

Redemption theory

Redeeming the sins of the father: Grandfathers' experiences and practices in a border community in Ireland.

By

Susan Kent

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DECLARATION

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Susan Kent

January 2017

Title: Redeeming the sins of the father: Grandfathers' experiences and practices in a border community in Ireland.

SUMMARY

Background:

Exploring the extant literature on grandparents reveals that, in many cases 'grandparent' is de facto synonymous with 'grandmother'. The world of the grandfather remains elusive, although evidence is emerging that recognise the significance of the role within contemporary cultures. Much of the European enquiry has focused on older, retired grandfathers. Emerging literature from Northern Europe and Australasia is seeking enquiry from a more diverse group of grandfathers. Irish enquiry to date has explored grandparents (predominantly grandmothers) in the context of intergenerational relationships. There is no literature that explores the grandfather and his place in the family within contemporary Ireland. As the literature exposes a gap in enquiry from grandfathers, this enquiry asked of grandfathers in a border area between Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland. The areas in focus are known as RAPID areas (Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development) identified by the Government as potentially disadvantaged. Populations in these areas are challenging to access and the group of grandfathers, many of who had spent time in prison related to sectarian and criminal activities, can be designated as hard-to-reach.

Aim: The aim of this study was to develop a Grounded Theory that explained how men in identified designated disadvantaged areas of Ireland experience grandfathering.

Methodology: This study was guided by a constructivist epistemology and the principles of Grounded Theory as described by Charmaz. Data was gathered in two disadvantaged or RAPID areas in an urban area at a border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. 30 interviews were conducted with 23 grandfathers. There was equal distribution between the two areas. Data was collected through interviews and analysed using the concurrent processes of constant comparative analysis, data collection, theoretical sampling and memo writing. During the process, the men refused to be audiotaped and interviewed as a response to an international concern and completion of the study was jeopardised. Following certain reassurances, the interviews continued unrecorded. The participants were working class men who were mostly unemployed or in part-time employment. The average age on becoming a grandfather in the sample was 47 years (range 32-62). Many of the men were ex-prisoners of the political Troubles in Northern Ireland or from criminal activity. Two men identified themselves as gay men (only one on audio recording). Some of the men had second marriages/relationships experiencing young children and grandchildren the same age.

Findings: The participants' main concerns were related to their desire to 'pay back' for what they felt they had not given to their children. Initially the concept of 'second chances' appeared to be a main concern. Through analysis and theoretical sampling, the latent concern emerged. This wish manifested itself through behaviors and processes conceptualised as *Redemption*, which consisted of three subcategories.

The first category '*Life before grandfathering*' is the antecedent to rationalising their existence as a grandfather. The men looked back on their lives as fathers in order to look forward to being a grandfather to the next generation. Their parenthood was ruptured for various reasons, whether self-induced for national political/criminal priorities, work induced

to provide for the families or out of choice. The crux was that they were absent as fathers.

The second subcategory '*Life as a grandfather*' reveals that being a grandfather requires some essential pre-requisites in order to demonstrate that the best interest of the child is foremost in the grandfather's world. These pre-requisites are the building blocks of establishing intergenerational relationships and are created from the lessons learned from the sins they perceive they have committed as a father. They look to redeem their sins and look for redemption for errors made in their earlier lives.

The third subcategory '*Life as a grandfather with family and professionals*' explores the facilitators and barriers and the issue of power as they portray it over the family. It also focuses on how it is projected over their practice as a grandfather. A contemporary categorisation of 'types' of grandfathers identified in the study adds to the existing typologies. In projecting the future of the children, the grandfathers raise several concerns pertinent to a future Irish society, interalia, heritage, legislation over access to children, lost grandfathering in certain cohorts of men and the use of a blood passport for maintenance of familial genetic knowledge, amongst others.

Although the findings are presented in three subcategories, they are cyclical and iterative rather than hierarchical or linear. Many of the findings have been viewed and influenced by the other subcategories. The subcategories were also developed through the co-constructivism of the interview process where the participants themselves enjoyed 'Eureka!' moments during the conversations.

Conclusions: The findings generate theory from a specific area and cohort of grandfathers. Although the findings are not generalisable, elements are transferable and applicable to a broader grandfather population nationally and internationally. Many issues may be identified and experienced by a broader cohort of men. In planning for the grandfather of the future, legislators and the general population need to understand the impact on children of the involvement of the grandfather and father before. The findings contribute to the understanding of the complexities faced by grandfathers in Ireland, where legislation and judicial experiences influence whether a man has an opportunity to engage as a grandfather or not. The findings challenge the assumptions in the literature that hegemonic masculinities are foremost in the lives of grandfathers. The narratives contribute to the development of typologies that explain who these grandfathers are and how the hegemonic masculine identity, although still prevalent, is evolving.

The findings can contribute to the broader discussion on the best interest of the child and challenges current legislation as identified in the study. These study findings also give complex issues expression in the broader discourse on the role of the grandfather, with practical inferences for the grandchildren. This research study identifies a once in a generation opportunity to access these men. I understood from the men, whether ex-political prisoners or not, that these stories might not reoccur in my lifetime.

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To the greatest loves in my life, my children, Rónan, Órlaith and Dearbháil. They are the reason I live.

For my two good friends who were with me at the start of this journey, Oscar and Christy but had to leave before I finished. You were never far away.

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Redeem

The time, Redeem

The unread vision in the higher dream...

- T.S. Eliot

I dedicate this thesis to my dearest friends, Oscar and Christy, who travelled part of this journey with me and are now gone to a better place.



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CHAPTER ONE: AN OVERVIEW OF THE THESIS

1.1 Introduction

Grandparenting has been traditionally understood as a role that assists parents in the care of their children. Cox (2000) suggests that it is a peripheral role. However, recent literature highlights that they in fact provide much more than the peripheral care and have been identified as the “mother savers” and the “child savers” (Herlofsen and Hagestad, 2012). There is a belief in the literature that the grandparents are actually filling the gap in childcare whether fulltime or part-time. Within a global culture of travel, grandparents may also be excluded because of geography and access to the child (Tarrant, 2016). Irish studies have recently looked at the grandparents in the broader family within the context of their role, family dynamics following divorce of adult children, intergenerational solidarity and relationships, and childcare in Ireland (Share and Kerrins, 2009; Doyle et al, 2010; Moore et al, 2012; Timonen et al, 2012b; Timonen et al, 2013; Conlon et al, 2014; Mc Nally et al, 2014). The contributions of the grandfather in the literature are still emerging with many writers particularly focusing on the role as it relates to childcare (Mann, 2007; Mann and Leeson, 2010; Leeson, 2016 and Tarrant, 2016). Within the Irish literature, there has not been the same enthusiasm. The changing constellations of families with children, with parents and grandparents moving from the original family, the grandfather is anecdotally being identified as a valuable resource that has not been explored.

This Grounded Theory study explores what being a grandfather meant to grandfathers in two areas in a border county of Ireland. The participants articulated the emerging theory. The central latent concern that emerged for the grandfathers was the belief that they will reap what they had sown, for decisions made in their earlier life. This means how they wished to pay back the debts they believed their children endured when they were fathers. The theory that emerged was *Redemption* theory. This is demonstrated and expressed through their narrative regarding life before grandfathering, being a grandfather, and in life as a grandfather with their family and other professionals. One of the outcomes of this thesis was the joy felt by most of the grandfathers on hearing that they were to be asked their experiences of being a grandfather. Their roles were to be discussed and their experiences taped for the benefit of contributing to the broader Irish and international theory. In truth and

what is evident throughout this study is that their voice was not silent. Once the interviews commenced and the discussion referred to the grandchildren, most of them became animated resulting in many of the interviews lasting over an hour in length. The aim of this introductory chapter is to provide a brief overview of the background, rationale and aims of the study. It also offers a concise overview of the contents of this thesis. Achenbaum (2011) eloquently writes that grandfatherhood affords idiosyncratic opportunities to '*gaze backward and peer forward*' (pg. 3).

1.2 The origins of the study

It is unclear to say when this research project began. As a practitioner in the community, many years have been spent working, supporting, mourning and mediating with families in both urban and rural areas. Over time it became evident to me how the dynamics within families and traditional systems of care providers and care receivers was evolving and changing. This practice experience and observation directed me in particular, to the role of grandfathers within the community. These men were not visible but are beginning to come out of the shadows and are making themselves visible (Mann, 2007 and Leeson, 2016). I was also aware how I had never known either of my grandfathers as they had deceased before I was born. My children's grandfathers were also deceased therefore; there was an absence of a grandfather figure in the family. Within practice however, I understood the value of the grandfather in the provision of child day-care and custodial (kinship) care. They are recognised as a valuable resource to the foster care and child protection agencies. However, within this context they were valuable as part of the grandparent package that included the grandmother. Perceptions in community practice interpret grandparents to be effective as carers of children provided by the grandmother with support from the grandfather.

1.3 Aim of the research

The overarching aim of the research was to develop a substantive theory that understands what it is to be a grandfather in Ireland.

1.4 Selecting the method

The study employed Charmaz's approach to Grounded Theory (2006; 2012; 2014). The decision to use Grounded Theory was based upon the desire to offer theory on the grandfathers within Ireland. Following some workshops on Glaser's Grounded Theory (Glaser, 1992), I was uncomfortable with the proposed detached approach to the theory development. I explored other theorists and identified Kathy Charmaz's co-constructivism as best suited to my career and personality. The choice was influenced by;

1. The awareness of the areas I was proposing to enter to undertake the enquiry and this reinforced the co-construction style of enquiry. This would also demonstrate ownership of the findings for the participants.
2. Charmaz's approach allowed me to develop the theory with the participants thereby reinforcing the rigour of the research enquiry.
3. The notion of discovering unrecorded latent concerns from this hard-to-reach group was appealing within an academic context.

1.5 Reflexivity and the researcher

Within the research and as demonstrated in Chapter Four, reflexivity is critical to ensure that the participants and not the researcher's main concerns emerge. Charmaz (2006) writes that reflexivity is the self-examination by the researcher of introspective exploration to reveal the researcher's mind processes, philosophical position and basis of decision about the enquiry. Chapter Four clarifies the rationale for using the researcher as a "human instrument" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) in qualitative research. As the researcher is the main tool they become part of the theory and therefore should reflect on their feelings, actions and most importantly conflicts (Holloway and Wheeler, 2004). The research is always open to multiple interpretations due to the researcher being involved in their own reality and that of others. Koch and Harrington (1998) suggest that the research should be "many voiced" and not just the narcissistic voice of the researcher. In harmony with Charmaz (2006), they also suggest that the research is all the more credible and rigorous if positioned in the political and social context. The reflexivity starts at the beginning and continues to the end of the research and beyond submission of the thesis.

The researcher acknowledges that the unexpected should be expected. She also wishes to reassure the reader that after 33 years in the practice of nursing, midwifery, intensive care, public health and policy development, a congruent and non-judgemental persona was professionally maintained at all times.

