to give more understanding of young motherhood (Rose 1997 p. 315). From my reflexive biography, emotions were brought to the fore from when I first became a young mother (Hochschild 1979), which led me to consider how young women's emotions involved in the fieldwork would surface during data collection (Giddens 1990). I wanted participants to 'invoke their real self' and not succumb to 'surface acting' in reaction 'feeling rules' (Hochschild 1990 p. 119; Hochschild 1983), so as individual habitus

(Bourdieu 1977) of who each participant *is*, how they have come to be, and how they make sense of and interpret their worlds (Bourdieu 1979/1984, Caetano 2013) would be unveiled.

The sample for this study consisted of four families living in Thanet, of which all had a child under and including the age of 21; two at the age of 21, one at 19 and one at the age of 17. The families spoke of their experiences in focus group contexts, which took place from the period of July 2019 until March 2020. The following table outlines the families involved in each focus group, listed concurrently in the order they were completed:

Table 1: Focus Group participant categorisation

Family focus group	Pseudonym	Mothers age at child's conception	Grandmother's age at child's conception	Current age
A	Katie- young mother	17		24
	Gemma- grandmother	42	32	49
	Cathleen- great grandmother	63	21	70
B	India- young mother	21		28
	Sylvia- grandmother	51	20	60
C	Queenie- young mother	21		35

	Alice- grandmother	49	19	62
D	Alex- young mother	19		24
	Jo- grandmother	43	23	48

The initial research design organised focus groups consisting of a young mother, maternal grandmother and great - grandmother. When recruitment began, potential participants offered themselves and their mothers, but no longer had their grandmothers (Patino and Ferreira 2018). This was an upsetting part of the process as both sympathy and guilt were felt, and that I was 'rejecting' participants due to not having a 'full set' of generations, causing concern that participants would feel unworthy of representing a group they belonged to. On investigation, there was limited literature on the effect on wellbeing of participants who had not been included in studies- therefore, transparency of honesty was used in order to address 'hidden ethnography' (Aldridge 1993 p. 64; Blackman 2007 p.700) to show researcher consciousness of emotions.

The plan of the research then changed from three generations to two. The question was then raised: if there are two participants, could the method of focus group still be used? It was found that guidelines for best practice of focus group methodology made suggestions on how many participants to include as a maximum, but not a minimum (Cyr 2016, Smithson 2007, O. Nyumba 2018), so, the decision to use focus group methodology was led by wanting to hear women's experiences in a context where participants encourage each other to 'express, clarify or even develop particular perspectives' (Kitzinger 1994 p. 112), as well as being shaped by the research aim and questions (Breen 2006), with a focus group question agenda used to guide and give rigour to the conversations (see appendix A). The change from three to two generations was not considered to affect methodological findings, as a contribution would still be made to furthering research of the complexities of intergenerational relationships (Keating et al. 2015).

Focus Groups in Young Motherhood Studies

In their study '*Nappy bags instead of handbags: Young motherhood and self-identity'*, Shea et al. (2016) suggest that underplaying the value of conversational outcomes surrounding young mothers experience can lead to inadequacies in policy, which have a knock on effect on services that support them (Wilson and Huntington 2005 p. 65). Shea (2016) also pits the importance of qualitative methods against quantitative methods to ensure the representation of young mothers' complex lives is true, with the latter giving more realistic insight to reduce narrow subjective opinions that target groups are thought of as seen under a societal lens (Arai 2009).

Madriz (2000) further emphasises this view, deeming the method as an integral element in working towards an evolution in the agenda of social justice for not only women, but those who are thought of as a 'problem' (SmithBattle 2013; Duncan 2007). As a collective, women in focus groups are able to lay bare their lived experiences and share survival strategies, highlighting that focus group experiences not only give the young mother a voice to impact policy, but also give a platform for an unexpected voice (Maykut and Morehouse 1994). Support for one another can be provided on dealing with stigmatizations they are associated with- thus, focus groups can become 'spiritual encounters' (Moloney 2011) that can be transformative for those involved, becoming aligned with feminist principles in a social context (Kitzinger and Barbour 1999). However, feelings of oppression can materialise in focus group sessions, and can occur due to intrapersonal characteristics, socioeconomic background, age, sex, ascendant tendencies, social sensitivity and social power (Stewart et al. 2015). These factors can influence general consensus amongst women (Van Teijlingen and Pitchforth 2006) which is not the intention nor objective of the methodology (Marczak and Sewell 1991).

Extracts from the focus groups conducted by Smithson (2000) illustrate cases of dominant voice creating a general consensus view, rather than an emergence of conflicting or contentious views, which may have occurred due to pressure towards consensus and unanimity (Smithson and Diaz 1996). A suggestion by Smithson (2000) was for the researcher to identify the nature and degree of bias (Stewart et al. 2015), and to make central to the research agenda physical, social, cultural and psychological factors when creating a research design and recruitment of participants (Smithson 2000).

In Smithson's study, the concept of 'dominant voice' contrasted with the 'silent' participant, with the latter being a valid feature of human interaction and is often present in 'research communicative contexts' (Poland and Pederson 1998 p. 308). Smithson (2000) recommends that in this situation, the researcher may encourage silent participants to engage. The danger of encouragement can transpire as pressure and reduce feelings of trust towards the moderator (Villard 2003) with the researcher being at risk of exploiting the participant for their own gain (Orb 2001) which then compromises ethical duty of care leaving the participant at risk of subjection to harm.

Watts (2008) admits that balancing rights and responsibilities alongside vulnerability and intrusion with the search for knowledge is difficult, with research integrity being multi-faceted with the power of the participant disenfranchised due to the demands of the researcher. However, the balance is not unachievable, with suggestions to reduce this risk as being aware of multiple angles of the inside out and outside in of processes (Van Manen 1997). This includes reassuring the participant prior to the focus group of their abilities to change their social, cultural and economic dominions through the impact of their voice (Habermas 1975) and how by having their stories told, the element of emancipation that comes from participating and making a difference to their social worlds is a powerful thing (Tisdale 2008).

Researcher Positionality and Subjectivity

Positioning myself in the research allowed me to start from my own experience, and then develop the transcript questions into broader points (D'Silva et al. 2016). My positionality does not solely define me (Louis and Barton 2002), nor define the whole experience of young motherhood- my experiences were my own and the way in which I constructed my narrative is different to that of another young mother. As Kluckhohn and Murray (1953) argued:

> 'Everyman is in certain respects: a) like all other men, b) like some other men, c) like no other man'. (In Friedman 1990 p. 64)

Accountability of position in methodology gave me a conscious awareness of how I interacted with participants as well as recognition of unintended power relations within group dynamic. hooks'(1984) concept of margin and centre was taken into account for disproportion of power in relationships, to avoid participants feeling they do not have as much in common with the researcher as they once thought, leading to reluctance to be as open with responses (hooks 1984). Reflecting on power imbalances was achieved by accounting for non-verbal communications (Ayres 2008) when transcribing participant perspectives to risk minimizing the voices of some, or all, of the women involved (Ospina et al. 2008).

Classical conceptualisation of insider position suggests the researcher is "the member of specified groups and collectives or occupants of specified social statuses" (Merton 1972 p. 21). Taking this into consideration, insider positionality and having *a priori* intimate knowledge (Wilkinson and Kitzinger 2013 p. 251) of the community of the participants (Chavez 2008 p. 475) makes the research relative, as all involved possess similarities in perspectives, beliefs and knowledge (Banks 1998). This position encouraged consideration to methodological and ethical issues regarding access, bias and confidentiality (Breen 2007; Greene 2014 p. 3-6) that may be seen as irrelevant to those categorised as an external-outsider (Banks 1998).

Although my insider positionality may be ethnographically situated in young motherhood, geographically, I consider myself as an outsider in Thanet, having strong feelings of identity towards South London as 'home'. Naples (1996) suggests outsider and insider status are 'not fixed or static positions' (p.84), with researcher positionality negotiated and renegotiated during the research process (Naples 1996, Rabe 2003). Therefore acknowledging that the researcher cannot escape being both an insider and an outsider Kitzinger (2013) allowed me to make use of both positionalities which helped to establish both familiarity and distance with participants.

Within a qualitative methodology, intimate involvement of subjectivities that stem from experiences of young motherhood are thought to guide all stages of research (Ratner 2002), and with reflection of individual values integral (Ratner 2002). For the researcher to actively participate in fieldwork interpretations and to inform the culture of young motherhood (Gergen 2001 p.806), taking a postmodernist stance when addressing my subjectivities is crucial to methodological processes, as it can decide

whether subjectivities facilitate or prevent objective understanding (Ratner 2002), and if findings having 'significant cultural meaning' (Gergen 2001 p. 806). This was approached by providing participants with a brief overview in the 'Participant Information' guide (see appendix B) that was given to all that were part of the focus group, which intended to show biographical interest and give my identity in order for me to have control over my social associations and limiting the effects I had on research outcomes (Lavrakas 2008).

Feminist Methodology and Principles

A question that arose during the research design was, how could the group's reflective experiences be best represented? Review of feminist praxis gave a framework to guide decisions in research processes (Brayton et al. 2006), strengthening the decision that a qualitative methodology was most appropriate for feminist research due to the encouragement of subjective knowledge (Depner 1981, Duelli Klien 1983).

Feminist methodology differs from traditional research in as much that it starts with the worldviews and experiences of women, developed through a critique of 'malestream' (Mies 1983) sociology. It also actively attempts to break down hierarchical power imbalances between researcher and participant (Ralph 1988 p.140), leading to a more equal relationship between the pair (Oakley 1974; Jayaratne 1983; Stanley and Wise 1990; Wise and Condie 1975). Feminist research is explicitly concerned with addressing diversity, decision-making and female empowerment, and encourages a platform for the voice of all women, which, in traditional sociology, pushed women's accounts from the public world (dominated by men) into the private, undermining women's views as unimportant (Merrill and West 2009), with women's personal views especially being central to the outcomes of this MA thesis

Considering the features centred in feminist methodology allowed me to use context and purpose of the research to facilitate the focus groups (Greaves et al. 1995 p. 334) ensuring questions gave reassurances to the women- that they were listened to, heard and their voices important. In particular, giving the women an opportunity to contribute to constructing new knowledge, social change and documenting new waves of female

oppression through their narratives (Brayton et al. 2006). The use of feminist framework will contribute to advancement in the arena of young motherhood , contextualised in the reality of their own experiences (Brayton 2006), especially when placed with a reflexive approach in my positionality, as 'reflexivity is at the heart of feminist methodologies' according to Etherington 2004 p. 31).

The use of a feminist methodology also stems from considering my positionality in the fieldwork, leading to reflection on prescribed gender roles from my childhood in relation to the social positions of women and men (Hammersley, 1992 p. 188). Such 'reasoning procedures which underlie the knowledge produced out of "research"' (Stanley and Wise 1983 p. 196) discovered a key intention of the fieldwork was to discover what women who have children 'young' are capable of, and how it is achieved despite vocational, emotional and social 'norms', values and beliefs which can interfere with women's emancipation.

Du Bois' (1983) reflection encapsulates my feelings as a girl and then woman:

> 'We see and think in terms of our culture; we have been trained in these terms, shaped to them; they have determined not only the ways in which we have been able to perceive and understand large events, but even the ways in which we have been able to perceive, structure and understand our most intimate experiencing. Yet we have always another consciousness, another potential language within us, available to us. We are aware, however inchoately, of the reality of our own perceptions and experience (. . .)'. (Du Bois 1983 p. 111- 2).