The researcher acknowledges that the sites chosen for this enquiry were based upon the initial origins of the enquiry. As a public health practitioner my professional life involves working in a community setting. This professional role is well known in communities but most particularly in areas of high children and older persons population density. It is important for the reader to understand that the researcher had not worked in community practice for several years before this research began. These men were not known to the researcher before this enquiry. The men were aware that I was undertaking a research study but that my occupation was that of a community nurse. However, the role of the community nurse is understood by many of the participants by different names such as the baby nurse, the school nurse, the wound nurse, the nit nurse, the elderly nurse and the health centre nurse to name a few. This role is welcome by community inhabitants as they are accessible and congruent within their work settings. I reflected on this in my journal to ensure that my intentions and attitudes towards the enquiry remained ethical and objective. Within such settings engagement with the population can be challenging if the inhabitants do not explore your (researcher or professional) background. What the findings disclosed was a network of communication practiced in these site areas, where enquiries are made about 'relative' outsiders entering and asking questions. The researcher's background was explored thoroughly at the first interviews undertaken with the gatekeepers. Thereafter, it appeared I had been accepted in the role of researcher.

1.6 The Current Irish Situation

1.6.1 Demographic Context of Ireland

Irish demographics, like most European countries, have changed, albeit with a few issues particularly relevant to Ireland, i.e. a slower population ageing, sustained high fertility and an increase in emigration. People in general are expected to live longer than previous generations with many grandparents seeing their grandchildren growing into adulthood (Central Statistics Office (CSO), 2012). The Irish statistics show an increase in life

expectancy by five years from 2006 to 2011. This is also seen in the well-documented increase in the older population of Ireland. The 2011 CSO figures show that the share of people aged 65 and over had increased by 14.4 per cent since 2006, with the number of persons aged 100 years or over being recorded as 407 in 2015 (www.cso.ie/age_profile/2015).

The reduced mortality rates are not unilateral in changing the Irish demographics. There has also been a decrease in the fertility rates. CSO figures (2011) show that the rate of births per 1,000 of population was 15.2%, compared to 21.4% in 1950. The fertility rate has plateaued in Ireland (Fahey and Russell, 2001). However, CSO (2011) results show that Ireland has the highest fertility rate in the EU, the lowest divorce rate and its' population is increasing at a higher rate than in any other EU country. Lundstrom (2000) highlighted that although Ireland's fertility rates dropped, they were still higher than in most other Western countries. Lundstrom's study identified that grandparents in Ireland had on average 10 grandchildren compared to a considerably lesser numbers in the UK and the US. Women in general are having children later in life and having fewer children. CSO (2011) figures also identify the increase in maternal age at an average of 31.3 in 2011 compared to 28.8 in 1980. Women are more focused on education and career pathways rather than getting married and starting a family early.

Irish society has seen a lessening of the influence of the Catholic Church on Irish society in recent years - for instance, having children out of wedlock is no longer considered immoral or stigmatising by the majority of the population (Murphy, 2009). This period has coincided with the comparatively late introduction of divorce in Ireland (Doyle et al, 2010). The change in the law to allow divorce in Ireland (<http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1996>) has altered the structure of Irish families. The increase in step-families and increase in sets of grandchildren for grandparents and grandparents for grandchildren (arising from divorce/separation and re-partnering) needs to be investigated to assess the impact on children and grandparents.

Within the context of this changing Ireland, comes a change in women's roles. Women joining the labour market have had a major impact on family life (Blundell et al, 2000). The diverse role of women in Ireland now encompasses parenting alone, working full-time or part-time, and being a full-time mother (Moore et al, 2010). This can result in the expectation of change of role of some men in an ambiguous position where their roles are also expected

to change. Murphy (2009) suggests that women in Ireland can take on the ‘breadwinner’ role but the men are slow to take up the ‘nurturing’ role. Ferguson and Hogan (2004), state that the ‘lost voice of men’ has to be restored to provide a meaning to fatherhood. This research enquiry was essential to find out if this ‘lost voice’ continued through the later life stage of grandfatherhood.

1.6.2 Policy and Grandparenting

In the UK over the last decade, proposals have been made to offer grandparents some form of grant for the provision of childcare, with some local authorities suggesting that they should register as child-minders (Marmot and Bell, 2012), thereby facilitating mothers. However, the researchers state that, on the basis of their findings, grandparents do not want to be used as providers of care whenever they are required. They wish to remain autonomous and independent. There is no evidence of Ireland considering offering grandparents a reimbursement for minding children; although registering to become a child-minder is now compulsory, it is perhaps not surprising that there are no offers of financial support for grandparents who for the most, offer unpaid care.

Jendrek (1993) identified three types of care-giving by grandparents; custodial, living-with and day-care. She identified that the custodial grandparents were more likely to be single parents, live within 20 miles of their offspring, have at least one of their own children living with them and were an average of 3 years younger than non-custodial grandparents. Grandparents who had a high school diploma/leaving certificate were less likely to become custodial grandparents. Other research offers that the majority of participants in studies of custodial care are grandmothers (Fuller-Thomson and Minkler, 2001; Smith and Hancock, 2010).

Within the current climate of change in legislation regarding marriage, divorce and the children’s referendum, the impact of the grandfather in/out of family life was beneficial to forecast the possible impacts of the legislation changes (www.oireachtas/acts.ie). Child care services identify grandparenting (www.tusla.ie) however as the literature states with the emergence of single parenthood leading to single grandparenthood, the availability of either grandparent in custodial/kinship care may be a necessity. Whether this issue was raised by

the grandfathers in the findings was interesting within a culture that preserves Article 41.2 of the Constitution (<https://www.constitution.ie/>) which states;

“41.2.1° In particular, the State recognises that by her life within the home, woman gives to the State a support without which the common good cannot be achieved.

41.2.2° The State shall, therefore, endeavour to ensure that mothers shall not be obliged by economic necessity to engage in labour to the neglect of their duties in the home.”(pg. 162).

1.6.3 Legal Concerns of Grandparents

The law as it applies to grandparents’ rights differs internationally. Within Ireland there are two pathways open to grandparents concerning access and legal custody. They are;

- A) **Access**; Section 11B was inserted into the Children’s Act (Government of Ireland, 1998) which allows for a person/s who is/are related to a child to apply for an order granting access to the child. This act does not give the right of access, but rather gives the right to apply for access (Government of Ireland, 1998). In granting access, the court must give due regard to the relationship between the child and the applicant. Also, taken into consideration are the risk of harm that may occur to the child if access is granted and the wishes of the child’s guardian; and,
- B) **Adoption**; in certain circumstances a grandparent may apply to adopt a grandchild. Application is made through the adoption board to the high court. All requests must be for the benefit of the child. Of note is that all applications of children over the age of seven must be considered.

There is a statutory requirement for all persons legally concerned with the child to give consent before application is made. However, this can be overturned by the Adoption Board if *“it is satisfied that the person whose consent is required is incapable by reason of mental infirmity of giving consent or cannot be found”* (Adoption Board, 1998, pg. 6), or if the High Court has made an order. For most grandparents to acquire guardianship without the parents’ consent can be very difficult. The 2012 Referendum on the Rights of the Child (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2012), will allow opportunities for grandparents to make

long-term fostering arrangements permanent through adoption. Enquiry was needed from the grandfathers on their interpretation of this major change.

1.7 Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is presented in three sections. Section one focus on the literature in the substantive area of research. Although Grounded Theory does not advocate the use of knowledge prior to the enquiry, Charmaz (2006) reminds the researcher that the classical theorists advocate delaying the literature review until the analysis is completed. This information also assisted the researcher in making application to the ethics committee and is an actual requirement within academia at Doctoral level. However, the literature was broad and was not used as a theoretical framework for the study. Charmaz (2006) suggests, “...let this material lie fallow until you have developed your categories and the analytic relationships between them” (pg. 166). Therefore, development of the literature occurs with detail in Chapter Eight. Following development of the substantive theory, the original literature became superfluous.

The second section (Chapters Three and Four) describes the epistemological, ontological and methodological propositions that informed the study. Included is a discussion on the use of Charmaz’s method of co-constructivism and how it differed to other Grounded Theory theorists. Chapter Four demonstrates how the enquiry was operationalised. This included issues like sampling, data collection, data analysis and ethical issues.

Section Three presents and discusses the substantive Grounded Theory of *Redemption*, which represents the findings from the study. The findings are presented in Chapters Five, Six and Seven. The theory emerges in Chapter Five through the subcategory of ‘life before grandfathering’. Here the theory emerges through the concept of ruptured fatherhood and sins of the father being committed. The theory develops further in Chapter Six, in the second subcategory of ‘life as a grandfather’, which highlights the role practiced or not as a grandfather, linked to the role they played as a father. In Chapter Seven, the substantive theory culminates in how the previous Chapters frame the world of the grandfather with the family and other professionals. A discussion of the theoretical and philosophical literature is provided to support the theory of *Redemption* in Chapter Ten. This Chapter also includes discussions on reflexivity, trustworthiness and the strengths and limitations of the study.

Potential development of the theory in the broader context of further application and policy development are interwoven throughout the discussion.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE

2.1 Role of Literature in a Grounded Theory Enquiry

The main precept of Grounded Theory methodology is that the enquiry must be approached without preconceptions or prior knowledge of the main issues relating to it. In this regard, Grounded Theory undoubtedly differs from other traditional qualitative enquiries. The difficulty arises when the student making an application for research proposal, appraisal, ethics or funding finds a rationale and justification is required by the governing institutions. The pre-enquiry literature search does allow for exploration of the substantive area; however, as the theory emerges, this literature will become superfluous in order to discover other areas for the literature to support the new theory (Glaser, 1992).

It is important for the reader to be aware of the path followed by the researcher, who comes to the enquiry as a health practitioner, to explore a theme emerging as a new phenomenon. Acknowledgement is given to the extensive clinical and frontline practice experience of the researcher, which has guided the exploration of the research topic. Glaser (1978) identifies this as theoretical sensitivity allowing the researcher to recognise certain subtleties in the data. This is however, separate to the notion that there is a theoretical framework from the literature that would guide the enquiry. Although the literature can be omitted from the thesis outcomes, it is also declared that the preconceived focus and ideas were also omitted, as the new substantive theory was co-constructed. Similar to other naturalistic enquiry, bracketing and reflexivity was the process by which the thoughts and ideas of the researcher were put aside; although it is as a result of these that the enquiry was undertaken.

2.2 Introduction to the Literature

The most common appearance of grandfathers as participants in research is usually as a small minority of the sample, and their data is used in combination or in comparison to grandmothers and reported as 'grandparents' (Jendrek, 1993; Spitze and Ward, 1998; Bengtson, 2001; Hoff, 2007; Shang, 2008; and Heikkinen, 2011). This literature originates from the UK, Australia, Spain, China, and Japan, but mostly from the USA. Any studies that had 'grandfather' in the title included grandchildren as participants (Cunningham-Burley,

1984; Kivett, 1985; Bullock, 2005; Okagbue-Reaves, 2005; Bullock and Thomas, 2007 and Chan, 2007). There were only two studies found that explored the world of the grandfather. Mann (2007) and Mann et al (2013) looked at the role of grandfathers within contemporary families in Britain. St. George and Fletcher (2014) explored men's experiences and what it was like to be a grandfather. Both of these studies had a cohort with average ages of 71 and 64 years respectively.

There are several Irish studies/papers of note on grandparents from 2000-2014; published research studies (Lundstrom, 2000, Doyle et al., 2010 and Moore et al., 2012; Timonen et al, 2013; Conlon et al, 2014 and Mc Nally et al, 2014), unpublished Masters theses (Murphy, 2009 and Hurley, 2010) and papers on grandparents and childcare (Share and Kerrins, 2009) and on grandparents and the law (Egan and McNamara, 2010). To date there has been little effort to understand grandfathering separate and apart from grandmothering, grandchildren and adult children. No literature has enquired from grandfathers as a cohort within contemporary Ireland.