As discussed in the autobiographical narrative, reactions from my family were unexpected, however I had not realised to what extent their value systems were rethought until they were reflected on in this research. Therefore, if gender roles can be re-constructed in a context of motherhood, it was then the intention to use a feminist methodology in order to steer research praxis towards progressive emancipation for women (Mies 1983 p. 124) other than myself. To achieve this, it was crucial the women felt their personal experiences were validated in the narratives guided by the focus group research agenda (see appendix A) as their own 'truths'- which is more able to happen within feminist methodology as opposed to 'conventional' and often considered 'masculinist' methods (Hammersley 1992 p. 187-206).

Snowballing Subject Recruitment and Transcription

The approach for designing the method was linked with dominant and alternative discourses discussed in chapter 1, which shaped the research title and questions. The current literature indicated not only a lack of young women's accounts of young motherhood (Arai 2009), but lack of study in the context of intergenerational support (East 1999). In order to document young mother's relationships, the criteria of participants was a young woman who had her child under the age of 21, and her mother. Snowball subject recruitment was used as a non-random recruitment method as it was researched to be well used in exploratory research of marginalized populations (Tenzek 2017 cited in Allen 2015). I contacted people from Thanet, giving the needed information but only found one participant due to lack of referrals, which is a noted disadvantage of snowball sampling (Cohen et al. 2011, Tenzek 2018). The fundamental advice of snowball sampling is communication, so, taking this notion, I used social media to recruit. Snowball sampling was still suggested in the wording, and, for the sake of transparency, honesty surrounding participant inclusion (Gelinas 2017) was given on contact. No legal regulations were found in relation to social media recruitment (Gelinas et al. 2017).

When transcribing, previous research studies highlighted 'thick descriptive' data (Geertz 1973, 1983) supports transcription to find themes within the narratives, with recommendation to include consideration of the research question and aims, research positionality and theoretical stance (Riessman 2002 p. 697), which was noted and used at this point in the research. Using Gibbs's (2007) transcription model, I started with a commentary of nonverbal communication to enrich the character of the conversation (Stewart et al. 2011) as well as a reflexive journal to ensure rigour in findings (Lincoln and Guba 1985). The focus group responses which arose from the focus group questions and agenda as a guide (see appendix A) and where then typed ad verbum to avoid diluting talk and thought (Stewart et al. 2011) and pseudonyms were given for confidentiality. After considering the data holistically, the transcribed conversations were then used in order to seek out and develop more complex emergent themes.

Ethical Considerations

Within the area of young motherhood, and when a sociological methodology is applied, more than surface thinking of the implications of those involved is required. If motherhood is a socially constructed concept (Gabe et al. 2004), the impact of society and how it views young mothers could be a contributing factor on how the young mother perceives herself. The transition between childhood and adulthood may deem the individual vulnerable (Valentine et al. 2001), needing careful ethical consideration prior to research, which was done by seeking approval from the Faculty Ethics Chair, and approved on 13.3.2019. When addressing sensitive content such as sex, social stigma and family, the intention was to create a researcher/participant relationship in stages. From initial contact, the participants were sent an information document (see appendix B) which included a brief personal background as advised by the Ethics Faculty Chair. Further to this, I worked upon a lawful basis of obtaining consent from (see appendix C) participants in to carry out the research project, stating participants can withdraw without reason up until data collection has been completed by October 2019.

The research participants were informed they would be given the opportunity to read the research paper after completion. All names and specific locations were changed to a pseudonym in order to adhere to confidentiality and it was explained that recordings will be kept at Canterbury Christ Church University in a secure locked place for 5 years in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. Focus group conversations were electronically recorded on a dedicated voice recording device, with all participants' consent, and the processes of transcription, analysis and storage were explained (see appendix B).

Due to potential sensitivity to the subject area, location as to where the focus group took place was chosen to minimise risk to participants and myself - therefore a mutual location agreed by all parties was arranged. It was clearly explained before the focus group commenced that if they wished to stop the recording it would be, in order to reduce harm to emotional wellbeing, and we could continue at a later date. The best emotional interest (McCosker et al. 2001) of each person was considered whilst conducting and reflecting upon the focus groups, with advice sought from supervisors regularly. After the focus group took place, all participants were given an opportunity to ask me any questions or

concerns they may have. Integrity and anonymity was respected of each family and took the uniqueness of each into consideration when conducting the focus group.

As the lead researcher, I have access to the personal data, as will my academic supervisors. However, anonymization was used at the point of analysis, meaning that drafts of the written research do not include Personal Identifiable Information, and this research project and the data collected was not to be processed by third party organisations. Should a participant wish to access their personal data, it was advised at the time of the focus group they would be able to request this from the point of transcription to up to 5 years later.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the motivations for the study, research questions and design, justification of feminist methodology frameworks, consideration of researcher positionality and subjectivity well as consideration of ethical issues. The next chapters will present and discuss the research findings, with analysis of the focus group narratives for four families giving two main themes that emerged: family support and intergenerational intimacies, and motherhood ideals.

Chapter 3: Family support and intergenerational intimacies

Introduction

This chapter will begin by discussing intergenerational relationships pre and post pregnancy to decipher if young motherhood brought mothers and daughters closer together or otherwise. It will then go on to look at to what extent young motherhood has impacted family and if it has led to a difference in lifestyle for the young mother and grandmother. It will present fieldwork discussions on what is considered to be family and if what constitutes as normative family is different for these women. This will be looked at in conjunction with family practices, specifically 'doing' and 'being' family, and how work and education are navigated within young motherhood. Intergenerational intimacies of 'loving, caring and sharing' between women and extended family relations of friendships will be investigated, and how the 'everyday' actions of the women in relation to balancing care with other responsibilities is achieved. The career strategies of young mothers and how they coordinate young motherhood with return to work will also be discussed. At the end of this section, the women's perceptions of support in relation to fathers will be examined, as well as young mothers perspectives on fathers, considering how they feel contributions of support or lack thereof from fathers has shaped their experiences of young motherhood.

Intergenerational relationships- pre pregnancy:
'It needed changing'

When considering relationships between mother and daughter, the data that drives this thesis uncovered an overall sense of closeness before pregnancy, although some participants spoke of tensions existing. Bojczyk et al. (2011) found such themes in their qualitative study as 'reflecting complexity', indicating relationships include variables such as conflict (Bojczyk et al. 2011), making outcomes more than linear when considering life-course narrative perspectives. Variables of supervision, control and connectedness between mothers and daughters will be discussed in relation to the research findings in this section.

When reflecting on pre pregnancy behaviours, the narratives from two of the young mothers indicated mother daughter tensions, suggesting they "argued a lot" "because I was out doing naughty stuff":

> Katie: "… I weren't naughty really, but I was just out, doing what everyone was doing."
>
> Gemma: "It needed changing- she was on a bit of a downward spiral so I look at it like she was what saved her, really…"

Accountability for pre-pregnancy tensions could be India and Katie's reaction as adolescents to their mothers' maternal parenting, such was an outcome in studies conducted by Chodorow (1974) and Thompson and Walker (1984). When the mother daughter relationship is then contextualised in relation to sexual behaviour, and theoretically positioned in classical sociology to be a 'salient sexual socialisation structure' (Fox and Inazu 1980), tensions could come from responses to parenting practices as reactions to authority and control, which could have been a contributory risk factor of the outcome of pregnancy for the two women. Research on parenting practices and their correlation with young motherhood found a lower percentile of intercourse in teens who had a moderately strict parent (Miller et al. 1986) and that teenage sexual activity is associated with lack of supervision at home (Manlove 1998) indicating supervision and control greatly influences adolescent pregnancy risk (Baumrind 1991), resulting in positive outcomes for authoritative parenting and permissive parenting in the negative. Contrasting findings however indicate authoritative parenting not to be a contributing factor of adolescent pregnancy, suggesting that maternal supervision is unrelated to a daughter having intercourse (Inazu and Fox 1980), that sexual intercourse and strictness and rules are unrelated (East 1996) and parental presence at home is 'not related to age first intercourse' (Resnick et al. 1997).

Queenie and Alex offered their relationships with their mothers pre-pregnancy as "fine" and "pretty good", showing pre-pregnancy relationships to be stable, with all findings from the fieldwork suggesting causal outcomes for young motherhood to be complex, with more than one factor required for consideration when investigating why young motherhood occurs, which, in this case, is that of parental closeness and its link to adolescent pregnancy. The majority of research conducted on connectedness and

parental closeness which guides parent/child relationships (Barber 1997) and the impact this has on adolescent sexual and contraceptive behaviour showed the more influential connectedness is (Jessor et al. 1983), the lower the risk of adolescent pregnancy, sexual risk taking and increased use of contraception (Inazu and Fox 1980, Luster and Small 1994, Jaccard et al. 1996). On investigation, a minority of research findings were found which suggested otherwise, and where it does, sexual behaviour and parental closeness were thought to be unrelated (Christopher et al. 1993) or not related explicitly to sexual risk taking amongst teens (Rodgers 1999).

At this point, the thesis acknowledges the dimensions of intergenerational relationships are multi-faceted, and accepts parenting styles, dialogue of sexual communication, structural features of individual families and biologically inherited characteristics (Miller 2001) play an integral part in daughter parent relationships. It also realises by only including two family variables that may affect adolescent pregnancy risk limits the discussion- however, this thesis is mainly concerned with how intergenerational relationships have changed because of a pregnancy, with pre-pregnancy relationships given to set the scene for the remainder of this chapter, which will continue on in the upcoming section with post-pregnancy reflections.

Changes in intergenerational relationships- post pregnancy:
'I appreciate my mother a little bit more'

Relationships post pregnancy from most of the group were found to have strengthened when asked if the relationship had changed. The 'why' they had changed was facilitated at the time of data collection by initiating discussion of post pregnancy relationships directly after pre pregnancy, allowing the women to re-evaluate past relationships, then take into consideration where they are positioned in their present structure (Bojczyk et al. 2011). Within the data, Katie and Alex expressed similar reflections on why the relationships between mother and daughter have strengthened:

> Katie: "But that's obviously (Katie's baby) brought us a lot closer hasn't it."
>
> Alex: "Erm, I think we've probably got closer, because I think we can kind of relate with having kids?"

India identified her post-pregnancy thoughts towards her mum as:

> "I appreciate my mother a little bit more".

These reflections place the child at their centre, giving the child credit for bringing the women closer together as seen in qualitative study of young women's narratives conducted by Kirkman et al. (2001). This was also found by Arai (2009) in relation to family structures in her study on the experiences of young parenthood, where:

> 'Birth transformed family dynamics and healed breaches'. Arai (2009).

From the data, use of words such as 'appreciate' and 'relate' show how the young mothers have formed and negotiated 'relatedness' (Carsten 2000) through the act of motherhood, which can be a basis for support and advice (Hogan et al. 1993). The idea of relating to one another more to enrich closeness (Nelson 2013) highlights motherhood as a form of kinship, which Mitchell and Green (2002) consider as important, yet in decline due to shifts in family changes through the experience of young motherhood where common ground is established which was seen in this fieldwork. Research conducted by Bunting and McAuley (2004) found that although mothers of teenage mothers were seen to be a source of support in 'child keeping' (Stack 1974), they were also one of conflict- the latter due to tensions surrounding disagreements of household space (Furstenburg 1981; Fine et al. 1991), conflict on taking responsibility for their baby (Sheeran et al 2015) and conflicting interests (Cramer and McDonald 1996), which could become a future concern for these families.

It is most likely that the family is the most powerful influence on the socialisation of a developing person (Markham et al. 2010), and, with the positive nature of the families relationships detailed in the findings showing that during late adolescence the young women have been influenced positively by this relationship with matriarchal figures. However, this finding may indicate a possible risk to the young mother and her child which are often overlooked (Cramer and McDonald 1996) in the context of a potential relationship change with family due to pregnancy occurring in mid- late adolescence (Belsky 1984 in McKenry et al. 1991; Cowan and Cowan 1995), if it adolescence is thought of in its broadest sense of being between the ages of 10 and 21.