2.2.1 The Literature Review

The prior use of literature within a Grounded Theory study is a controversial subject. Unlike traditional research methods, Grounded Theory differs in the emphasis it places on the literature review prior to the research enquiry. Glaser and Strauss (1967) acknowledged that the researcher cannot approach an enquiry with a blank mind. The driving force to undertake research is based on the researcher's knowledge of theory and phenomenon. What Glaser (1992) did object to was an in-depth literature review that identifies frameworks and theories that should be moulded into the enquiry. Morse and Singleton (2001) disagreed with this and suggested that bracketing of the literature should occur. This is difficult for many researchers exploring the phenomenon. Glaser (1992) does suggest that, as the emergent theory arises, the researcher can simultaneously be directed to the literature most appropriate to support the theory. Charmaz (2006) writes that grounded theorists do not want you to see your data through the lens of 'received theory'. However, she realises that realistically the researcher will require knowledge on the key concepts that are in place in the area of enquiry. This literature search, therefore, was based on the practical value of focus at the outset of the

research enquiry. As a student, it is expected that some literature was provided to justify the research and that this became superfluous once the research was concluded.

Literature at this stage was identified through a selection of methods. Searches of electronic databases such as Medline, Cinahl, Jstor, Pubmed and Scopus were performed. Keywords that were used were; grandfathers/grandfathering grandparents/ing, grandchildren, ageing, masculinities, emotional labour, mother savers, child savers, intergenerational relationships, family poverty, absent fathers, lower socioeconomic status, men's talk, emotions, parent death, and gender gap in the workplace. A total of 2,235 pieces of literature/resources were obtained. When refinement of topic and duplication were completed 536 appeared relevant. Following examination of the abstracts, 235 were read in full. The literature and searches span the years 1964-2014 with the majority in the 2000-2014 range (Neugarten and Weinstein, 1964). Some unpublished theses were accessed through interlibrary loans. Attendance was made to workshops on Grounded Theory (Ireland), Centre for Ageing and Biological Studies (UK) and Centre for Policy on Ageing (UK). Books were accessed in several libraries. Newspaper articles were sourced over the research period and copious discussions were had with persons interested in talking about grandfathers. Literature was accessed from 2015-2016 after the development of the substantive theory and was analysed and synthesised within the theory of *Redemption* in Chapter Eight.

2.2.2 Background

Grandparents today are different from grandparents in the past, and their role continues to evolve as society changes. It was noted in the research that the term grandparenting usually refers to grandmothers, as grandfathers have barely been studied in their own right (Arber and Timonen, 2012). It is not known how grandfathers' roles vary from grandmothers' roles in different cultural, social and family contexts. Tarrant (2013), in her U.K. study, is one of the few researchers to have asked grandfathers about their perceptions and experiences.

What is evident within western societies today are the demographical changes and in particular the increased longevity of grandparents, with the result that many grandchildren are enjoying the presence of one or more grandparents well into their adult lives. Arber et al (2003) offer that the presence of the grandmother in a child's life tends to be longer as

women generally live longer than men, and were typically younger than men at the time of marriage. However, Arber et al. (2003) suggests that due to the convergence of mortality rates of older men and women, many grandparents live longer as a married couple. Therefore, increasing numbers of grandchildren will reach adulthood with both sets of grandparents still alive. Grandparents can become a significant presence in the child's life and can have particular influence in the child's development. Removal of grandparents from the child's life, for instance as a result of separation/divorce or death, can have negative effects on the child's development (Cacace and Williamson, 1996). Of note is the increase in the potential for the child to have a greater number of step/grandparents if the divorced/separated parents remarry or indeed if the grandparents divorce/separate and re-partner (Doyle et al, 2010).

Parallel to this increase in grandparents, there has also been a reduction in the numbers of children within family units (Harper, 2005). This combination has the potential to create stronger relationships between the two groups (Connidis, 2010). More grandparents are living with a decreasing number of grandchildren, for a longer period of time. This has been identified as the 'beanpole' family with more family members present 'above' and 'below' (across generations) and smaller numbers horizontally (within generations) (Murphy, 2009). Tarrant (2010) also discusses where men who have re-partnered experience second fatherhood at a time when their children, from an earlier relationship have their own children i.e. become fathers and grandfathers around the same period of time. Within Irish society the influence of the divorce laws and an increase in single parenthood have not been explored in-depth to determine if this reflects similar phenomenon (Conlon et al, 2014).

In addition to demographic change and the influence of divorce/separation, there are many other factors that influence grandparent-grandchild relationships, as this literature review will outline. The research reviewed stems predominantly from the United States (US), Northern Europe and Asia (Arber and Timonen, 2012). There is very little research on grandparents in the Irish context; most of it is dated and concerns predominantly grandmothers (Fahey and Murray, 1994; Lundstrom, 2000; Share and Kerrins, 2009; and Murphy, 2009). However, there is some recent Irish research that has interviewed grandparents (predominantly grandmothers) in the context of divorce/separation in the middle generation (Doyle et al., 2010; Moore et al., 2012; and Timonen et al., 2012b). These studies agree that the strength of the father relationship with the child after divorce/separation is in part due to the help, care and support offered by the paternal grandparents. The remainder of this review focuses on the

international experience of grandparenting; gender and grandparenting; grandparents working and caring; the caring and working role of grandparents; the changing family structures involving grandfathering; grandparenting after the middle child divorces/separates/death; grandfathering: What do we know?; ageing and male identities; masculinities and men and emotions.

2.2.3 International experience of grandparenting

Internationally, substantial research has looked at the types of care that grandparents provide to their grandchildren (Neugerten and Weinstein, 1964; Mann, 2007). This may vary from custodial to occasional childcare. Much research has examined the impact of grandparental care on children; in the absence of their parents, grandparents as ‘child savers’ (Hayslip and Kaminski, 2005; Stratham, 2007); or in situations where grandparental care allows both parents to return to work known as grandparents as ‘mother savers’ (Tobío, 2007). Most of the research is based in the US and Southern Europe and tends to focus primarily on the grandmother. Arber and Timonen (2012), state that we know much less about the more ‘typical’ grandparents, who occasionally care for their grandchildren, and in particular the role of grandfathers within this family unit.

Elder et al (1992) suggest that in well-functioning families, grandparents are redundant. However, research from the US (Pearson et al., 1997), Sub-Saharan Africa (Burton 1992; Minkler et al, 1992; Jendrek, 1993; Cox, 2000; Hayslip and Goodman, 2008 and Goodman and Silverstein, 2001) and Asia (UNICEF/UNAIDS, 2004; Opong, 2006) identifies the role of grandparents as crucial ‘child savers’, where they may take over the care of their grandchild on a full-time or near full-time basis. This arises in situations where the middle generation are not able to care for their children due to, for instance, drug abuse, HIV/AIDS, incarceration, or long-distance migration of parents to urban areas or abroad for work. In contrast, much of European research (Tobío, 2007) does not focus on grandparents as ‘child savers’ but rather as providers of informal care occasionally or on a regular basis. Tobío (2007) identifies as ‘mother savers’ those maternal or paternal grandmothers who provide childcare to allow their daughter or daughter-in-law to combine motherhood with employment. In the context of Northern European countries, grandparents have been characterised as ‘family savers’ where grandparents step in as a back-up in care giving, but

not on a regular basis (Hoffman et al 2004; Hagestad, 2006; Danielsbacka et al, 2011a). The main reason for the difference in Northern and Southern European description of grandparents can be viewed as related to the welfare of the State. The Northern European welfare States offer long maternity and parental leave and child care services are affordable (Herlofson and Hagestad, 2012). In contrast, the grandmothers of Southern Europe tend to be involved in child care provision on a much more intensive basis, thereby facilitating the mothers to return fully to the labour market and become economically active within a welfare State that makes little or no provision for childcare (Tobío, 2007). In this context, Herlofson and Hagestad (2012) highlight the paradox of the elderly Spanish mother adhering/reverting to the traditional female role in order to allow their daughters depart from the traditional gender roles.

Exploration is occurring on the emotionality in how men interpret grandfathering (Mann and Leeson, 2010). The study explores the concept of 'New Grandfatherhood' particularly among younger men perceived to be healthy and mobile. Although the intention of the study was to access the younger grandfather this mixed-method study yielded 60 grandfathers with an average age of 71 years. The findings, however, were relevant to a contemporary society where grandfathers become a critical part in the provision of care for single parenthood children. The implications for policy are effective in a changing society. However, a caveat of caution is offered around the competency of the grandfather to provide the necessary cares. This is most likely linked to the extent of involvement of the grandfather as a father. This area highlights the potential scope for further exploration in future Irish studies that could also be beneficial in accessing a younger grandfather within an Irish context.

2.2.4 Gender and Grandparenting

The literature identifies a strong focus on the role of grandmothers with the grandfathers' voices rarely being heard (Mann, 2007). Herlofson and Hagestad (2012) suggest that much of the literature to date has focused in particular on the maternal grandmother. It is suggested that this is related to the 'mother-daughter' bond, and the view that the maternal mother is generally the youngest grandparent and therefore will have the longest shared lifespan with the grandchildren (Hagestad, 1985; Spitze and Ward, 1998; Ice et al, 2011). Herlofson and

Hagestad (2012) established that the maternal grandmothers were on average four and a half years younger than the paternal grandfathers.

Somary and Stricker (1998) argue that the grandparents' gender does not influence their level of satisfaction regarding involvement with grandchildren. Frequent contact with the grandchildren, regardless of the nature of shared activities, predicted high levels of satisfaction among both grandmothers and grandfathers. However, grandmothers tended to focus on interactions with their grandchildren while grandfathers appeared to focus on the grandchild's parent, offering parenting advice. In contrast, Uhlenberg and Hamill (1998) suggest that grandmothers are more likely than grandfathers to have frequent contact and involvement with their grandchildren.

Mann (2007) believes that the literature has obscured the knowledge on grandparenting as, like the fatherhood literature, it has been subsumed into the grandparenting literature where the grandmother is most prominent. In his analysis of grandfatherhood coming 'Out of the shadow' he proposes that future study into grandfathering should explore the roles the grandfather plays and what they report as being important within this role, How grandfathering contributes to the wider later life male experience, should also be investigated with focus on the actual contribution they make to care, support and mentoring of grandchildren. He warns that a purposive sampling relating specifically to grandfathers is required, rather than having grandfathers report as an 'adjunct' of grandmothers.

2.2.5 Grandparents working and caring

Grandmothers as carers are highly prized day-care providers according to Wheelock and Jones (2002). The quality of the care is good, the cost is low and the flexibility is maximal. Worldwide it is noted that there has been a retreat from marriage and an increase in single parent families (Meyer and Cancian, 2012). This identification of this dramatic rise in single parenting is important as it can usually be associated with the absence of a partner to share the work and family load. Although Meyer (2012) writes from a US perspective, this trend is also evident in Ireland with the use of grandmothers being identified as the childcare preference. However, the grandmother is now be identified as part of the workforce herself. Research suggests that a fairly high percentage of grandmothers are juggling work and caring

of grandchildren (Lundstrom, 2000). This information is not available within an Irish context and therefore has not been seen, if the grandmothers are working, is the grandfather caring for the children? Hagestad (2006), states that much grandparenting of today is done through the provision of financial support, practical help and encouragement to adult children. However, in her research, Meyer (2012) warns that many grandmothers are not saving for their retirement or taking retirement at the desired time in an effort to support their children who are in financial difficulties, with some cases entering the extreme of getting into debt themselves (Goodfellow and Laverty, 2003; Jesmin et al, 2011).

Harper et al (2004) points to the cares performed by grandmothers that were identified as the most frequent, which are; grandmother as carer, replacement partner (confidante, guide and facilitator), replacement parent (listener, teacher and disciplinarian) and as family anchor (transferring values, attitudes and history). This is proposed by Mann (2007) to be a good starting point to compare to grandfathers.

Enquiry needs to be made, within the context of an Irish economic downturn, as to who is caring for the children. The term “double duties” has been used to characterise grandparents who combine working and caring (Fuller-Thomson and Minkler, 2001). This research also yielded evidence that the grandparents, as caregivers, were at a high risk of depression, poorer physical health and functioning. Fahey and Murray’s (1994) earlier study identified how grandparents reported that giving money or time was likely to cause them psychological distress. They also found that a third of the care-giving grandparents lived below the poverty line (Aughinbaugh and Gittleman, 2003). This phenomenon has not been studied in the Irish context. Recent economic conditions in Ireland have seen a rise in unemployment (CSO, 2011) and an increase in relative foster care places (Irish Foster Care Association, 2012). There is difficulty in acquiring statistics around the gender of the grandparents that are providing the foster care. Whether there is an assumption that grandparents will include the grandmother is unclear. Enquiry was needed to examine the role that grandfathers are playing in the provision of care to children in Ireland.

Within the provision of care, the grandparents are seen as role models for the children, through companionship (Robertson, 1977; Denham and Smith, 1989). However, Bengston (2001) suggest that this is not a one-way track but rather influence can run both ways between the generations. This two-way relationship can benefit the welfare of the

grandparent and the grandchild. Matos and Neves (2012) found that the adolescent child-grandparent relationship allowed the grandparent to become more integrated into social engagement and bridged a generational gap. This can then minimise the grandparent's risk of becoming socially excluded and marginalised, especially concerning issues such as information technology, dietary routines and environmentally-friendly practices. The research also identifies the possibility of the adolescent generation reinforcing the ties between the middle and the elder generation and hence strengthening family solidarity (Matos and Neves, 2012).

2.2.6 Grandparenting after the middle children divorce/separate/death

The literature is scant on the experiences of grandparents on the death of an adult child and how this may impact on the access and continuing involvement in the grandchild's life. Identified areas of literature highlight the challenges faced by parents after divorce and separation, particularly fathers and paternal grandparents in maintaining involvement in the grandchild's life. This cannot be assumed in the family systems after a death. In a study by Cacace and Williams (1996) the death of the adult child had adverse effects on the health of the mother (of the adult child). They felt cheated out of the investment they had put into the child in preparation for their older age. No discussion or findings were offered in relation to grandchildren in the study. This area of research is significant in understanding the bi-directional impact within the family systems and may be raised in this study.

Timonen et al (2009) discusses grandparenting after a son or daughter divorces. This can range from co-parenting to total absence of contact with the grandchildren. These findings are similar to other research which noted that the strong bond between mothers and daughters extended to grandchildren who, in turn, had a greater connection to maternal grandparents (Chan and Elder, 2000; Somary and Stricker, 1998). However, Barranti (1985) and McGreal (1986) in earlier research suggested that paternal grandparents played almost as important a role as maternal grandmothers, especially grandfathers with their grandsons. Within the US study of 4,000 grandparents carried out by Uhlenberg and Hamill (1998), maternal rather than paternal grandparents were more likely to have frequent contact with sets of grandchildren and the effect of lineage was greater for grandmothers than grandfathers. Johnson (1998) also found a lineage dimension in her study, with grandmothers having

stronger relationships with divorced daughters than with divorced sons. Gladstone (1989) also agrees with this and suggests that grandmothers have several types of support to offer such as babysitting, advice, finance and teaching family history and traditions. Bradshaw et al. (1999) also offers that the paternal grandparents can be beneficial in maintaining relationships between fathers and their children. However, Murphy's (2009) research suggests that the grandfather is not 'kept in the loop' when help is needed and he is not the 'first port of call'.

The findings in Doyle et al (2010) study concurred with the theory that the middle generation act as mediator between the grandparent and grandchild. They also found that the grandparents can revert to 'parenting' roles. This is demonstrated through the provision of care or finances. In this, Doyle et al (2010) found that the literature undervalues the extent of efforts that grandparents go to have engagement with their grandchildren after divorce. In this they become extremely active in increasing contact. They also argue that the perceived 'invisible' role of the grandparents on the paternal side to maintain relationships between the grandchildren and their sons is truly underestimated in the literature. The research primarily focused on the excessive care given by grandparent to grandchildren after divorce/separation. These findings showed that although the grandparents stated that their main motivation was contact and well-being of the grandchildren, they did also acknowledge the benefits to their own wellbeing in the process. The researchers also stressed that the involvement of the grandparents post-separation was heavily related to the amount of involvement there was in the pre-separation period. They also, in line with research mentioned earlier, identified that the grandmothers had a greater need and ability to make contact with the grandchildren over the grandfathers. Similarly to the death of an adult child, highlighting the perceived level of investment into children has significance after a family disruption whether due to family breakdown or death.

Mahne and Huxhold (2012) suggest that grandparenthood is embedded within multi-generational ties. With the increasing rates of divorce, re-marriage and step-families, being a divorced or step-grandparent will become more prevalent in Irish society. This will possibly result in less contact between grandfathers and their grandchildren if current trends are not altered. Grandfathers need to speak and be heard regarding how they perceive their role in the future within the family unit and how they expect policy to support this role. What was anticipated to be the crux of the enquiry of this study, was to enquire on what motivates them

to be in contact (or not) with their grandchildren, in particular within ambiguous circumstances such as divorce, separation and even estrangement from their own children.

2.2.7 Grandfathering: What do we know?

The exploration of men's roles and identities as grandfathers is underdeveloped (Bates, 2009; Tarrant, 2010). Discussions on grandparenting are over-feminised, with the voice of the grandmother appearing stronger than the grandfather (Roberto et al., 2001; Monserud, 2008). Few studies have been undertaken which have specifically looked at the role of grandfathers (Kivett, 1985; Roberto et al., 2001; Mann, 2007; Tarrant 2010). Within the UK, there has been a flourishing of research undertaken on fathering and grandparenting (Clarke and Roberts, 2004; Dench and Ogg, 2002). However, Mann (2007) suggests that this has not resulted in an interest in the theorising of grandfathers and their involvement with grandchildren. Harper (2005) develops this further by suggesting that the assumption that men do not want to be involved in the research excludes them even more. Mann (2007) offers that being a grandfather is important in the formation of middle-aged and older men's identities. Grandparents that remain married have more frequent contact with the grandchildren followed by widowed, remarried and divorced grandparents (Uhlenberg and Hamill, 1998). Tomassini et al (2004) concurs by suggesting that divorced grandfathers have less contact with their grandchildren than other grandparents in different marital situations. Many of the main reporters on grandfathering internationally are male and (Belenky, 1986) suggests that the lack of feminist enquiry into male activities and their roles reduces the visibility of exposing their caring roles.

Arber and Timonen (2012) identify the emergence of the new generation of grandfathers. These men have had greater involvement as fathers caring for their children. Tarrant (2010) discusses how the role that grandfathers play is affected by their family circumstances and intergenerational relationships. Generational identities and the relationships with their children will affect the interaction between the grandfather and the grandchild. There is a traditional belief that grandfathers wish to adopt the 'head of the family' persona and therefore do not get involved in the specifics of caring, but rather take on the task-oriented role e.g. providing transportation to activities (Hagestad, 1985; Roberto et al., 2001; Tarrant, 2010). Davidson et al. (2003) describe, within their research the paradoxical role of the

grandfather. They become involved with the nurturing care of the grandchildren, while still wishing to remain the ‘head of the family’ or ‘wise one’. Murphy (2009), in her study of grandparents in Ireland, supports this by also identifying this paradox. She states that there is interplay between the grandmothers taking on the caring role, grandfathers stepping back, grandfathers wanting to be involved but parents asking the grandmothers to provide the care. We need to understand what are the masculinities of the men and the dynamics of being a male and having a grandfather role (Emslie et al, 2004). Research suggests that the identity of men as grandfathers is shaped by the current social context of divorce and family fragmentation (Uhlenberg and Kirby, 1998; Drew and Smith, 1999; and King, 2007). Grandfather identities and the grandfather-and-grandchild relationship have remained poorly understood in the current social context of family dynamics. Tarrant (2010) suggests that the grandmother responds on behalf of the grandfather in research. We must be mindful to enquire from all groups within contemporary society without bias or restriction on class, colour, social or work situation.

In Tarrant’s (2010) research, the participants offered that they engaged in various activities that reflected their identities as men, e.g. playing sport and socialising. However, research has identified the contradictory struggles men have between these masculine roles and the nurturing, caring roles which they also enjoy (Davidson et al., 2003; Murphy, 2009). This was expressed in the words of one participant in Tarrant’s (2010) study, who stated, “.... *I suppose I have become kind of modernised, by watching the way younger people today behave.....*” This development is as a result of the intergenerational interactions with his son, which suggests that grandfather involvement results in the construction of new identities and masculinities, in interaction with the men’s personal and familial circumstances. There is also the practice that some of the grandfathers make themselves available to the grandchildren as a counter action to the absence of their son-in-law. Whether men can be involved in the lives of their grandchildren, and who controls this relationship, is based upon the solidarity between grandfathers, their children, former children-in-law and their grandchildren (Katz and Lowenstein, 2010; Moore et al, 2012; and Timonen et al, 2013). Ross et al. (2005) corroborate that by not interfering in the parenting practice of the grandchildren, they will maintain a positive relationship with the children.

Tarrant’s (2010) study also highlights the role of the daughters or daughter-in-laws as the ‘gatekeepers’ to contact with the grandchildren. In this situation, the grandfather is witness

to a 'power over' relationship which usually results in a passive grandfather. Some men will also experience multiple generational identities and conflict. Within modern British society and increasingly in Irish society, we can identify men who may have left their first marriage and remarried and fathered children. They then have grandchildren to the first family whilst having children within their current nuclear family (Timonen et al, 2009). They simultaneously have to manage being a grandfather and a father (and possibly being employed). This has not been explored to date within an Irish or British context and identifies a major gap in the literature.

Much research has endeavoured to investigate the issue of reduced face-to-face contact of grandparents and grandchildren, whether due to acrimonious divorce/separation or simple geography of distance between residences (Quadrello et al., 2005; Katz and Lowenstein, 2010; Lesperance, 2010; Tarrant, 2010). Within contemporary Ireland, the interaction and development of relationships are enhanced and facilitated with information technology. This allows for the demolishing of the 'space' issues between grandchildren and grandparents (Mahne and Huxhold, 2012). This connection between the two generations does not need to be facilitated by the middle generation. This may be achieved through telephone or internet communications. However, this is not always possible within acrimonious relationships or in the case of younger children.