With the arrival of a new baby, the young mother has been expected to readjust her value system (Whitehead 2009) from that of adolescence to adult, also questioning the way in which she performs- i.e., is she adolescent or adult? (Bauman 1997 p. 49). Should she, as the child gets older, begin to rebel then reject against the latter system (Moore and Rosenthal 1993), the relationship that is told in the findings as close and supportive may breakdown causing tension (Fine 1988; Moore and Rosenthal 1993) and the isolation of the mother and child from the family, and potentially further isolated from social support (Phoenix 1991; Speak et al. 1995; Kidger 2004; McDermott and Graham 2005).

This finding from the data also brings out the fluidity of family practices (Morgan 2011), highlighting the way in which human agency diversifies what is thought of as family structure, with how processes of individualisation evolves social structures (Finch 1997 in Neale 2002, Beck 1992) which was a methodological consideration of this study.

The impact of young motherhood on family:
'You saved us all, didn't you darling?'

Describing how becoming a mother had impacted the womens families saw a contrast of either changing or not changing. The following fieldwork carries on from their previous narrative, which move us from the idea of intergenerational shifts in relationships, to the examination of the impact young motherhood has on the family as a whole, and for the young mother herself.
The findings suggest the experience has impacted family:

> Katie: "Massively- cos, oh God, to think of what I'd be like if I didn't have her. She was definitely a blessing-definitely- changed my life massively."
>
> Gemma: "But for the good."
>
> Cathleen- "You saved us all, didn't you darling? (To Alice in the kitchen)."

India's conversation with her mum reflects on the change in a similar way to Katie's grandmother Cathleen, who said "you saved us all, didn't you darling?", with Sylvia feeling the same for her grandson:

India: “I do prefer my lifestyle now…. because I was out a lot but I was young and I was always just chasing the money trying to better myself”

Sylvia: “He’s changed our life haven’t you love? For the better”

India: “Yeah he has changed me for the better”

Sylvia: “(to India) you’ve changed, a million percent…”

For Katie and India, it has been established they felt their lived experiences prior to motherhood were leading them down an undesirable route, with India’s mum feeling she was “stressing all the time, before she had her son”, with India noting ‘”yeah I was a bit of a stress head”. Here, motherhood and the child specifically are seen to be the key reasons for sharp changes in lifestyles for the women which adds to previous research conducted by Duncan et al. (2010), Seamark and Lings (2004) and Clarke (2015). This reviewed lifestyle may indicate early motherhood is not a causal reason for turbulent lifestyle choices, but is a reason to readjust what kind of life course the young woman wants for herself (Chohan and Langa 2011), and her child by compromising her old life (Kaufman et al. 2001).

In isolation, India and Katie’s comments indicate the positive impact motherhood has had on them as women as individuals, developing a newfound attitude towards their lives (Bowman 2013, Watts et al. 2015). However, if the reflections are looked at as a collective, grandmothers and great grandmother suggest how positive the impact of change has been on the family as a whole (Seamark and Lings 2004), with family thought of here as a young mother, her mother and in one case, maternal grandmother. This then begs the question- what constitutes as ‘family’ for the women in this research?

Family practices:

‘I’m kind of involved, but not as much as I’d like’

For context, the question posed was worded as ‘since becoming a mum, how you feel it’s impacted your family?’ who then all went on to talk about how it affected the women in their respective families- their mothers. This could have happened as previous questions were revolved around intergenerational relationships, or because the overview in the Participant Information Sheet (see appendix B) stated questions

focussed on direct relationships with one another. This does not mean the young women disregarded fathers, as they were considered later in this chapter -they just did not consider fathers at this point, rather thinking of maternal figures as to who they consider 'family'.

The data suggests high levels of support are offered to the young mother, with Alex's mother stating that she offers help where she can, but would like to feel more involved, but still saw her daughter and grandchildren on:

> Jo: "Yeah weekends, we see each other every weekend and the children every weekend erm so yeah- I'm kind of involved but not as much as I would like…"

This is also shown in levels of support offered to the young mother with a maternal grandmother and maternal great grandmother's feelings on involvement as being there '"massively", "90% involved" and "quite a bit".

Within the fieldwork, it would seem the women have re-constructed their idea of family based on lived experiences, and familiarity of family practices, re-imagined at the birth of their child with already established relationships (see Phoenix and Brannen 2014). The term family practices is used in this thesis as a preference to 'family' (Morgan 1996, 2004), in order to avoid 'dangers' of family analysis which dilute emphasis on the active, linking history and biography and a sense of the regular (Mills 1959, Morgan 2011 p. 6-7). How the women constitute what 'being' family is have been constructed from how they 'do' family (Morgan 2011, Smart 2007 p. 4), which is evident in the findings where the women think of family as what is done in 'practice', structured on the idea that:

> 'Family practices consist of all the ordinary, everyday actions that people do, insofar as they are intended to have some effect on another family member'. (Cheal 2002 p. 12).

The reality of 'everyday actions' (Cheal 2002 p. 12) and the practices of everyday life (see DeCertau and Mayol 1998; Randall and Hunn; 1984; Felski; 1999; Henri 1984) were also found when reflecting on recreational activities with their children. It was found such activities were created by the mothers and families, as there was a lack of knowledge or lack of attendance of local activities as stated by all of the participants. None of the young mothers attended baby groups, with India suggesting a reason for this being that she:

> "Just weren't into stuff like that, and as a person I weren't very sociable…..I just didn't have the time for it I just thought they were a waste of time. I am not a people person I don't want to sit there and discuss other people's babies, and my baby……I just haven't got the time for it".

Katie did not know of any baby groups, apart from:

> "…..when you go for your midwife thing you can do like one or two that I done, but that was only the anti-natal classes….I went to one of them and that was it".

And Queenie and Alex did not know of any baby groups either, explaining:

> Queenie: "No- not really- I went to the health visitor clinics for the weigh ins and things like that but baby massage and all that no I didn't go to anything like that".

> Queenie: "erm, to be honest I didn't really think about it…. I didn't think to ask cos I didn't have friends that had had babies so I just didn't know this stuff might be going on".

> Alex: "Erm, not really"

> Alex:" Erm, most of my….midwife appointments were at children's centres? So they've got bits up"

Further to this, the young women were not offered, nor knew of any young pregnancy, young mother or family support agencies during their pregnancies or when having their children. Queenie stated:

> Queenie: "…we were given leaflets on how to apply for your child benefit and stuff like that and then at the health visitor clinic there was leaflets…."

When asked if she knew of any young pregnancy or family support agencies available, she responded:

> India: "What if I didn't have my mum?.... I probably would have gone into a health centre or something like that"

The way in which the families created their own family practices may leave them at risk of association of generalisation of consequences. As Bristow (2016 p.9) discusses, normative functions that are associated with reproductive choices have become 'increasingly rationalised, and subject to bureaucratic norms and rules' (Bristow 2016 p. 5). So then, when placed in societal constructs whereby practices are subject to 'norms' their disengagement and change to practices could appear as misinformed child rearing and the child being at risk. The fieldwork shows the families preferred to construct

frameworks around and including their families to provide child rearing experiences, practical and emotional support, which was found in research conducted by Mitchell and Green (2002) whereby relying on family allowed them to identify themselves as respectable and caring mothers because they had sought advice from female relatives.

Intergenerational Intimacies:
'loving, caring and sharing'

How family practices are done have been shown from the fieldwork to influence what these women consider family to be, presenting its members as working beyond nuclear family models (Morgan 2011), and resisting traditional familial 'norms' (for example, Bernard 1974; Durkheim; 1895 cited in Herman 1995, 1982 cited in Guth et al. 2002; Bynder 1969), showing shifts in both modern familial structures and practices.

The data driving this thesis also shows practices of intimacy amongst women which goes beyond the 'less relevant' (Clark 1996) nuclear family (Parsons 1956) model, coinciding more with views of Young and Willmott (1957, 1974) in regards to extended family relations, with Jamieson (1998 p. 8) reframing intimacy overlapping familial practices with 'loving, caring and sharing' that 'may also be seen as dimensions of intimacy' (Jamieson, 1998 p. 8). Jamieson's (1998 p. 8) notion of intimacy in families are echoed in the findings in relation to levels of support, which were high. Within the fieldwork, Katie discussed living at home when she had her baby indicating the support extended to making her family home available to her and her child, as well as Gemma and Cathleen, her mother and grandmother offering to Katie:

> Gemma: "Loads! (Laughs) loads- I would baby sit for her kid when she was working….I will help her as much as I can help her"
>
> Cathleen: "And so would I- she knows that"

The importance of the data here is how it includes intersections of 'family practices', 'practices of intimacy' and navigation of care responsibilities in order to redefine family from nuclear to 'new nuclear', giving those who are involved within it an association with strength, resilience and determination, which may help to distance such families who have a young mother within it from a narrative which is less than complimentary. Notions of reframed intimacy (Jamieson 1998 p. 8) were also seen to overlap familial

practices when discussing friendships. When asked, 'how did your friends react to your news of pregnancy?' they responded with:

> Katie: "Er, who was I friends with? Erm, I don't know- I didn't really, have many friends back then"
>
> Gemma: "You had fair-weather friends, you know?"
>
> Katie: "Yah- I didn't really…but erm, oh, but my other two friends they were pregnant at the same time, - no! so my step mum, she was pregnant at the same time, and my best friend now she was pregnant at the same time, so we were all happy, cos we were all pregnant at the same time, it was sort of like, excited, but- yeah, that's it really"
>
> India: "My best mate Sally"
>
> India: "Because I didn't know what I wanted to do, and she just made me feel comfortable, and then I think I told you [talking to her mother] no when I decided that I was gonna, then I told family; she (her best friend) was a bit like, oh I can't really remember- she was like happy, but at the same time, because I was the one running her businesses, she's the owner of the chip shop, the café and all that, she was like, a bit- oh! What am I gonna do?"
>
> Queenie: "Yeah fine pleased for us; erm, I was mainly friends with my partner's friends I'd lost touch with school friends so I didn't have strong friendships at that time really"
>
> Alex: "Em, I didn't really have any friend friends- just people that I knew; well they all saw it as, I think there was quite a few people that have kids young now? So I think it's like, a thing?"

When considering the methodology, namely my own positionality and autobiography I considered my own friendships, reflecting that at the time of pregnancy and during early motherhood were a strong support network. I felt friends were who I could rely on for advice that I would not ask of my mother, indicating family boundaries for support were present, and, when compared with extended relations of friends, there were not. I anticipated that this would be a similar outcome for the women I spoke to- however it was not the case, and was one of, if not the only, difference between our experiences.

Research conducted by Moore and Rosenthal (1993, 1994) suggesting shifts from familial influence to peer influence may occur (Moore and Rosenthal 1993, 1994) in early adulthood, and, without friendship support and reluctance to adhere to family structures can leave the young mother at risk of social exclusion, which Ellis-Sloan and Tamplin (2019) argue friendships have a potential role to alleviate this. It is not

suggested that friendships may take the place of familial relationships but rather compliment them (Willmott 1987). In the narratives, some of the women felt they either had a "best friend" (India) or "didn't have strong friendships at that time" (Queenie). For Katie, there is some confusion as to whether she considered herself to 'have' friends, as when first being asked she "didn't really have many friends back then'" and her mother Gemma stating "you had fair-weather friends". She then went on to say she did have "two friends-they were pregnant at the same time".