Men are developing new identities and masculinities as to their role in the family and wish to remain interactive with their grandchildren in contemporary societies. Current practices highlight the intergenerational transference of these identities. Many grandfathers are now learning to become nurturing, caring grandfathers through the example of younger generations (Brannen and Nilsen, 2006). However, this is only possible when access is present with the relationship being positive and cohesive (Tarrant, 2010). Researchers claim that the geographical distance between grandchild and grandparent have an influence on the involvement (Somary and Stricker, 1998). Uhlenberg and Hamill (1998) agree and offer that those grandparents that live within an hour from grandchildren, have more involvement in the family unit. Fahey and Murray's (1994) study found that the presence of family members living locally increased the degree of contact with kin. This Irish research pre-dates the divorce referendum in Ireland (Government of Ireland, 1997). In contrast, the positioning of divorced /separated/repartnered families within close proximity to each other in some communities is not always conducive to maintaining harmonious relationships. Furthermore,

up-to-date Irish enquiry is needed to determine from grandfathers their perceived position in these families that have changed in the socio-familial context.

Within the global context of mobility and emigration of family subsets abound which have a significant impact on grandparents. Geography and spatial awareness of the grandfathers role have been explored recently in the UK (Tarrant, 2010) and within the intergenerational literature (Timonen, et al, 2012b; 2013). What is recognised from Irish studies is the capital contribution the grandparents have made into the recent economic and cultural shift from a two-earner family to a one-earner family. Events in this period in Ireland witnessed an exodus of young people and young families to distant places, to start new lives. The impact of this emigration on grandparents who are ageing has not been explored.

2.2.8 Ageing and male identities

The social identities of men are invariably affected by ageing. Their view of this includes the effect of aging on their maleness and masculinity. This can also impact on their relationships and connections with others (Coles and Vassarotti, 2012). Masculinity of men is traditionally a hegemonic vision epitomised as a strong, young, healthy male who is dexterous and agile (Arber and Gilbert, 1989; and Berg and Longhurst, 2003). Older men will not have these abilities or bodily manifestations and therefore have difficulty in the transitional phase between the hegemonic vision and the evolutionary reality of masculinity, where the ageing process is both inevitable and universal (Coles and Vassarotti, 2012). In UK research, Simpson (2013) in a study of ageing gay men identifies the traumatic associations they hold in relation to growing old. This was particularly associated with the changing colour of hair in their pubic area. This was seen to be a major blockage in their establishment of relationships, particularly with younger partners. Within this research, it was identified that men were more willing to participate in the interviews if talking about health issues rather than their social worlds. Simpson (2013) suggested that this health element to research participation is often used as a ‘Trojan horse’ for access to interviews.

The ageing process and its acceptance have been explored for many years. Featherstone and Hepworth (1991) write that, as ageing occurs, the self and the physical body become separated as, the outside appears older and the inside remains ageless. This is the common

perception of older people, that they are trapped within the shell of an older person. Bourdieu (1984) discusses the ageing processes in men resulting in a loss of physical capital as the youth age (Mullen et al, 2007). Although this is appreciated, what is also valued within men's masculinities, are the economic and cultural capital that afford them status within their lives (Coles and Vassarotti, 2012). In turn, this will allow the ageing men to avoid feeling marginalised to the more hegemonic younger male, as they value this capital and view it as superior over the physical capital. Coles and Vassarotti (2012) suggest that middle-aged and older men also felt superior as they felt more in touch with their 'self' and felt peace and contentment, resulting in decision to sometimes distance themselves from the younger, aggressive male perceptions of hegemonic masculinities.

2.2.9 Masculinities

There is, within the research, acknowledgement of the power imbalance between the different genders (Pini, 2005; Sallee and Harris, 2011). In order to reduce this imbalance, there is a dressing down or dressing casually of the female attire, a reduction in the use of the makeup, and interviewing in a neutral space, preferably chosen by the participant. Research shows that male researchers use traditional displays of masculinity when performing research with male participants. The researcher during this research engaged with the participants through the medium of sports and socialising in the pub (McKeganey and Bloor, 1991). Connell and Connell (2005) stated in their seminal work that men demonstrated a display of masculine power in the vocabulary used when being interviewed by female researchers. They were also noted to use less sexualised and aggressive vocabulary in their discourse. This was demonstrated in an earlier study by Winchester (1996), who suggested that the female stereotypical role as an empathic listener to male narratives was seen by the participants (lone fathers) as the female role. Horn (1997) and McDowell (1999) also suggested that it is advantageous to be seen in these roles when interviewing men, who view the female interviewer as unthreatening and different. It was unpredictable how the participants for this research will relate to the researcher, as many may be of a similar age and from a similar cultural and generational period. Therefore, what was identified was that the researcher in this study approached the participants in a friendly, professional manner. However, research also discloses the unacceptable behaviour of an overly authoritarian professional approach.

When looking at the 'whom' of an interview, McDowell (1999) states that the gender is sometimes not the issue but the status of the person is seen as a negotiating factor in the discourse. The position held by the researcher to the participant may also be seen as 'power' participation within the interaction. Pini (2005) would agree with the 'whom' and 'what' but also suggests that the 'where' is a major element for the interview process. In this, the 'where' is part of the broader context for the researcher. In looking at this broader context, the gender of the interviewer may add to the limitation of the enquiry. However, it is anticipated, as the researcher is not a young graduate that there is a lesser opportunity for the men to be overtly powerful towards the researcher. Indeed this was seen in McDowell's 1999 study, where being an older and more experienced researcher enabled her to evade the difficulties a focus on gender might present. Traditionally, research looking at construction of masculinities has focused mostly on men working in 'female' occupations such as nursing and social work (Egeland and Brown 1989; Evans and Harris, 2004) and studies of men's health (Robertson, 1977). Within Sallee and Harris's (2011) research, data from the two studies was juxtaposed to illuminate the influences gender has on data collection. Findings suggested that participants portrayed differently to male and female interviewers especially, when discussing sensitive issues such as gender.

Researchers such as Gurney (1985) and Pini (2005) were all relegated to subordinate roles within the research enquiry. Sallee and Harris (2011) suggest that women who study male settings are challenged in gaining access and establishing a working rapport with the male participants. William and Heikes (1993), in their study of male nurses, found that the participants displayed social desirability bias, in that they expressed to the researcher what they thought the researcher wanted to hear. This does not advocate for symmetry in the researcher-participant relationship, as many researchers have suggested that too many factors other than gender affect the symmetry, such as race, sexual identity, class, professional status and age. There is no desire within the research to advocate for a homogenous interviewer-interviewee pairing based on colour, creed, religion or any other different character traits. Connell and Connell (2005), in looking at gender as a collective creation, suggests that traditional hegemonic masculinities (e.g. white, heterosexual, able-bodied) operate at the expense of women. Their peers sanction men who fail to meet these expectations. These men are identified as being gay, coloured/black, old or disabled. Notable from Sallee and Harris's (2011) research, is the expected gender performances displayed towards different researchers. To the male researcher the men express their sexual prowess and dominance over women. In

the research conducted by the female researcher, the men portrayed themselves as thoughtful and non-stereotypical of male gender roles. It was unknown how the participants in this study would respond, however, as a practitioner the research has worked with similar families and men for many years and is proficient in the language used and the empathic listening that will be congruent with the participants' narratives.

2.2.10 Men and Emotions

Men have been described as emotionally inept with Simpson (2013), suggesting that this type of reductive thinking has led to the so-called 'crisis in masculinity'. Men and emotions have been understood through frames that fail to illuminate the range and complexity of their emotional experiences or expression. Simpson (2013) offers that, if women have been portrayed in the literature as over emotional, then men have been caricatured as rational and have distanced themselves from emotionality. This emotional ineptness is stereotypical of men and contributes to their emotional oppression. Simpson (2013) suggests that men's emotions are gender and context based. Men may be predisposed to venting their emotions in line with their expectations within their gender and socioeconomic status (Mann et al, 2016). Sallee and Harris (2011) agree and suggest that within the male gender, the context by which men are permitted to express grief, joy and anger are through the mediums of bereavement, football matches and nightclubs.

Over time, however, it is possible that gendered emotions can change to be less traditionally gendered, re-gendered and in some cases de-gendered (Simpson, 2013). This is witnessed within the fatherhood literature, with the extremes between the absent working fathers (Lupton and Barclay, 1997) to the intensified forms of fatherhood. Simpson (2013) proposes that men do not lead emotionally stunted lives but that they have equally complex emotional issues as women. In support of this, Galasinski's (2004) study concluded that class, employment and ethnicity were actually more contributory to expression of emotions than gender. Within the research the identified disadvantaged site may identify similarities to these findings.

2.3 Concluding Thoughts: Rationale for new research on grandfathers

On investigation, several writers are excavating theoretical knowledge on grandfathers within the family system (Mann, 2007; Tarrant's, 2010; St. George and Fletcher, 2014; and Mann et al, 2016). Much of this appears to be in relation to hegemonic masculinity and intergenerational spatiality. Some allude in their research/studies to the roles and functions of the grandfather but they are limited nationally and internationally within similar contexts to Irish grandfathers. Arber and Timonen (2012) also recognise this dearth in the enquiry of grandparents. They highlight the fact that grandparenting may be a euphemism for grandmothering, as much of the literature mentioned assumes the grandmother to be the primary carer within the title of grandparents. Most of the literature enquire from grandparents, mostly the grandmothers, or the parents of the child. The literature sources are quite strong from America and the UK. In this context the grandfather appears to be the silent voice in the grandparenting structures. Within the proposed research, there were several areas from which enquiry could have been made as the lacuna is so great. An added novelty and merit of the research arose from the fact that it included grandfathers from nationally identified deprived areas and low socio-economic groups that were almost completely absent from discussions of grandparents' roles in contemporary literature. Some participants were also in the situation alluded to previously, of being new fathers and grandfathers at the same time. This constitutes another area where a contribution to the international literature was made through this study.

The studies mentioned, although beginning to explore the roles of the grandfather, are modest in their understanding of grandfatherhood today. The changing world of Irish society has signified a changing family structure. The participants in this system need to be understood in order to address any gaps that could affect the generational evolution. The studies fail to provide data, which could explain the social and psychological shift for grandfathers in this fluid world. No model of framework was identified in the literature as suitable to an Irish context which could explain or understand this transition of Irish grandfathers. Therefore, the aim of the study was to develop a substantive theory that understood what it is to be a grandfather in Ireland. The next Chapter explains the underpinning philosophical and methodological considerations of the study.

CHAPTER THREE: PHILOSOPHICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL PROPOSITIONS UNDERPINNING THE RESEARCH STUDY

3.1 Introduction

Early Greek philosophers, among them Aristotle and Plato, are accredited with the construction of a whole new method of reasoning (Osborne and Agogino, 1992). Their early focus explored ‘what is knowledge?’ and ‘what is truth?’ They provided the rigour and clarity from which the foundations of philosophy were based. Aristotle first attempted the classification of knowledge under the topics of ethics, logic, biology, metaphysics, politics, poetics and the categories. Philosophy evolved through the millennia, as did the advances in science. At the turn of the 19th century the sciences then bifurcated into the natural and social sciences under the influence of Weber (1864-1920) and Émile Durkheim (1858-1917) (Crotty, 2005). This allowed other sources - the human voice - to influence the research outcomes. The scientist, Thomas Kuhn, in the early 1970s, asserted that the approach scientists place on their work was based on a particular paradigm (Crotty, 2005). They, as a collective group, focused on common beliefs and views contributing to the worldview. The development and implications of Kuhn’s work led to the belief that there was no objective truth, but that truth changes depending on the paradigmatic approach to it. This then allowed for the introduction of subjectivity into this worldview and was described by Rolfe et al (2006) as a softening of the sciences.

Crotty (2005) offers that there are four elements or parts at play when developing a research enquiry. However, the elements are influenced by the research question posed. The researcher and the reader must be made aware of the assumptions made towards the epistemological, ontological, theoretical perspective and methodology that directs the research. This, in turn, is influenced by the philosophical position of the researcher and in the approach which they take to the enquiry. Although Grounded Theory was the methodology utilised in the study, much discourse surrounds whether the epistemological approach is objectivist or constructivist. Placing the research and the researcher within a constructivist epistemology bears true to the belief witnessed by the researcher in practice. In this regard, Charmaz’s (2006) approach to Grounded Theory acts as the template for the enquiry.

3.2 Philosophical Underpinnings of Research Paradigms

The researchers ontological position is embedded within symbolic interactionism in comparison to any other theoretical perspectives. At the core of the conflicts between different epistemological stances, is the belief of how it is we know what we know and how real this is to the believer. The epistemological positions of many researchers according to Oakley (2000) have been debated between two perspectives; Positivism and Interpretivism. Annells (1996), however, states that the ontological and epistemological beliefs of the researcher will determine the type of Grounded Theory that will be selected and used. With this in mind, the extensive level of work performed by the researcher on frontline services with people in the health sector between acute and community settings is acknowledged. Therefore, in a suitable fit, Charmaz's Grounded Theory methodology is employed for the researcher and the enquiry. This allowed for a constructivist epistemology with an interpretive, symbolic interactive theoretical perspective as will be further detailed.

3.2.1 Symbolic Interactionism

Amongst qualitative paradigms, one of the most popular ontological approaches is symbolic interactionism. This approach was developed by George Herbert Mead and made famous by Blumer who published Mead's work posthumously (Sarantakos, 2005). One of the elements encapsulated in this paradigm is that social life is expressed through symbols. Language is one of the most important of these symbols with body movement also being recognised as a relevant symbol in this context. The interpretations of other meanings on an action are only truly possible through dialogue. This paradigm also depends on the social actions and interactions between people. LaRossa (2005), stresses the need for a theoretical perspective which places language at the heart of the analysis. The meaning of '*things*' is interpreted by social interaction and which further acts as an instrument for guidance and formation of actions. These meanings are established, employed, managed and changed through social interaction (Blumer, 1986). Mead believed that we owe to society our Being based on symbolic significant gestures (Crotty, 2005). It is only through taking the standpoint of others that we can enter the attitudes of a community. The idea that participants place a meaning on an action is core to the theoretical perspective of symbolic interactionism. Merleau-Ponty and Heidegger (cited in Crotty, 2005, pg. 55) remind us of a world already there, whether human

beings are aware of it or not. The meaning that human beings place on actions or objects is only as a result of beings making sense of the object (Crotty, 2005). He further states that Grounded Theory spawned from this paradigm.

3.2.2 Constructivism

Maurice Merleau-Ponty (cited in Crotty, 2005, pg. 43) describes beautifully that the world can be pregnant with probable meaning, but it is only when the mind engages with the object that meaning can emerge (Crotty, 2005). To think in the ontological method of a constructivist is to believe that meaning is not discovered but constructed. Constructivists explore what is the nature and focus of reality. Constructing reality is contextually and culturally based within personal experiences. There is no objective meaning of reality or truth in practice, as reality is constructed. Therefore, meanings do not exist before the mind engages (Crotty, 2005). They self-construct the reality relevant to their person and based on personal interpretation (Sarantakos, 2005). The presence of reality is not in doubt. However, the reality needs to be given meaning and interpretation. This includes the meaning of the reality within the social context for these participants. Crotty (2005) purports that realism and constructivism is quite compatible as, '*a world without a mind is quite compatible but a meaning without a mind is not*' (pg.). The attraction of constructivism as a method is that it can bring together objectivity and subjectivity eternally. It allows the researcher to apply the meaning within the context to the object.

Much doubt has been placed on constructivism due to the belief that participants always assign meaning to objects without engaging in the social and cultural contexts. Sarantakos (2005) points to Schutz's (1971) proposal that the accuracy of the participant's construction cannot be tested. Crotty (2005) concludes that what constructivism informs unequivocally is that there are no true or valid interpretations, only useful interpretations.

3.2.3 Interpretivism

In unity with constructivism, Crotty (2005) explains that interpretivism linked to the thoughts of Max Weber, is the study of '*Being*' by which social actors can negotiate the meanings of their reality. Pfeifer (2000, cited in Sarantakos, 2005) explains interpretivism as the

exploration of local meanings from the participants. The emphasis is subjective, i.e. based on symbolic interactionism. Interpretivism is the key process that facilitates constructivism. It also involves the reflective processes and interactions of processes that constitutes and constructs new meaning. Interpretivism is not seen as an infallible approach to reality. Again, the credibility of the research is questioned, as the participants' meanings cannot be tested.

3.3 Grounded Theory: Background and Conflict

3.3.1 An overview of the original method

In order to understand the many schools derived from Glaser and Strauss, it is important to understand the original ideas of Grounded Theory. Hood (2007) writes of the process of Grounded Theory as having the key components of a systematic process of collection, coding, categorising analysing and categorising the data from the emerging data itself, rather than forcing preconceived ideas onto the data. Through constant comparison, additional data is acquired and coded until saturation occurs. This results in theory that is analytically grounded in the data. It was fundamental to Glaser and Strauss that, as the researcher passes through the research and comparative analysis takes place, they must be theoretically sensitive. This requires the researcher to have the skill of sensitively engaging with the data based on earlier knowledge and experience in the area of the data. Strauss and Corbin (1990) make the point that theoretical sensitivity is imperative to allow development of theory that is grounded, conceptually dense and well integrated. There is, however, a fine line between theoretical sensitivity and preconceived perspectives on the data. It is imperative that the researcher demonstrates expertise in Grounded Theory methodology through demonstrating insight into the data, the capacity to comprehend the data and the capability to differentiate the useful from the useless (Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

Grounded Theory is information that is induced from the data rather than preceding it (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Glaser and Strauss (1967, pg3) gave the definition that the theory should '*fit and work*' when put to use. Therefore the '*fit*' demonstrates that the categories are readily applicable to the data under study and the '*work*' suggests that the categories induced must be relevant and explanatory to the behaviour of the study. Thus, Grounded Theory is a methodology for accumulating data that is systematically collected and analysed (Strauss and

Corbin, 1990). The methodology aims to understand the processes and patterns of a social group of people who define their reality through their social interactions. Glaser (1992) believes that human existence has a latent pattern of which they are not aware. The goal of Grounded Theory is to make this pattern visible through the generation of theory that explains the patterns. Charmaz (2006) concedes that Grounded Theory combines the depth and richness of qualitative interpretations with the logic, rigour and analysis intrinsic in quantitative research. These processes and patterns are used within the central feature of Grounded Theory, which is the constant comparative analysis of the data. This process of data collection, organisation and analysis simultaneously epitomises the principle of Grounded Theory (Glaser, 1992). The researcher constantly compares the data as it is collected with other data acquired at the same time (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). The theory information gathered is conceptually dense or has many intangible relationships, which are embedded in the descriptive and conceptual writing (Higginbottom and Lauridsen, 2014). They are presented in discursive form. This differs to thick description of data, or phenomenological methodology, where the emphasis is on description rather than conceptualisation (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Grounded Theory advocates that the researcher looks for the phenomenon in the data. No preconceived notions or ideas or theoretical frameworks are employed to assist in the theory development. As Glaser (1992) firmly states, it is the management of the data that ensures the theory is not forced to fit. Charmaz (2012) suggests that, as most qualitative studies address the *'how'* and *'what'* questions, Grounded Theory gives the researcher tools to answer the *'why'* questions. She explains that this is through an interrogation of the data that the ideas emerge and are brought to a level of conceptualisation through the use of analytical questions.

Conceptualisation is the core process within Grounded Theory. The focus is not on organising the data but on organising ideas that have emerged from the data. Qualitative approaches focus on thematic and content analysis with the connections between the themes being underdeveloped. Grounded Theory surpasses the data to a higher level of conceptual analysis, resulting in links between categories becoming explicit. Grounded Theory can then be used to form substantive or formal theory. Glaser and Strauss (1967) purport that they can then be used as middle range theories between working hypotheses and Grand theory.

Unlike many other qualitative approaches, which are expressly thickly descriptive in their objective, Grounded Theory is purposefully explanatory (Crotty, 2005; Allen, 2010). The

Grounded Theory researcher does not believe in merely reporting the voice of the participants, they assume the further charge of interpreting what is read, said or observed (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). The major emphasis on Grounded Theory is theory development. LaRossa (2005) offers that Grounded Theory is the most popular qualitative approach for family theorising. He also offers that it is seen to be the most tiring of qualitative methods. However, it provides a most valuable set of tools for thinking theoretically about textual materials, i.e., through intensive interview transcripts, observational field notes and reflexive journaling. Charmaz (2006) remains passionate about using Grounded Theory suggesting it is '*exciting*' (pg. 72). Because of the extant theory nationally and internationally on grandfathers, Grounded Theory was an apt methodology in which to begin looking at this group of men both from a theory development and personal perspective.

3.3.2 Grounded Theory as a Methodology: Charmaz's Approach in Comparison to other Theorists

One of the major barriers in using Grounded Theory as a methodology is the constant battle between different Grounded Theory theorists, which contributes to the opaque and confusing guidelines. Despite originating from the same source and sharing many of the original methodological techniques, Classic, Straussian and Constructivist Grounded Theorists have lost their interchangeable and similar methodologies. Kenny and Fourie (2014) suggest that the fundamental conflicts remain with three specific areas of coding procedures, opposing philosophical positions and conflicting use of the literature. Glaser and Strauss (1967) made it clear in their initial work that they wanted other theorists to develop their own methods of generating theory within the guidelines created by them. Strauss and Corbin (1990) further suggested that the researcher should '*Study them, use them and modify them in accordance with the requirements of your own research...*' (pg.8). It is unacceptable to use bits and pieces, referencing from several different grounded theorists' work. The audit trail must be exact in relation to the coding and analysis and the researcher must disclose the specific techniques that were used (Charmaz, 2006). It is with this in mind that a thread of process, practice and procedure was chosen to suit the research and the requirements for the PhD award.