This could indicate the blurred line between what is perceived as family or friend, with friendships being seen as networks of potential support as a dimension of intimacy between women (Jamieson 1998, p. 8) which contributes to rethinking nuclear family practices. The fieldwork also could indicate that friends and family can become a mixed up category, where friendships contribute to 'families of choice' (Pahl and Spencer 2010) being recast where those who 'behave like family, or are treated like family, should be defined as family (Pahl and Spencer 2010). It also further contributes to the contrasts of 'being' family and 'doing' family, wherein there is a fusion of family relationships and relationships of friendship (Spencer and Pahl, 2006), which exist in personal communities, where we reside alongside a 'collection' of personal ties we deem as important (Spencer and Pahl 2006). Considering the importance of non-familial ties (Weeks et al 2001) can enhance emotional support (Oakley, 1992 p. 29) if family relationships were to break down.

Alice's and Queenie's ideas about support within their family were thought of as Alice providing Queenie with "lots of advice I'd say", with Alice feeling, she was "There for her" when Queenie had her baby, which was a similar response from Alex and her mother who reflected:

> Jo: "I'm always there for her, you know- it might not seem like that but I'm always there for her- for advice or anything, erm, I don't know really"
>
> Alex: "Well you're just there aren't you"
>
> Jo: [Laughs]" yeah I'm just a fixture"

The comments from the remanding families state that young motherhood "hasn't really" (From Alex and Queenie) impacted their familial structure dramatically. The data suggests that intimate practices of sharing, caring and being 'always there' are evident for both families who do not feel the impact of young motherhood has brought about significant change, and for those who feel it has.

Strategies of grandmothers:

'oh it was mum'

The support that has been provided by grandmothers in this study has shown to impact the young mother and her child in mostly positive forms, offering physical and emotional support that also extended to living arrangements, with three of the women residing with their mothers at the time of birth. However, further reflection from the fieldwork is that of difficulties that were felt by the families when considering day-to-day activities of support, but were needed from the young women and their children.

From the perspective of the young mother, they felt they were able to rely on their mothers for respite, and in times of concern, with Queenie and Katie offering:

> Queenie: "Oh it was mum- a couple of times she had a high temperature… I phoned mum straight away and she was there within 10 minutes over the hospital with me"
>
> Katie: "I suppose that even when you've had enough and she's (Alice) like driving me up the wall, mum would take her for a couple of hours- anything else I just had to deal with and just get on with"

The perceptions shown indicate the importance of their mothers' presence in relation to support which are also considered in other young motherhood studies (Dellman-Jenkins et al. 1993). The findings highlight the integral interdependent (Hammer 1998, Minuchin 1985) role families play in pregnancy and beyond by providing support to help with reducing stress, which has a positive impact on parenting behaviour (Nitz et al. 1995).

However, as much as some grandmothers enjoyed being grandmothers, it was found they felt providing support times difficult due to work constraints. India and Alexs' mothers offered:

> Sylvia: "I love it….I work as well you know so it gets stressful sometimes I have to stop what I'm doing to have him"
>
> Jo: "…. Then again its more kind of me down to me working, I haven't got as much time as probably I'd like…."

Katie's mother suggested similar difficulty in juggling support and work with home life when Katie first had her baby:

> Gemma: "… And it was hard, yeah cos obviously I worked I've got my own house my own kids… so yeah I found it hard… but we got through it and we done it and here we are at the other end"

Although grandparents have suggested providing support can be hard to juggle alongside personal life and responsibilities, they are still considered by the young mothers as a key support network in emergencies and play a significant role in their lives (Brooks-Gunn and Chase-Lansdale, 1991; Furstenburg and Crawford 1978) - this shows not only the young mothers need for support, but the grandmothers willingness to oblige, however difficult it may be. This could be accessed through a framework of 'caringscapes' (McKie et al. 2002) achieved in a context of maternal thinking and rationality of care (Waerness 1996), by involving themselves in:

> 'Processes of mapping out caring routes in order to combine care and paid work' (McKie et al. 2002).

The comments in the data illustrate the life courses of these families, highlighting dependences are taken into account and 'mapped out' in order to strive for continued care, with work and care-giving brought together as a unified concept (Thomas 1993).

Career strategies of young mothers:
'I weren't one of those typical mums'

Consideration of their own situations with work was also discussed with the young mothers. Narratives of work commitments pre and post pregnancy found that all the young women were either in vocational work or in college at the time of falling pregnant, and, on having their child, returned to work when their child was under the age of one. Not unlike their mothers' comments, three of the group acknowledged balancing work commitments and care responsibilities came with some difficulties. Alex, Queenie, and Katie's mum Gemma suggested they felt they were able to return to work after maternity with support given to themselves, mother and or partner or their workplace:

> Alex: "Nothing majorly I don't think- I'm still a chef now which I wanted to do, it's like the little things like the shopping ,bogged down with all the kids but nothing major- my partner works during the day, and I work in the evening? So I drop them off and pick them up"
>
> Queenie: "Well when I fell pregnant I was working as a teaching assistant and I knew I wanted that to continue on and I knew that I wanted to go straight back to work. I didn't want to leave work and be a stay at home mum mainly because I knew in years to come when my daughter started school I would need a job….. the school were very good and let me go part time so that helped with money so I didn't have to put my daughter into childcare all the time and mum helped out with childcare as well so although it was difficult, it was manageable"

Gemma answered the question of goals and support on behalf of her daughter Katie, reflecting:

> Gemma: "she went and got herself a job, which was good, she needed a job, and I had her quite a lot when she was smaller, but now as she's got older I have her a lot….but it's more sort of when I want her or when she wants it rather than I had to have her cos she (Katie) was working- but, at the same time it got us close you know"

Research indicates that young mothers are portrayed largely negatively in image (Arai 2009), with public perception surrounding women who embark on pregnancy early in life contributing to poor socioeconomic outcomes (SmithBattle 2000), who have an agenda by becoming pregnant to claim welfare benefits and be granted easier access to social housing (Arai 2009). Led by the data, the narratives indicate this not to be the case for these women. Hoffman (1998 p. 236) suggests a vision of young motherhood to be respected as:

> 'Teenage mothers are individuals, so they naturally vary in their circumstances, their behaviour and their well-being….. And some of them end up doing rather well… Consequently, there can be no 'one size fits all' conclusion here'. Hoffman (1998 p. 236).

From the fieldwork, mothers as individuals show the women have 'end(ed) up doing rather well', and coincide with the idea there is no one way of structuring the life of a mother (Hoffman 1998 p. 236). The narratives show 'success' at returning to work after having their child, and is largely achievable, based on intergenerational, partner and flexible workplace attitudes, which supports the idea that young mothers are

constructed by individual experiences and are influenced by the society in which is lived (Watts et al. 2015).

The young women have returned to work on their own terms as opposed to seeking 'intensive support for parents and child' to return to education and vocational work, such as was part of the agenda for the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy (Social Exclusion Unit 1999), with the fieldwork finding the young women were engaged in education or vocational work at the time of falling pregnant, which works against the comment that experiencing educational problems is 'a risk factor for early pregnancy' (Social Exclusion Unit 1999). Furthermore, the recommendation to support young mothers return to vocational roles and education in order to avoid long term social exclusion through the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy (Social Exclusion Unit 1999) has been found to crucially omit structural and contextual barriers to inclusion (Kidger 2004), which discounts the social and moral circumstances of the everyday lives of families. The uncovering of such circumstances has been key to this study, and has been documented in the narratives. For the families in this study, they have constructed their own networks, which are worked at in order to overcome difficulties in order to continue in the workplace as they were before pregnancy, working towards reducing negative stigmatisation associated with the young mother and her family.

Further thought in the fieldwork was given by the families to how they overcame difficulties in daily parenting. When asked 'how do you overcome any challenges?', the young women did not go into detail on the daily aesthetics- however, what was evident was they all felt that whatever arose, they just 'got on with it' as 'most mums do' dealing with motherhood complications as and when, and as each situation dictated.

As Cathleen vocalised in support of Katie and in the absence of family in everyday issues," you just dealt with it". The immediate responsibility of the mother herself came to the fore in the narratives, with India and Alex feeling:

> India: "Erm, well I just do it for him, like you just have to get on with it- it's hard because sometimes you haven't always got childcare." "I'd just have to drop everything and just deal with it- you aint really got a choice have you."
>
> Alex: "Erm, I just kind of get on with it really [laughs]…..just do what you have to do"

It could be perceived that the young mothers almost identical ways of thinking are based on motherhood coming with responsibilities that involve caring about and caring

for others, with theoretical and empirical analysis suggesting care and gender are intertwined (Brannen et al. 2000 p. 3; Holdsworth 2007). As already seen, the statements from the families do not give much insight into *how* they 'do' everyday care in the same way grandmothers have reflected- however they do not seem to have been said with a sense of burden, yet nor do they leave us with a sense of content with their circumstances, as the data lacks comment on personal feelings (Haugen 2007). Yet still, the data gives us an idea of the practices of care the women undertake which is derived from their attitude towards what they constitute as caring, and could be considered as care being a 'form of labour and love' (Bhopal et al. 2000 p. 2; Finch and Groves 1983; Land and Rose 1985; Ungerson 1990; Graham 1991). The comments from the women may appear matter of fact, yet when care is looked at as a concept, it includes notions of relationships and connectedness which are used to create a sense of well-being for those they apply care to in practice, which include using a wide range of skill, acts and sentiments (Morgan 1996) - therefore, the act of care for these women is done in a context of labour, but done out of love with the best interests for their children at their core.

Young motherhood is often associated with an assumption of generalisation of consequences for families, with a lack of attention to social contextual factors (Merrill and West 2009, p.10, East 1999). These findings attempt to alleviate assumptions, with the narratives reflecting adaptation to young motherhood (Luthar and Cicchetti 2000, p.858) and organisation of daily practices of care, which contradicts statistic led research associated with adjustment difficulties, and instead show how mothers turn problems into achievements (Luthar and Cicchetti 2000, p. 258). Considering care as an interpretation helps to contribute to theories of care and caring which Thomas (1993 p. 663) claims by concept are unclear epistemologically, especially as it is presented in the data as a relationship (Ruddick 1998) between young mother and grandmother, and thought of as shared responsibility.

Young mothers perceptions of paternal support

Ideas of shared responsibility were extended in the narratives in relation to fathers. The question 'could you tell me a bit about your child's father' was posed in the fieldwork, with an understanding of emotional connotation that could be linked to responses, which is relevant to the methodological and reflexive approaches of acknowledging and including empirical data where emotion played a part (Aldridge 1993p. 64; Blackman, 2007) which is often hidden, and also further enriches the biography of the women by positioning them in the locality (Abu- Lughod 2000 p. 264) of the thesis.
When discussing paternal support, the focus group narratives found two of the women feeling support was offered from their children's fathers, and with two women feeling they did not.

Alex discussed support offered from her partner in an emotional way post pregnancy:

> Alex: "Yeah really good- he's always supported us, especially me as I had postnatal depression?.....he's always there, and he works full time so that we've got somewhere to live, erm- so, yeah"

Experiencing first time fatherhood, being in full time work along with expectations of immersed involvement with childcare practices to alleviate mental health for his partner, could have had an impact on the father's own wellbeing (Kowlessar et al. 2014). NHS (2016) guidelines do advocate importance of partner support post-partum, but with little understanding on how men should be supported (Ruffell 2019). From the data, Alex and her partner constructed their own methods of support to handle postnatal depression, which would suggest that policy guidance and mechanisms are not definitive advisory for such couples- instead, Alex and her partner weaved support into their families' daily lives alongside work responsibilities in their own way.

Katie, her family and India speak of experiences with fathers which led to them not being involved in their children's lives. They both refer to responses of pregnancies from their partners as initially positive, with reassurance that they would be supported, and, in Katie's case, from the father's family as well, which then changed.