It is well known that Glaser and Strauss practiced research within a positivist environment in the 1960s. Research at this time was more deductive than theory building. It was not until

their shared study on dying individuals that the quantitative influence of Glaser and the symbolic interactionism of Strauss became amalgamated (Charmaz, 2008a). The development of an iterative and systemic process involving manual coding, categorising and comparison of the data minus the influence of guiding theoretical frameworks allowed an inductive method to be applied (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Ward et al, 2015). Bryant and Charmaz (2007) explores how this method allows for the positivist epistemological view of research that is systematic, replicable and rigorous, in addition to the symbolic interactionism view of human reflection, choice and action. It is believed that the differences in their epistemological and ontological views that, once brought them together to develop Grounded Theory were also the root causes of their differences resulting in their opposing ends (Devadas et al., 2011). The post-positivism of Glaser finally conflicted with the symbolic interactionism and pragmatism of Strauss and his ally Corbin. Mills et al (2007) would suggest that this was later affected by the belief that constructivism occurred with the existence of several other constructed realities. Glaser always contended that the methodology of axial coding devised by Strauss and Corbin was forceful and pushed data into predetermined categories (Charmaz, 2006). Constructivism, as proposed by Glaser (2002) is also used to legitimise forcing. He goes further to state that it actually is a justification for the researcher's impact on the data to be seen as more important than the participants.

When Grounded Theory began, many believed it belonged to a positivist paradigm, particularly in the management and interpretation of the data (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Grounded Theory aspired to develop theory without the subjectivities of the participants. Qualitative researchers who believed that the participants' stories were not being told rejected this. Glaser continues to argue that the theory should be emergent from the data and not from the socially constructed world (Glaser, 2002). Remaining pragmatic will allow the construction of an, '*interpretive rendering*' (pg. 184) of the research, rather than an external reportage (Charmaz, 2006).

As a student of Glaser and Strauss, (Kathy) Charmaz responded to their call in their seminal work 'The Discovery of Grounded Theory' (1967) to employ Grounded Theory flexibly in the researcher's manner (Charmaz, 2006). She adapted the dated methodology to a contemporary paradigm and developed Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT). Her rejection of Glaser's deductive tenets to a more constructive relationship between the researcher and

the person, sparked a shift from Glaser's philosophy and Strauss' prescriptive coding framework. This caused Glaser to shift his invective from Strauss and Corbin to Charmaz. Charmaz's constructivist approach is critiqued quite severely by Glaser (2002), as he describes the theory as a '*misnomer*'. Glaser based this on the fact that he states the theory is soaked in the rich description acquired rather than the conceptual theory. Although the processes between Glaser and Charmaz are similar in the methodology, the end result does not have a core category or a social process. Charmaz (2006) claims in her theory, that the complexities and uniqueness of the participants' experiences, generates the emerging theory. Mills et al. (2007) supports this theory and offers that the participants and the researcher truly become co-authors of the Grounded Theory research.

In 1995, Charmaz's first writings on CGT wrote that constructivism assumes that people construct the realities in which they participate (Charmaz, 2006). Charmaz, who suggested theories were constructed as a result of the lifelong relationships and interactions that researchers bring to the enquiry, opposed the notion that only one external reality existed, with the researcher as an objective observer. She further contends that these realities are compounded by the subjective continuous, on-going interpretations of the data based on knowledge, privilege interactions, perspectives and geographical proximity. Wertz et al. (2011) agrees that the end result is an interpretation of the multiple realities, mutually constructed by the researcher and the researched (Charmaz, 2008b). The researcher is charged within CGT to locate the researched reality within a larger discourse and social structure that they may not be aware of (Charmaz, 2008b). One of the main tenets of Charmaz's method is to give voice to the researched in a way not experienced before. This is achieved through partnership and collaboration.

Straussian evolution was unacceptable to Charmaz who described his highly systematic coding process as over-prescriptive (Charmaz, 2006). Strauss together with Corbin developed their strand of Grounded Theory further (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). They believed that abstaining from the literature prior to enquiry highlighted the difference of an open mind to an empty mind (Kenny and Fourie, 2014). This framework deviated from the emergence of theory to deducing theory from the data. This was anathema to Glaser who, for many years before Strauss' death, argued that he did not understand the methodology and suggested that he distorted Grounded Theory. Charmaz (2006) explains that the reasoning employed in Grounded Theory is abductive. It begins with inductive and becomes comparative, interactive

and iterative and later deductive (Charmaz, 2011). Charmaz (2006) explains that the Grounded Theory method is an abductive method, where we are testing out our hunches (Ong, 2012).

Glaser (2002) discounts the notion of intuition within Grounded Theory as constant comparison. The grounding of patterns in Grounded Theory is by the constant comparative method. Notwithstanding, the level of imagination of the researcher to code the narrative, will involve a level of researcher intuition and subjective knowledge. That said, the use of bias in Grounded Theory has been lauded by Glaser (2002) as a necessary variable, which Charmaz attempts to cover up. Glaser (2002) writes, '*It appears that constructivism is an effort to dignify the data and to avoid the work of confronting researcher bias*' (pg. 3). Glaser (2002) does not believe Charmaz's constructivist theory as being able to achieve this when he states, '*...Charmaz talks the talk of conceptualisation, but actually walks the talk of descriptive capture*' (pg. 3). However, in response to this comment, Bryant (2003) writes that '*...Grounded Theory is far too valuable a method to leave to the objectivists*' (pg. 5). Bryant (2003) follows with the suggestion that Grounded Theory has outgrown the realms of Glaser and as such his version of Grounded Theory is not the only option for researchers to employ. Glaser does concede in his 2002 paper that Charmaz's method is acknowledged as different rather than better. The option is for a Grounded Theory method based on objectivism or constructivism. This affords some respectful acknowledgement to constructivism as a legitimate variation of Grounded Theory. This also affords the belief that Grounded Theory has evolved thereby allowing the researcher to employ the best method to fit the enquiry.

Glaser (2002) identifies '*all is data*' as a statement specific to Grounded Theory, thereby suggesting that the activity in the research scenario is the data. This data is not bias, subjective or objective and the resulting Grounded Theory is a snapshot of a time, place and person. Glaser (2002) agrees that Charmaz's (2000) impression of Grounded Theory ... '*as a construction of the subjective interpretation of the mutual creation of the knowledge by the viewed and viewers...*' (pg. 510) is applicable to Grounded Theory, but that it is only a small piece of the Grounded Theory research. It is but a portion of '*all is data*' (Glaser, 2002, pg. 3). He remains, however, unconvinced that the method is conceptual and instead through invective, believes that by imposing a mutual interpretation, she is in fact offering descriptive capture. Bryant (2003) offers that Glaser is unclear as to how the theory is conceptualised.

Charmaz's constructivist Grounded Theory method is exact about suggesting that the discovery of conceptualisation occurs as a result of the conversation between the researcher and the research phenomenon.

In a response article to Glaser's diatribe on Charmaz's constructivist Grounded Theory, Bryant (2003) offers a succinct description of each concept of the Grounded Theory method. Objectivist Grounded Theory (Glaser and Strauss method), views the world as a neutral observer, where categories are derived from the data within an external reality. Constructivist Grounded Theory (Charmaz's method), concedes that the data and analysis is created by the viewer within the world as disclosed and with the viewed. Therefore, Grounded Theory is but a tool to conceptualise data. Glaser's staunch objectivist approach to the methodology unsettles qualitative researchers from using Grounded Theory. Turner (1982) epitomises Grounded Theory as an ideal method to capture theoretical accounts closely representative of the observed. These can then be openly corrected by the observed in a useful manner. He also states that this method assists the researcher in their application of intellect and imagination. I would offer that the intuitive skills of the researcher have also been utilised at this level. Turner (1982) would support this belief in that he states the resulting outcome of the research, through Grounded Theory, is reliant on the quality of the researcher's understanding of the research experience.

3.4 Grounded Theory as a Research Method – Core Characteristics of Charmaz's Approach

3.4.1 Recruitment, Sampling and Theoretical Sampling

The more homogenous the sample can be made, the better the inferences from the study (Cutcliffe, 2000). Cutcliffe also suggests that Grounded Theory sampling is confusing. Some theorists differ on whether to choose a broad approach to gain the maximum amount and variation of information (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) or, as Morse and Singleton (2001) suggests, the sample should be focused to seek out participants who have the most experience in the topic under study. In support of the narrow sample, Glaser and Strauss (1967) suggest if the intent is to induce data from one substantive group, then the sample must be narrow. Crotty (2005) suggests that there are different reasons to choose different sampling methods however, for the researcher the context of the enquiry is important. Access to the study

participants was initially through purposive sampling, as there was no existing evolving theory to guide the data collection (Coyne, 1997). This type of sampling allowed a choice of the individuals and location best suited to the enquiry (Cutcliffe, 2000). Within the Grounded Theory method, the foundation for emergent theory is developed with theoretical sampling (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest this term is synonymous with purposive sampling.

Purposive sampling does not merely include the selection of a particular sample but rather includes the requirement of certain characteristics. This includes avoidance of choosing the sample beforehand. The gap in the literature data is utilised to direct the researcher to the cohort. The point at which the researcher commenced data collection was not critical. The first participant in each of the sites was the pilot case and became the gatekeepers (A sample of the third participant is offered in Appendix I). As the theory is co-constructed, theoretical sampling directed the data collection. They had local knowledge within the research sites, that assisted in accessing participants as required in theoretical sampling. This also had the potential to act as a barrier to participation. To avoid this, leaflets and posters were distributed (as described later). Cutcliffe (2000) suggests that the Grounded Theory researcher selects an appropriate gatekeeper and thus suggests a-priori sampling. Lincoln and Guba (1985) infer a-priori is the idea that the sample is drawn in advance. They further counter argue by stating that there can be no a-priori and that any sample will do. However, Morse and Singleton (2001) stresses the importance of an adequate sample in qualitative enquiry to gain the maximum quality.

The gatekeepers were purposively chosen as they worked with men in each of the areas, assisting them through the RAPID themes of community involvement, integration and access to community resources. They were knowledgeable of the areas and of the population residing in the areas. The site areas under study were identified as lower socioeconomic with a high deprivation index. Furthermore, from the experience of the researcher, residents in the areas are cautious of persons they perceive to be from Governmental departments or similar. The information collected informed the direction of the data collection. In choosing the gatekeeper, the researcher was mindful of the geographical and residential knowledge of the participant. As theoretical sampling was developed from this participant, the choice of a

knowledgeable participant with a broad understanding of the social processes was required. Many of the community leaders in these particular areas are well-informed from a political, social and demographic perspective.

Theoretical sampling involves the gathering of data to expand the properties of a tentative category in theoretical sampling (Charmaz, 2012). It refers to sampling for development of a theoretical category and not sampling for population representation. After the initial coding and analysis of the data, alternative directions and sources were required to develop the theory. Through the analytical processes of constant comparison, the data was refined and the sample selection was further refined to obtain the ultimate co-constructed theory. The researcher can only declare the size and selection of participants and data after theoretical saturation has been achieved. Thornberg (2011) states that theoretical saturation is when you keep gathering data until no new properties of your data emerge. By the nature of the co-constructed theory and the theoretical sample, it is indicative of Grounded Theory that the researcher returns to the field during the analytical process to refine the emerging theory. Within this refinement process of the core categories, there was only a need to collect data relevant to the theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Of note in theoretical sampling and critical for the researcher to understand, is that theoretical sampling was not about representing the population or generalising the results (Charmaz, 2006). However, following the development of the theory the latent categories and concerns for these participants can be seen in other grandfathers and therefore suggests that this research was significant in offering the beginning of understandings into the world of grandfathers in Ireland.