Katie, her mother and India reflected on this as:

> Gemma: "… she had a lot of pressure from his family, a lot of pressure from him and his mum, we'll help you look after the baby don't worry about that blah, well they're nowhere to be seen"
>
> Katie: " …..they were saying basically that if you get rid of it then were not talking to you and stuff like that they were very, offensive"
>
> Gemma: "…. said they'd support you and that they'd help you and look after her and then they didn't, they're nowhere…not only was she duped by that she was duped by the whole family because they were all going we'll help you we'll support you and this and there was never an ounce support it was all coming from us d'you know? There was never anything there from his side"
>
> India: "….he was ok before I fell pregnant I mean it was a bit of a struggle, and then when I fell pregnant I felt that he completely changed….I just think I hold a grudge against him because he made me keep my son and then, he just completely changed as soon as I was on my way with it"

The data indicates decisions to go ahead with pregnancy was done so in a context of ambivalence, suggesting insistence of a pregnancy which India describes as unintended (Grace et al. 2016) and with Katie feeling '"pressure" to continue with her pregnancy from both the father, and from his wider family (Grace et al. 2016). The most crucial impact this has had on the women is a gap in support, leading motherhood to be felt of as a "sad", "broken" time in life, with their early associations of motherhood of being "left to deal with it" and "duped".

Why the change in father participation occurred was not offered, and, having not spoken with the fathers themselves gives a one sided narrative, which this thesis acknowledges. However, ideas of rejecting fatherhood as described by the women are a point of relevance to this research as it has led to not only a pregnancy, but has impacted the support available to the young woman, which may have led to early motherhood turning out differently to their initial expectations.

These perceptions reflect the wealth of research where questions have been asked of lone mothers about the fathers of their children (Bradshaw and Millar 1991; Ford et al. 1998; Ford et al. 1995; McKay and Marsh 1994; Marsh and McKay 1993), which give insights of the women's experiences and reflections, of which this fieldwork intends to contribute to. They also reflect on the expanding literature on fathering and fatherhood (see Burghes et al. 1997; Popay et al. 1998), identity and transitions to parenthood (Hofner et al. 2011), refusing fatherhood (Ives 2007, Lawton 2016), masculinity and fatherhood (Dowd 2012) and 'new' fatherhood (Powell 2006, Harris, 1995, Ives 2007).

However, there is no scope within this thesis to deal with this large area of work, but it does recognise more research is needed in these areas.

Conclusions

It has been found from the fieldwork that overall, a young pregnancy has perceived family relationships to become stronger, with family members stating they have come closer together due to the child being born in a context of relatedness. Some of the women hold their child accountable as a life changing, whilst others feel their family dynamic has not been disrupted- however all families have not been impacted by young motherhood in a negative sense, seeing it as a welcome addition to their family structures.

Family forms were found to be made by the everyday commitment to family practices by the women, with the extent of impact of young motherhood was found to be positive in the case of all women, with narratives suggesting the way in which they construct their daily practices could constitute as a re-consideration of family, from a traditional structure to a 'new nuclear' family. This is evident from the way in which women discuss family practices, intergenerational intimacies and care responsibilities, whereby each family unit has constructed their own 'norms', or, 'families of choice' (Pahl and Spencer 2010) which extend to friendships. They perceive fluidity of family practices crucial when applied in context of support given to the young mother, and her child.

The family narratives show high levels of support provided to the young mother and her child, shown in the extent of involvement the maternal grandmothers have in their grandchildren's lives. When difficulty has arisen with support due to maternal grandmothers' work and family life constraints, it is handled through careful mapping of care and work in order to strive to provide the best support they can. In respect of career strategies of young mothers themselves, the young mothers felt they were able to overcome balancing work and care responsibilities due to support from their mothers and partners, and in one case, from flexibility from an employer. It was shown the young mother herself provides support to her child by considering child rearing as a labour of love, undertaken practically, but with the child's best interest and well-being central to her intentions.

Discussions in relation to paternal support found that mothers and fathers created their own networks of support in a context of emotional care when experiencing post-natal depression whilst the father maintained paid work, with the finding contributing to literature which suggests although there is some support available for fathers, there is still a gap on how effective this is. Two of the women felt support was initially suggested by their children's fathers, but state this did not materialize after their children were born. This led to a reassessment of young motherhood as the women felt paternal support and being in a relationship makes young motherhood experiences difficult to manage 'alone'- however, requirements of support were fulfilled by maternal family.

Chapter 4: Motherhood ideals

Introduction:

The first section of this chapter will focus on the families' awareness of media representations of young motherhood, and their reflections, and will consider how the women feel they are represented, and what constitutes as a 'good' mum for them. It will then go on to look at their own experiences of young motherhood stigmatisation, and how they have managed situations in order to uncover the complexities of intergenerational support when placed in a broader social context. What they might say to those in their community on the experience of young motherhood will be investigated, with a focus for discussion on where young women are positioned in relation to their economic status, and to what extent their awareness of how they are perceived in their society impacts their attitudes to mothering. What families would advise a young woman contemplating young motherhood will be discussed, with attention to drawbacks of motherhood, and the way in which support can be given amongst family members. Finally, perceptions of 'ideal' fatherhood and how practices in theory and reality differ will be discussed, and how this can impact motherhood experiences in relation to support.

Recognition of media perceptions:
'it's personal how you cope with a baby'

When considering how young mothers are perceived in the wider context of the media, Katie and Alex's mother Jo felt that young motherhood is shown as "shocking" and focusses on how age is considered a factor. They suggest that regardless of age, being a good mother is a personal experience, with motherhood suggested as being categorised as women being 'first time mums' rather than using young and old to describe mothering:

> Katie: "I think it's, I do think it's still quite frowned upon…people do just look at it like Oh my God- but if you're a good mum you're a good mum"

> Jo: "…. it's more of the norm now, in the media, I think they put the young mums down a little bit as though they can't cope because they're so young, and actually? They can? You know- obviously there's ones that need that extra support but even the older mums…It's not really an age thing, it's just personal how you cope with a baby"

Media representation of marginalised groups has been identified as two intersected zones (Blackman and Rogers 2017 p. 81)- where young adults are seen as scroungers; or, young people presented in newspaper representations in a context of 'advanced marginality' (Wacqant 2008, quoted in Blackman and Rogers 2017 p. 81). This delivers young adults with little sympathy (Paterson et al. 2015), often encouraging consumers to categorise youth culture as emphatic, or seen with 'disgust and loathing' (Blackman and Rogers 2017). From the fieldwork, the women acknowledge the latter as how young motherhood can be depicted by the media and then received by the public. Media depictions can be seen to promote young mothers as a social problem (Social Exclusion Unit 1999; McDermott and Graham 2005; Macvarish 2010), which can create a commentary indicating socioeconomic differences in women determine their abilities in practices of childrearing (Clarke et al. 2004; Byrne 2006; Tyler 2008), which concludes the young mother to be referred to as a 'distinct population', where she is solely accountable for the problematisation of impacts upon society (where fertility and birth are concerned) (Teitler 2002).

Examples of using comparatives between younger and older mothers show a clear distinction of normative advertisements for motherhood, with the young mother central to media outcomes which herald her as a poster person for promoting popular stereotypes which fuel a culture of voyeurism (Collin 2009, cited in Blackman and Rogers 2017). Young women can also be shown as hypersexual, embodying a 'style of feminine excess, denoting an overly abundant sexuality' (Skeggs 1997, 2004), encompassed in the term 'pramface' (Nayak and Kehily 2014). The older mother, then, in contraposition, embodies motherhood as described by Kehily (2017 p. 108 in Blackman and Rogers 2017):

> 'In the representational sphere of pregnancy magazines and women's magazines more generally, pregnancy is promoted as a big beautiful adventure. In popular culture, the maternal subject is encoded as a woman with a choice in her life; aged between 25 and 35, heterosexual, in employment and in a relationship'. Kehily, cited in Blackman and Rogers (2017 p. 107).

The comment from the data suggests that motherhood is a personal experience which works against such normalisations, suggesting motherhood should be thought of as a whole, rather than separated by social ideals of division. Jo states motherhood is "not really an age thing", with her perspective contributing an attempt to close the gap between what Lewis (1992) describes as 'the teenage unmarried mother, unable to escape from dependence on state benefit and the professional woman in her thirties, married to another professional, having her first child and able to pay for a nanny' (Lewis 1992 p. 10). It is interesting to note, with Lewis' comment on categorisations of motherhood in mind, the older mother does not always come away unscathed in the public sphere. Brown (2016), in her book *Teenage Pregnancy, Parenting and Intergenerational Relations* indicates as well as Lewis (1992) that 'professional women' are associated with having a career will lead to 'having regrets at lost opportunities to become a mother' (Brown 2016 p. 3). This indicates that the vision of motherhood for the popular press is problematic for all mothers, as Brown suggests:

> '…….young and poorly educated women are having too many babies while clever women are not having enough, if they are having any at all'. (Brown 2016 p. 3).

The comment from the fieldwork foregrounds the personally unique experience of the mothers and their families. This outlook is useful to inform generalised views about mothers, in the way their ideas work against the categories for motherhood as Brown (2016 p. 3) reflects on, which points to the need to resist and complicate generalisations about the phenomenon of young motherhood to understand the specific experience of individuals in their context.

This fieldwork contributes to promoting age as less relevant to achieving 'good' motherhood by exploring the reflections of the young mother and her family, and supporting motherhood as 'recasted' (Kehily 2017 p. 105 in Blackman and Rogers 2017) as quasi- universal, which can contribute to reducing the negative connotations the young mum is associated with, helping to re-establish motherhood as a 'potential site of solidarity between women' (Kehily 2017 p. 106 in Blackman and Rogers 2017) and give mothers in their general form social recognition as a positive force.

From the fieldwork, Queenie's voice on young motherhood in the media suggests she is seen as a "bad" thing, linking an association with alienation from education and lack of opportunities that are deemed to occur from having a child young:

> "….I think it's just portrayed that falling pregnant young is a bad thing, your life's over you're never going to do anything, you can't go to uni, you can't do this, you can't do that cos you're now a mum and nothing else"

Age as a factor that commits young motherhood to 'bad' choices is apparent in Queenie's comments, with gender narratives supposing that 'girls should refrain from engaging in sexual behaviour' (Brubaker and Wright 2006 p. 1220) as a possible suggestion to decrease rates of young motherhood. When considering the identity of the young mother, conflict between media structures questioning 'suitabilities' of parenting (Hanna 2001 p. 457) and the woman's individual choices may have detrimental impact on how the young mother views herself, especially if media is thought of playing an integral role on shaping identities (Shea et al. 2016). It is here such constructions of identity as explained by Hallman (2007) Haynes (2006) McMahon (1995) and Stryker and Burke (2000) are thought to rely on internal narratives to offer a different interpretation of media constructs in order to 'resist dominant hegemonic discourses' if she wishes to be considered more than "a mum and nothing else". Queenie's outlook on education and lack of engagement coincides with globally comparative studies (Mkhwanzi 2006 p. 97) into representations of teenage pregnancy, whereby young mothers are associated with long-term negative outcomes (Duncan 2007; Gillies 2008; Macvarish 2010; Shea et al. 2016) with such factors as disrupted education highlighted as a concern. The fieldwork shows a theme of strength amidst media commentary, which contests negative consequences for young mothers placing them in a framework of 'hardship and reward' (Rolfe 2008 p. 299) in relation to self- identity constructs, rather than allowing held views to encourage their societal decline.

India offered her thoughts on the way in which young mothers use social media, suggesting young mothers 'do not help the situation' with displays of materialism discussed as follows:

> "….I feel like a lot of young mums put their babies on social media as sort of like a show pony?....And dress them up. I know they want to show the world their kid, but I feel like maybe that's frowned upon cos of the way they act on social media"

India's comment gives an acute awareness of how young motherhood is viewed by others. By reflecting on the behaviours of young mothers in relation to how they portray motherhood on social media platforms could fuel notions that young mothers do not abide by normative motherhood expectations. Tyler (2008, 2010) discusses the correlation of chav culture being strongly associated with 'excessive and conspicuous consumption' (Kehily 2017 in Blackman and Rogers 2017), which could be interpreted here with young women 'dressing up' their children and then translated as aberrant. This further fuels the divide between women, classifying motherhood by age, with those in mature motherhood doing so with style, yet, young mothers are translated as tacky and excessive, rather than their change in consumer practices being seen as an attempt to establish themselves as a 'good' mother (Ponsford 2011 p. 545). Advertising depictions of parenting which show middle class norms as a true representation of good parenting constructs can influence economically disadvantaged young women to attempt to adopt such norms. As she does not have the resources to facilitate this type of lifestyle for herself and her child (Feasey 2017), it may lead the young mother to abandoning her belief in her identity as a good mum- a persona she has worked hard to justify in the face of stigmatisation for herself**.**

Young mothers in their locality:
'you don't know what you are talking about; you're only a first-time mother'

The women were then asked how they felt they were received locally. Three of the young women felt young motherhood was perceived negatively, recalling interactions they had with healthcare professionals, which are shown when Katie, her family and India reflected on personal experiences:

> Katie: "….When I was having Alice, it was very frowned upon wasn't it…..even when going into labour they were just looking at me like oh, she's acting up like when I was giving birth"
>
> Gemma: "You don't know what you're talking about, you're only a first time mother-well I'm not, and I've had three kids and I know what I'm talking about, and she's in labour- their attitude was pretty shit with her, it was all like, roll your eyes…..you go back to like war time and that's when women had kids- they never went to Uni or went to college- they come out of school, they went and got married and they had kids and stayed at home….."

> India: "I don't think they respect them, I think they probably frown upon….when I used to take him to the doctors I used to make my mum come with me cos I used to think they'd look at me like I didn't know what I was talking about…"

The fieldwork adds a further dimension of support for the young mothers by their parent, in the face of stigmatisation they feel they have experienced from professionals in their locality such as in the work of Devine et al. (2000) and Speak et al. (1995). Goffman (1963) reflects upon cleansing spoiled identities 'in an attempt to make hygienic what is publicly regarded as toxic', recommending that future studies contribute to highlighting struggles for representation in order to reduce polarisation in social divisions, of which has been shown in the above comments.

The families recount their interactions with healthcare professionals as being left with a feeling of judgement, which could have been endorsed by normalised views of what a mother should be as constructed by society- white, middle-class, have extended their education, belong to a two income household and have a career (Unicef 2001: 5-6 in Wilson and Huntington 2005). The verbal support that Katie received from her parent does not seem to be an attempt to integrate her daughter in modern structures of motherhood, but instead positions Katie in a historical identity of young motherhood when rejecting responses to stigma. Traditional types of motherhood coincide with the text 'Round About a Pound a Week' by Maude Pember Reeves in her account of families, whereby a woman's role was to raise healthy children with a child-centred mothering approach, with their role being committed to being a mother (Pember-Reeves 1913). However, the young mother in contemporary culture with the same aspirations of wanting to focus on being and becoming a mother would leave her vulnerable to stigmatisations, categorised as what is considered a 'bad' mother. These judgements could have been what the families felt at the time of childbirth, and came from intersections of the mothers economic, relationship and workplace positions- in short, making the assumption that women's identity does not conform to 'regulatory regimes' (Butler 1990, p. 8), which, through the assertions of Katie's mother, have been resisted.

This argument contributes to the notion that intergenerationality is not just a term associated with cycles of young motherhood production- it also is coined in relation to describe the family as an interdependent social unit (Hammer 1998, Minuchin 1885, 1974), with the new grandmother often playing a significant role in supporting their child (Brooks-Gunn and Chase-Lansdale 1991; Furstenberg and Crawford 1978). It also highlights the importance of the uniqueness of the modern family as an

intergenerational support network for children and adolescents, which is often underplayed (when defining 'good' parenting constructs (James et al. 1998, Murray and Barnes 2010, Chase and Rogers 2001) and practices. More specifically, we are witnessing support for daughters coming from grandmothers by reacting to parenting 'overwhelmingly determined by middle-class norms and choices' (Brown 2016 p. 4) with grandmothers taking on support for their daughters themselves, rather than relying on 'technical and individualised solution to the problem of poor parenting' (Brown 2016 p. 4) such as parenting lessons offered by Children's Minister Sarah Teather (2011 in Brown 2016 p.4; Brown 2015). However, inasmuch the grandmothers are being shown in the fieldwork as advocating support for their daughters, their assertions can leave the young mother and her family still at risk of being subjected to individualised, corrective measures, of which if they are not seen to take up, leave them to be blamed for poor parenting.

In the fieldwork, Queenie offered her thoughts on how her local area view young women:

> Queenie: "I think the assumption is that they get pregnant, they go straight to the benefit system, they get a flat given to them and they either never get into work or certainly never into work until the kid gets into school"

As Queenie suggests, the young mother's choice to embark upon motherhood describes her as 'architects of their own fate and undeserving of support' (Ellis-Sloan 2014), and have made their decision based upon 'bad' parenting advice surrounding discipline, discussions around sex and have had a baby to gain access to public housing and welfare which has generated feelings of blame and resentment towards families that have 'produced' a young mother (Furedi 2008). With the fieldwork as reference, it could be perceived that the young mother is making her own claim on motherhood by having an active involvement on child rearing, and in turn is making her own contribution to society (Kirkman et al. 2001). This shows resisting aforementioned norms surrounding motherhood by making own decisions on the basis of a right to become a mother (Ellis-Sloan 2014).

The research acknowledges that Queenie's ideas on how her locality perceive young mothers do not reflect her lived life experience, but instead how 'they' (young mothers as a whole) may be received in her local area. However, Queenie's awareness of how marginalised groups can be perceived connects media depictions with local representations of young motherhood, showing she is subject to a particular criteria nationwide and in her specific

socio-dynamic, indicating outcomes of young motherhood such as social exclusion and welfare dependency are the inevitable.

Informing communities on young motherhood:
'It doesn't mean your life's over'

During data collection, the women were asked if they had the opportunity to discuss young motherhood with their local communities, what they would like to inform them based on their lived life experiences. Overall, the young women resonated that young motherhood is achievable and should not be seen as a stopping point for life goals. Queenie feels the situation she has lived through and in has taught her:

> Queenie: "That it's not the end- it doesn't mean that your life's over and you're now a mum and nothing else it might mean that for the short term because baby needs to come first but you can go on- you can do Uni you can do a career you can travel- you can do all of that and be a mum as well it doesn't mean it's over"

The idea that motherhood is an institution and not 'just' a natural condition is brought to the fore in the fieldwork, in the sense that idealized family is a cultural construct and not only a naturally occurring unit (Edholm 1982; cited in Silva 1996 p. 38). Historical concepts of motherhood central to feminist ideas of oppression in relation to responsibility of care, costs and leaving the workplace are not reflected in Queenie's outlook- instead, she suggests that motherhood can be seen as a way to tap into their strengths and uniqueness (Silva 1996 p. 38) in order to form a more contemporary approach to motherhood, giving a critical revision of how the social conditions of young mothers are able to be improved, but on their own terms (Silva 1996 p. 38).

Balancing by choice ecofeminism whereby 'child comes first' with assertion of feminine identity (Plumwood 1993 p. 436-458, Plumwood 1993, p.8) allows the young mother to re-identify herself, with motherhood having a transformative effect on her life thought of as inspiring to others (Minaker 2019). This finding aims to contribute to informing and adapting normative constructs (See Mollborn and Sennott 2015 p. 1283-85 for age norms discussion) that indicate mothers are inadequate, or 'bad', with the fieldwork potentially giving way to a more 'compassionate view of mothering' (Aparicio et al. 2018).

Alex supported motherhood as an empowering action, but with support facilitating her journey:

> Alex: "Erm, probably that young mums can raise a child as anyone else can- as long as they've got the right support, they can do it as well"

Alex suggests support as being integral to the development and progress of a young mum, with her advice encouraging individuals deserving of the 'good' mum accolade because they have sought advice from female relatives, as well as being open to receive practical and emotional support to become the best mother they can be. It also indicates how mothers can 'carve out a space for themselves' (Lawler 2000 p. 169), by imparting her confidence that young mothers have the power to raise a child as well as anyone else.

Advice to young women:
'what have you got in place?'

The fieldwork looked at what advice the group might give to a young woman considering young motherhood. This is summarised as the experience can affect your life in a range of ways, can be considered life changing and support is accountable for facilitating parenthood. Queenie focussed on practical advice to consider before having a child:

> Queenie: "….what have you got in place? So are you financially ready, is your mental health in a good place where you can support yourself as well as a baby, I'd just ask them to maybe evaluate their life and just say is this a good environment to bring a baby into…."

Weighing up life circumstances and reconfiguring environments are key considerations for Queenie before becoming a mother. As discussed in the introduction, all of the mothers in this study did not plan their pregnancies, which could involve them and their experiences being depicted as 'natural, deserved consequences of careless behaviour' (Bay-Cheng 2015 p. 285). The advice Queenie has given may have come from her own thoughts when she fell pregnant, and translates in her advice that reproductive choice is down to the individual (Mann et al. 2015) which should be a woman's main

consideration, not societal suggestions to prevent young motherhood (Mann et al. 2015). Then, instead of taking control of sexuality (Bay-Cheng 2015 p. 285) and waiting to have a child at a more socially 'acceptable' time or within a construct of age norms in life course (Neugarten et al. 1965; Furstenberg et al. 2004), the idea of motherhood is thought of in the fieldwork as possible and achievable, but relies on practical considerations before taking the next step, with preventing pregnancy not an advisory point here.

Alex also does not advise against young motherhood, but commits herself to sharing her experiences to advise and support, as opposed to prevent:

> Alex: " I'd probably just tell her how it kind of affected my life, like things to consider and then probably just say I'd just be there if she does choose to have a baby"

Alex and her mother go on to explain:

> Jo: "So erm, Alex's 18 year old sister is now pregnant"
>
> Jo: "so that's exactly what she's done to her you know, told her the pros and cons that she could do it, you know her sister can do it erm, she's got the support there, yeah"

The sense of achievement at motherhood as a role is evident here for Alex and is echoed by her mum in the fieldwork, citing motherhood can be 'done' and it can also be 'done' again. This perspective indicated advice and support being imparted from sibling to sibling rather than an intergenerational transmission of parental values in regards to young motherhood. This suggests young mothers can draw support from siblings (Logsdon et al. 2005) in a context of 'relatedness' (Carsten 1995, 2007) to establish positive parenting experiences (Putnam 1995) through interactions based on lived life experiences. Whitehead et al. (2009) and Wall-Wieler et al. (2019) found in their studies that an older sister's choice to have a baby in adolescence had a stronger influence than that of their mothers adolescent childbearing. This suggests familial influence extends further than maternal, with sibling influence and advice on her own experiences contributing to a younger female member's attitudes towards living standards and opportunities. The strength of this data has intergenerational and agency support at its core, however it has little focus on findings in relation to intergenerational transmissions between parents and children (Muncie et al. 1997; Dallas 2004)- however,

in a context of support, intergenerational transmission between siblings has been discussed to strengthen the argument for individual reasons for pregnancy and how support is distributed within family structures.

India addressed the everyday practices of parenting, which she considers as all encompassing:

> India: "Not to….because, without making it sound like I regret anything, it makes you stop what you want to do- it changes your whole life you've got a responsibility constantly….there's so much to think about just to leave the house, like I don't think people realise how much it completely changes your life with everything"

India acknowledges the potential drawbacks she found with young motherhood in the data, which, in contrast to the affirming advice she would give to the locality in general, are more personal, detailing feelings of struggle. Choi et al. (2005) reflect these thoughts, making observation that new mothers felt confined to home like they had not been before, adding to the myth of mothers automatically falling into a new role of selfless care for their babies (Woolett and Marshall 2001). Phoenix et al. (1991) suggests 'ideal' motherhood contrasts greatly to the lived reality, such is honestly expressed here by India, if it is considered negative feelings surrounding motherhood are often considered 'bad' and not without fear (Parker 1995).

Katie also speaks of being a single parent and its difficulties also, regardless of age. She felt that being part of a '"good relationship" would facilitate motherhood experiences, advising:

> Katie:" I would say, probably not do it as young as I was cos I found it really difficult especially being, like I think you need to be in a set, like with someone- even having a baby when your older like you have to be in a good relationship for a good amount of time where you know the person and you know they're not going to leave you and you're stuck with a kid, cos the worst struggle I think is being a single parent well I think it was really hard, so I would just say I think people should wait and really think about having kids young"

India also speaks of being in a "set relationship" when considering would she have made the same decision to have a child if she could go back in time:

> India: "If I, if I weren't, if I had the support from his…yeah, then it might have been a bit different but because it was such a rubbish time of my life and because it was very broken, I'd probably say no because I didn't want to go

> ahead with the decision, it was all him, and I've obviously been left to deal with it- not on my own, but on my own- and I wasn't ready"

Katie's mother mirrors India's idea of "being left to deal with" a child, opining how she felt that there are differences with approaches to parenthood life courses and attitudes between women and men, offering:

> Gemma: "And more so I think it's harder for them because 9 times out of 10 they don't end up with the man they're pregnant with, so while that man goes off and gets on with his life and he's off doing exactly what he wants to do you're then left at home with the baby young your whole life's changed theirs hasn't- you know their life hasn't changed- they can walk round like here you go I've got a kid but not having nothing to do with it, it's your life that changes so that's why it's that much harder"

The behaviours that Gemma talks of are based on her witnessing Katie's experience of relationships, as with Katie's comments on feeling that being part of a 'set' relationship potentially easing the pressures of every day parenting. The behaviours they have explained could be considered appropriate to the women based on what they have experienced in gender roles in their own relationships, with performative male behaviours (Butler 1990) central to their views. In her description of a prescribed male role, Gemma does not perpetuate this (Choi et al. 2007), but instead acknowledges in her advice the potential gap in support left unfulfilled by Katie's partner, and which Katie feels could be fulfilled by 'ideal' fatherhood.

Conclusions

The women show their understanding of negative media perceptions which young mothers are associated with. However, they insist that motherhood is a personal experience which is not defined by age and should be considered as a whole identity. It was found that by categorising motherhood as being an older or younger woman polarises the latter, portraying motherhood in two separate lights which perpetuates the younger mother to be associated with negative assumptions, and the older mother 'doing' motherhood right by societal standards. Consumer choices as interpreted as practices of excess were also found to separate younger older mothers, instead being seen as asserting their identities as a mother.

When reflecting on stigmatisation locally, the young mothers cited they were given support from their mothers in situations with professionals, indicating complexities of intergenerational relationships, with families working as an interdependent social unit to negate stigmatisation. The idea that young mothers hold awareness of judgement from care professionals could be an important advisory to women who are about to become a mother, with encouragement to consider yourself a good mum in the face of judgement.

The fieldwork reflected perceptions of local areas, and how they viewed young mothers having children as a gateway to public housing and welfare, with education and employment not a life goal. The research found that all of the young mothers did not follow this path, but instead resisted societal norms by embarking on motherhood as their own right. It was suggested in the fieldwork that instead, motherhood can be seen as a source of strength, allowing an opportunity for the young mother to develop and reimagine her self- identity in a context of achieving. It was also found that as long as a woman has the right support in place, she is able to succeed at motherhood as much as anyone else can.

When reflecting on advice to give to a potential young mother, the women acknowledged drawbacks to early motherhood, discussing feelings of isolation and restriction, indicating adapting to motherhood is not an automatic reaction, which finds 'ideal' motherhood contrasting to lived realities. Thoughts on sibling to sibling advice in a context of young motherhood found that support can be offered through 'relatedness' of motherhood experiences, with narratives indicating because motherhood has been achieved by one sister, support will be given so as a sibling could do the same.

Final advice for potential young mothers was that being in a 'set' relationship could elevate pressures of parenthood by adding a further dimension of support from both a father and his family. Differences in parental expectations in women and men were explored, finding that thoughts on performative male roles, and ideas of how fathers intend to support is different to how they might in reality, may leave a gap in support which should be considered when becoming a mother.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

The previous empirical chapters discussed intergenerational relationships and support from young mothers and their mothers, as well as investigating motherhood ideals which materialised from focus group study fieldwork. Findings were presented in relation to the original research question of if young parenthood put family in crisis, in order to highlight the impact of young motherhood on intergenerational relations in families.

The methodological approach of focus groups explored narratives of the realities of women's experiences, working with four families; three of which consisted of two generations, and one of three generations, with the youngest women of the groups having had her first child under and up to the age of 21. The value of this approach, which was led by the purpose of the research, in relation to the study was that focus groups uncovered rich data from participants, contributing to the phenomenon of young motherhood studies which may be of future use when constructing policy recommendations for marginalised groups. Involving my own biography allowed myself as a researcher to be positioned whereby I had commonality with the women, but also encouraged distance by thinking of the participants as being the experts on their standpoints when transcribing and analysing findings, which was done with the intention of addressing inequalities that these women have faced. Considering principles of feminist methodologies (as much as the findings do not speak for all women who have experienced young motherhood) has led to the thesis developing new knowledge on intergenerational relationships directly from women's perspectives, or, research conducted for and about women, highlighting that women who are positioned in a marginalised group are empowered by their experiences.

The fieldwork can then be used to reshape socially constructed perceptions based on traditionalist views, which was a key motivation of how findings were conveyed, rather than allowing the research findings to attend to gender without an agenda for change. This concluding section provides a thematic summary of my key findings. The modest contribution it makes to the phenomenon of young motherhood studies are suggested, as well as recommendations for further study.

Intergenerational relationships

The research aimed to investigate if young motherhood put family in crisis, and, through a critical review of literature, discourses of young motherhood and methodological considerations, identified key questions which have shaped the thesis findings and discussion.

In relation to intergenerational shifts in relationships in a context of young motherhood, the findings from the MA thesis suggest that, overall, relationships became closer as a result. It was suggested that some of the participants felt relationships prior to pregnancy held tensions-however, all of the women suggest there was closeness between mother and daughter pre pregnancy, which has previously been cited as a factor associated with reducing teenage pregnancy, which, in this study, was not found to be the case. This conclusion has also contributed to strengthening inconsistencies in intergenerational methodology.

Some of the families felt that the child provided a turning point which led to a renewed outlook on the young mother's life course, as well as a shift in relationships between mother and daughter for the better. This was thought to have been achieved through feelings of maternal relatedness, which contributed to restructuring what the women considered as family. Some of women felt there was no change in relationship post pregnancy, with the young mother being reassured that the families had achieved 'good' motherhood before, and it can be done again. All of the families felt young motherhood did not cause detrimental impact to family structures, and saw the child as a positive addition to their lives.

Rethinking definitions of family

The definition of what 'family' is thought to be in classical research and theory has thought to have been reframed as the 'new nuclear family' from this fieldwork's findings. This conclusion was made from the way in which the women described what as constitutes family for them by considering family practices, with 'everyday' actions they do as an important factor, especially care responsibilities which has helped to

reshape what are thought of as familial 'norms'. A reconsideration of intimacy was found to consist of caring, loving and sharing between mother and daughter in a context of parenting. Intersected with intergenerational intimacies, such as balancing work and care commitments with the care of the child being of high importance, led to family being recast in this study with thought to extended family, such as mother and grandmother, and 'families of choice', which in some cases were friendships which are thought to be an additional dimension of intimacy in relation to support, with all families working beyond a traditional nuclear family structure.

Intergenerational support

It has been found that different generations of family provide high levels of support to young mothers which is evidenced by the grandmother's high involvement with mother and child. Despite citing difficulties in balancing grandmothers' own home lives and work commitments, careful mapping of grandmothers commitments was shown to be done in order to prioritise and balance care with work and other family restraints. For the young mothers themselves, balancing work with motherhood was felt to be difficult, yet achievable due to support from their families, and in some cases their partners and workplaces. It was perceived that a key strategy of managing work and childrearing was that of a labour of love- with difficulty managed strategically with the child as a motivation to succeed.

The data reflected that the women had experienced what they thought of as stigmatisation in their local communities, specifically with healthcare professionals, with it found they were 'frowned upon' for being a young mother. This was managed by the mothers of the young women by addressing the situations head on in order to protect their daughters from what they deemed as projections of judgement based upon age, further illustrating that different generations are symbiotic in relationships, especially in a context of support. Narrative analysis of families experiences of stigma have offered an alternative dimension of intergenerational support, and adds to existing research where women have cited experiences with stigma in social support services.

Views from the mother on their portrayal locally discovered the association of mother's choice to have a baby with abusing benefit systems. The idea that the women have made the decision to have a child on the basis of the right to become a mother was given, with the women concerning themselves with doing motherhood as a form of work where the child is her main priority. This notion turns us full circle as far as intergenerational support is concerned, concluding young women carve out their own space as a mother, whilst coupling seeking out practical and emotional support from their families.

Intergenerational support was mainly discussed in relation to mothers and grandmothers. However, the women reflected on their perceptions of paternal support from their own experiences. It was found that support was given when post natal depression occurred, and, whilst juggling work and child rearing practices, the young mother and her partner found their own methods of overcoming this difficulty. Lack of knowledge from support agencies was found in the literature on how to support fathers when supporting mothers post-partum, with insight from young mothers given in this thesis on how they have felt supported by fathers.

Families' thoughts on fathers were noted in the narratives. In the absence of paternal support, the women felt making sense of motherhood would have been facilitated by receiving it from their children's fathers and his family, especially when this was initially offered, but then decided against later on. This left a gap in support some of the mothers felt would have been beneficial, but was fulfilled by maternal grandparent picking up support instead. The fathers' voice on their own experiences were not heard in this thesis, as the topic was beyond the scope of this study- however, further research on father and fatherhood was established, and is a future recommendation from this study.

Motherhood ideals

The fieldwork found the women recognised negative portrayals of young mums in the media, and reacted by insisting that a good mum is a good mum, irrespective of age, stating motherhood is a personal experience that is different for all women. By using the fieldwork for reference, the thesis explored the idea that if motherhood were to be re-cast as a shared experience and one of solidarity between women, the negative associations with young motherhood can potentially be reduced, encourage closing the

gap between societal norms and age as a marker for ideal motherhood. It was recognised that young mothers' use of social media platforms to showcase their children has formed an association with 'chav culture', further confirming that in an attempt to establish themselves as a 'good' mother and taking ownership of new identity as a mother, it is lost in translation and pits the young mother at risk of further stigmatisation.

When considering advice they would give to young women considering having a child, the women offered that they would suggest looking at what the individual has in place, for example finances, mental health and what support is available. With the fieldwork accounting for the lived lives of the women, the advice they impart comes from their own experiences, with young motherhood being achievable but difficult (such as isolation and pressure to comply with normative motherhood roles) irrespective of support. However, the women insist young motherhood can be 'done' as it has by them and 'done' again, with the fieldwork paying attention to the intergenerational transmissions of advice between family members, most notably siblings, which showed the power family influence holds over such decisions of motherhood.

The idea of being in a partnership with the father to add a dimension of support was discussed, finding this could have come from the young mothers ideals which are linked to performative parenting, and what the young mother considers a father to 'be' and 'do'. This does not dilute the young mothers' feelings that a father may have made motherhood easier for her, but recognises her ideals on fatherhood uncover her own insecurities on how she feels she is performing as a mother herself.

In conclusion, it would seem the focus on where the 'crisis of young motherhood' as commentated by the government, media and within society is located has been misdirected, as the idea that 'family' is in crisis due to an outcome of young motherhood is neither associated with, nor existent, in the families narratives shown in this fieldwork.
Therefore, if research continues to develop understanding of the intergenerational strengths of mother daughter relationships, and the work families do for a young mother to succeed at motherhood through applied qualitative methods, it may lead to finding that the crisis is located in discourses that surround young motherhood, which may encourage more informed and detailed picture of who the young mother is, and lead to a healthier, more balanced conversation when she is being discussed. Furthermore, the inclusion of contextual

circumstances and lived experience narratives used in this thesis may alleviate pressures of stigma, with first-hand accounts of navigating young motherhood offering a richer insight of life courses, finding that young mothers are able to handle much of the difficulties motherhood can bring, rather than basing assumptions of incompetency and generalised notions the young mother and her family are associated with.

Original contributions to young motherhood studies

The fieldwork discusses the question 'how does young motherhood impact on the way in which family members define family?' taking group and individual family narratives to uncover what constitutes as family for them and how they 'do' family. This finding intends to contribute to intergenerational studies especially in relation to how families are felt to be constructed, and looks to strengthen research which provides awareness of the importance of the 'new' nuclear family in a context of support within a marginalised group, and challenges the notion that young motherhood threatens the institution of 'traditional' family (Ellis-Sloan 2014). It also considers young mothers perceptions of fathers to add to the conversation of what these women consider family to be and how contributions from fathers have shaped young motherhood experiences in this fieldwork.

The young mother and family voice is considered an important tool to gain insight into young mother's experiences, allowing for increased awareness on how each family navigate their way through motherhood. This has been a key finding of this thesis, most specifically the way in which families strive to provide emotional and physical support to young mothers whilst managing other priorities, such as work and family.

The way in which families respond to media portrayals and locality perceptions offer insight into an alternative dimension of intergenerational support, focussing on motivations and actions on disregarding stigmas on behalf of the young mother. This contributes to previous research where women have been found to see motherhood as a turning point rather than a hopeless situation (Higginbottom et al. 2005, Phoenix 1991, Seamark and Lings 2004), citing motherhood and their child as a reason to rethink life courses, and redesign their future pathways (Chohan and Langa 2011; Kaufman et al. 2001; Duncan et al. 2010; Seamark and Lings 2004 and Clarke 2015).

This research complicates the stereotypes that exist around young mothers, and reveals the explicit and implicit relations of pressure and support within their intimate family context. Findings from the family narratives intend to offer rich data which reveal deeper understanding of the behind the scenes scenarios of the family and young mother, how they work through problems which motherhood presents and how the family can be a key network of support. It attempts to add an added qualitative dimension of the lives of the families, rather than reliance on generalised social constructions to decide whether young mothers are deemed as at risk or prevailing within society (Schneider and Ingram 1993).

Considerations for future research

The study yielded some interesting findings regarding mothers' perceptions of their babies' fathers; it would be valuable to collect narratives from the fathers themselves- as an investigation into how young fathers of young mothers fit into new ideas of family and intimacy in an intergenerational context, which was especially evident in lacking when researching fatherhood literature, most notably their own reflections.

During time of writing this thesis, the Covid-19 pandemic occurred. Restrictions were put in place in respect of work, travel and access to family which may have impacted intergenerational support and relationships. Although the data was collected just before lockdown occurred, a recommendation would be to repeat this research post Covid-19 pandemic to investigate if support and intergenerational intimacies have diminished or changed for these families. However, considering the solidarity and attitudes of the women, especially from comments such as 'shit happens' and 'you just deal with what you got chucked at' it is possible these women continued in the same vein as they did at time of focus group discussion, with their motivations thought of as inspiring and resilient during the hardscrabbles of life, especially in the way they navigate and compromise how they do family.

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Appendices

Appendix A- Focus Group Questions and Agenda

Interview questions/agenda:

Research Aim:

To account for social and moral circumstances of participants from different socio-economic backgrounds and everyday lives of those in austerity

To add to existing research surrounding how the rates of teenage pregnancy, the stigmatization of young mothers and policies surrounding teenage pregnancy and motherhood have changed in recent decades.

FOCUS QUESTION AREAS:

1. Intergenerational familial relationships and how they may have changed as a result of a teenage pregnancy

a. How old were you (mother/grandmother/great grandmother) when you had children?

b. Can you tell me about where you were in life before you became pregnant? (Family structure, where participant lived, education, friendships, life goals)

c. What kind of a relationship did you have with your mother and grandmother (or, altogether_ before pregnancy/motherhood?

d. Do you feel this relationship has changed since motherhood? If so, how?

e. What was your reaction to your child/grandchild's pregnancy news?

f. Did you plan your pregnancy?

2. The impact of these changes on the family as a whole and wider community relations

g. What was your reaction to your pregnancy? How did you feel emotionally?

h. Who was the first person/group of people you felt comfortable to tell your news to?

i. How did your friends react to your news of pregnancy?

j. Since becoming a mother, how has it impacted your family?

k. What support do you offer the young mother and their child? (Does the young mother agree or think differently?)

l. Did you have any particular goals before becoming a mother?

m. Do you feel that they were less achievable after becoming a mother?

n. How do you feel you overcome any challenges you face in every day parenthood? (I.e. childcare, emergencies, etc.)

3. Stigmatization of young mothers and families and generalized opinions from wider communities

a. When you had the baby, how did you support yourself? (Who did they live with, income, what support they had with this)

b. Did you attend any baby groups when you had your baby? If so how did you find out about them?

c. How do you feel other mothers interacted with you in these groups?

d. What kind of activities in the community do you participate in with your baby/child? Do you attend these alone? (Or with friends, grandmother/great grandmother)

e. What is your community like to live in? Do you have relationships with your neighbours or those nearby?

f. How do you feel your community views young mothers?

g. What are your thoughts on how young motherhood is portrayed in the media (social media, news?)

4. External family welfare support provided to families

a. Were you offered any support from outside agencies during and after your pregnancy? If so which ones?

b. Did you use the facilities offered? Did you find them helpful?

c. As a grandmother/great grandmother, how involved are you in the child's life?

d. How difficult have you found it supporting your child/grandchild with pregnancy and post pregnancy?

e. What support (if any) have you had from agencies?

f. Are you aware of any young pregnancy/family support agencies available?

ff. If so, which ones, and how effective have you found them if you are in contact with them?

g. If you could talk to your community about young motherhood, what would you like to tell them?

h. What would you tell a young woman who was considering becoming a mother?

i. If you could go back in time, would you make the same decisions you made?

j. how much of this decision is based upon support you have received? (Either from family or outside agencies)

5. The role of the father and the relationship between mother, grandmother and great grandmother

a. Could you tell me a bit about your child's father?

b. How did your mother/grandmother respond to his role in your child's life?

Key points to investigate:

1. Have methods of support for young mothers changed since the onset of austerity?
2. Do different generations of family support young mothers?
3. Does young motherhood impact on intergenerational relations in the family?
4. Does young motherhood impact the ways in which family members think of family?

- Examining intergenerational support in families
- Exploring historical stigmas attached to young parents through generations
- Developing a methodology and methods for studying intergenerational relations

Appendix B- Participant Information Sheet

Working title: Does young motherhood put the family 'in crisis'?

An ethnographic investigation into the impact of young motherhood on intergenerational relations within families.

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

A research study is being conducted at Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) by Cissie Buxton.

Background

This study is taking place to contribute to the field of Sociology, which looks at the development of human society. The reason for this study is to look into young parenthood, what you feel family is and the relationship you have between grandmother, mother and young parent and how different generations in your family have helped support you to become a mother.

My interest in this research area comes from personal experiences of becoming a mother at 19, and the impact young motherhood had upon the relationships with my mother and grandmother. I had an upbringing where women stayed at home to raise children, but when I had my daughter, their ideas of women and their place in society changed, and they encouraged and supported me to return to work and education, and our bond as a family became stronger, and us closer together. This has led me to want to find out from families not only how young motherhood has impacted their families, but how they feel they are supported by family.

What will you be required to do?

Participants in this study will be required to join in a focus group talk that will be recorded with other members of their family: being their grandmother, mother and themselves. This talk will be about their own experiences of being a mother, and also how they have felt they have been supported with parenthood by the other members of the focus group.

To participate in this research you must:

Be a young mother between the ages of 18- 21 at the time of having a baby

Be part of a family where you have a supportive relationship or contact with your grandmother and mother

Procedures

You will be asked to take part in a focus group and will need you to each bring along photograph(s) that you feel are important to you from your own pregnancy and early parenthood, to discuss with the other members of the group.

Feedback

After the focus group takes place, all participants will be given an opportunity to ask me any questions or concerns they may have from what has arisen during the conversation taken place. Also, what will happen next with the recording will be explained, along with an opportunity to provide the researcher with contact information of each participant should they wish for the paper to be submitted to them for them to read on its completion.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

On the legal basis of the Data Protection Act 1998 all data and personal information will be stored securely within CCCU premises in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the University's own data protection policies. No unrelated or unnecessary personal data will be collected or stored, for example, the anonymity of location shall be kept. Personal data will be used only for the purpose of organising the research and will be stored securely for 5 years at Canterbury Christ Church University. Data can only be accessed by Jennie Bristow, Shane Blackman and an examiner that will assess this research project. Anonymisation will be used in all written accounts of the study (i.e. personal information associated with the data will be removed).

Dissemination of results

Whatever is discussed in the focus group will be part of a research paper submitted to the University for assessment, with all names changed for confidentiality reasons. Should this paper be published, the same approach will be taken. The recording itself will be securely stored at CCCU and kept for records for 5 years.

Deciding whether to participate

If you have any questions or concerns about the nature, procedures or requirements for participation do not hesitate to contact me. Should you decide to participate, you will be free to (i) withdraw consent at any time without having to give a reason, (ii) request to see all your personal data held in association with this project, (iii) request that the processing of your personal data is restricted, (iv) request that your personal data is erased and no longer used for processing.

Process for withdrawing consent

You are free to withdraw consent up until October 2019 when data collection has been completed. You can email 000000@000000 with 000000@000000 copied in requesting to withdraw. Please be aware that although you may have withdrawn and your data not used in the study, your voice will not be able to be omitted from the recording during the interview.

Any questions?

Please contact Miss Cissie Buxton via Dr. Jennie Bristow who is supervising this research project on 0000000 or at 000000@00000.

Identification of any Health and Safety Risks (complete appropriate Risk Assessment forms after discussion with your supervisor and submit to Programme Management Committee)

Appendix C- Participant Consent Form

CONSENT FORM

Title of Project: Does teenage parenthood put family in 'crisis'? An investigation into the impact of young motherhood on intergenerational relations in families in the context of austerity politics.

Name of Researcher: Miss Cissie Catherine Buxton

Contact details:

Address:	Miss C. Buxton C/O Canterbury Christchurch University North Holmes Road CT1 1QU
Tel:	00000000000000
Email:	0000000@00000000

Please initial box

I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.	

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw up until October 2019, without giving any reason.	
I understand that any personal information that I provide to the researchers will be kept strictly confidential	
I agree to take part in the above study.	
I realise this interview will be recorded with an audio device, and I agree to be recorded. I also understand that if I choose to withdraw from the study, I will not be able to be removed from the recording but my input will not be used in the research paper.	
At any point during data collection I am aware that my participation in the research can be stopped or I can withdraw at any time.	

Name of Participant: Date: Signature:

Name of person taking consent *(if different from researcher)* Date: Signature:

Researcher: Date: Signature:

Copies: 1 for participant 1 for researcher