3.4.2 Coding

The power of Grounded Theory began with coding (Charmaz, 2012). Coding was the first step in the analytical interpretation (Charmaz, 2006). It was the process that concurrently categorises, summarises and accounts for each piece of data collected. The codes were categorised into initial, focused and theoretical codes. They were described as being *in vivo*, from the participant's language or *in vitro*, constructed from the data (Glaser, 1978). A major concern for Glaser was that these codes must be emergent and earn their way into the theory from the participants. Glaser (1978) and Charmaz (2006) agreed that this single issue was

anathema to Grounded Theory. When concepts emerge as the data flows in, commonalities occur (Glaser, 1978). A point of note is that the analysis and collection in this study ran concurrently. With the use of comparative analysis, theoretical sampling and memo writing, development of the categories began. These categories are the chambers that hold the concepts and form the beginning of the analysis of the emerging theory (Glaser, 1992). The coding can be defined as;

(i) Initial Coding

The initial coding was quite descriptive of what was happening in the data. It was most successful when performed with speed and spontaneity (Charmaz, 2006). It can be word-by-word, line-by-line or incident-by-incident and depended on the participant's narrative and what was spoken of at interview. The benefit of this coding was the notion that the researcher stayed close to the data. Through the use of gerunds, the data was fractured into little pieces that gave clues for the researcher to follow.

(ii) Focused Coding

This was the second stage of the analysis and allowed for the coding to become more directed, selected and conceptual. It also allowed the processing of the most relevant codes to become visible (Giles et al, 2016). From this, codes that made the most analytical sense to categorising the data completely and incisively were extracted. It was an emergent process that allowed what was implicit in earlier coding to become more explicit. The focused codes allowed the data to become fragmented to enable the theory to emerge. Charmaz (2006), states that this is similar to the stage of axial coding as proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1990). Grounded Theory researchers acknowledge this as a frame for researchers to apply the codes to. At best, Charmaz (2006) describes this as a cumbersome process. For the researcher it felt in the early stages like the participants' disclosure was not being analysed. But the next stage quickly offered reassurance to the process.

(iii) Theoretical Coding

This stage was the most sophisticated as it supposes to offer links between categories developed at the focused coding stage. This coding attempts to, '*weave the fractured pieces back together again*'... (Glaser, 1978) (pg.72), thus allowing conceptualisation of the focused codes, moving the analysis to a theoretical direction. Glaser (1992) identified a number of coding schemas or families that may be used to view the data through, numbering 18 in total.

The family of the six Cs; cause, context, contingencies, consequences, covariance and conditions, is the most widely known and used by Strauss and Corbin (1990). Glaser (1992) suggested that they misused the themes resulting in a 'forcing of the data', anathema to the aim of Grounded Theory methodology. He believed that they were more concerned with the researchers' agenda than the importance of the data to the participants. Charmaz (2006) cautions that they should be used as required, clarifying the analysis but avoiding forcing a framework to the data. During this process of weaving the pieces back together a particular category kept re-emerging. The true voices of the participants could be seen and the formation of the emergent theory became visible. The core phenomenon from the participants were then captured under this theory (Charmaz, 2006).

3.4.3 Constant comparative analysis

One of the main themes in Grounded Theory is when data collection and analysis occur concurrently. This process was cultivated in the study by theoretical sampling and fortified by theoretical sensitivity. This was a repetitive process as the researcher returned to the data to elaborate, saturate and validate the emerging theory (Glaser, 1978). The intention of delimiting the theory was assisted by the repetitive processes. The codes were identified and compared with each other, and with the categories; and categories compared with categories. They were then compared with the emerging theory. According to Glaser and Strauss (1967) this demonstrates both the generation of Grounded Theory and the verification of the theory. As a process, it demonstrated inductive thinking by the researcher. Charmaz (2006) states that constant comparison offers 'fit and relevance' as the two criteria for Grounded Theory. Fit, as it fits the empirical world when you construct codes and develop categories. Relevance, as an incisive analytical framework, which interprets what is happening and makes relationships between processes and structures visible. With the development of the theory and the use of memo writing, the constant comparison finally ended when the 'writing up' of the theory ceased.

With regard to this study and to avoid getting burdened by the codes, it was vital as a researcher to engage in constant comparative analysis in order to offer a description of an incident rather than just offer codes. When reading literature on Grounded Theory, it is easy to believe that this process is linear and that one procedure follows another. These processes ran simultaneously during the enquiry, and in so doing led to the theoretical sampling, as the

need to revisit or explore elsewhere became necessary to develop the theoretical categories (Glaser, 2002; Charmaz, 2006).

3.4.4 Memos

Memo writing, as described by Charmaz (2006), is the pivotal intermediate step in the research process. It commenced early in the analysis process and prompted me to think and make notes on all the data that was collected. It captured and crystallized the main concepts and then directed me to look in different directions for more data (Charmaz, 2006). The constant memo writing challenged me to think and identify new ideas and insights. The analysis and illumination of theory was as a direct result of memo writing. Glaser (1992) identified that memos have a clear function in allowing the researcher to write down their biases and personal experiences thereby avoiding the distortion of the grounding of the theory. Juxtaposed to the memo writing the reflexive journal assisted me in bracketing any pre conceived thoughts or feelings prior to and after the interviews.

3.4.5 Female Enquiry From Male Participants

This study proposed that a female researcher speak and make enquiry from male participants. Pini (2005) suggests that we need to go beyond the gender of the researcher and instead understand that the gendered focus of the topic under study is critical in the establishment of a relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee. Her study offers that the questions required in order to understand the gender when interviewing are 'whom, what and where.' Masculinities are displayed by men who emphasise their heterosexuality, presenting themselves as powerful and busy, positioning themselves as having expert and superior knowledge (Pini, 2005). When interviewing men, Lee (1997) chose to minimise her femininity by dressing down and not wearing makeup, so as to reduce any sexual advances from her male participants. No intentional changes were being proposed by the researcher in this study. The interviews occurred at a suitable time for the men which was for the most in the evenings after my working day or at weekends in casual free time. Of note however was that the researcher was of a similar age to the participants and presented herself with appropriate maturity.

3.5 Concluding Thoughts

This Chapter outlined the epistemological, ontological and methodological propositions that have informed the process of enquiry. Having identified the critical approaches taken around symbolic interactionism, constructivism and interpretivism and their influence to the conducting Grounded Theory, the researcher explored the rationale for choosing Charmaz in contrast to the work of other qualitative Grounded Theorists, and although the writing of the thesis may have been challenging (Elliott and Higgins, 2012), it is also recognised as the most suitable (Gardner et al, 2012). Similar to Charmaz (2012) this method offers harmony with concepts such as power, privilege, equity and oppression. I therefore acknowledge my congruence with the methodology of constructivism as the method of choice for the viewed and the viewer in this study. The main tenets of Grounded Theory are identified in this Chapter and through the next Chapter the operationalisation of the tenets further demonstrate the fit of this choice for this enquiry.

CHAPTER FOUR: OPERATIONALISING GROUNDED THEORY METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This study design explored the experiences of grandfathers in Ireland. The overarching aim is to enquire and understand what it is to be a grandfather in Ireland. This study captured in particular the experiences of men living in identified disadvantaged areas in a border town in Ireland. The findings were co-constructed between the researcher and the grandfathers, with theoretical sampling as a core element of Grounded Theory study, directing the enquiry. Analysis of the main concerns raised began at the first interview with coding, theoretical sampling and constant comparison rendered throughout the study. Initial coding followed by focused and theoretical coding resulted in fracturing and reorganising the latent emergent issues. Co-construction demonstrated in the formation of properties and categories that captured the participant's main concerns on this topic. Throughout the stages of coding, memo writing allowed the emerging data to be theorised.

4.2 Research Aim

Within Grounded Theory enquiry the emphasis of the research question should emerge from the participants. Therefore, it was unfeasible to ask a direct research question (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser, 1992). The overarching aim of the research was to develop a substantive theory that understands what it is to be a grandfather in Ireland. This study captured in particular the experiences of men living in areas identified as disadvantaged. This was based upon the researchers initial focus identified from practice in regard to care of children requiring relative foster care. This is a starting point in the enquiry of grandfathers in Ireland where there is a dearth of information in their practices. This was the crux of this study.

4.3 Understanding the site

The areas identified for the research were two urban areas within a border town in rural Ireland. As identified in the origins of this research earlier in the thesis, the work of foster grandparents was most prevalent in these specific urban areas. Therefore, these were apt sites to focus on grandfathers' involvement where the grandfathers were becoming increasingly

valuable and visible to the State in the care of relative grandchildren. The areas were part of the Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development (RAPID) areas that are referred to as RAPID initiatives. RAPID is a focused Government initiative that targets the 51 most disadvantaged urban areas and provincial towns in the country (Pobal, 2013). RAPID aims to bring about significant improvements in the lives of the residents within their communities, by improving the delivery of public services through integration and coordination, improving the opportunities for communities to participate in the strategic improvement of their areas and giving, where possible, priority access of available resources to RAPID communities.

The RAPID initiative is implemented locally by a cross-sectoral area implementation team which includes representatives of the community, relevant State agencies and other partners, and is supported by a co-ordinator. Using the process of targeting State resources to the needs of disadvantaged areas, it aims to reduce deprivations faced by these communities. Pobal, established in 1992, is a not-for-profit organisation with charitable status that manages various funding programmes on behalf of the Irish government and the EU. Funding for this regeneration ceased through Pobal in 2012, although the areas continued to be identified as disadvantaged areas. The Local Government Reform Act, 2014 was enacted in January, 2014 and gives legislative effect to the commitments by local council committees to deliver the primary responsibility for coordinating, planning and overseeing local and community development. In 2016, a further €2 million has been assigned to the RAPID areas to assist with the housing crisis currently occurring in Ireland (www.Oireachtas.ie).

Haase and Pratschke (2012) developed the Pobal HP Deprivation Index, to provide up-to-date analysis of the changes in deprivation that have occurred in areas between censuses 2006 and 2011 (CSO findings have not been reported prior to thesis submission). The total population for the combined areas for 2011 (CSO 2011) is 22,370, of which 5,510 are men aged 30 and over. Of the population number, 81% were born in Ireland and 19% were born outside Ireland. Of the 81% born in Ireland, 83% identify themselves as white Irish with an additional 1.28% and 6% identifying themselves as white Irish Traveller and Other white, respectively. Of the male numbers, 33% are married and 69% describe themselves as other. Employment figures for the area show 42% of the males at work and 58% not at work. Within the areas, 37% of the adults were identified as lone parents, although this was not gender defined. A total of 1.3% of males defined themselves as carers of home and family

members. Again it is not made specific to who is cared for. Within the male cohort, 79% were educated to secondary level and 56% are employed to skilled manual level.

Disadvantage, according to Haase and Pratschke is based on three main determinants; Demographic Profile, Social Class Composition and Labour Market Situation. Based on this analysis, disadvantage and affluence are measured on a deprivation index of -35 (very disadvantaged) to +35 (very affluent). As per the deprivation index, the demographic profile is primarily a measure of the rural affluence/deprivation and is typically agricultural underemployment and/or emigration. With this is a mismatch of education and skill sets and availability of job opportunities. With the emigration focusing on core working groups and those with further education, the remaining population constitute a disproportionate cohort of economically dependent individuals plus those with a lower level of education. This in turn leads to a lack of economic and industrial investment and therefore a reduction in available services.

The social class composition is measured by the level of education, and the type of employment of the individuals. As social class is relatively stable over time it has an intergenerational cyclical impact on the cultural, economic and social aspects of individuals. Within the labour market determinant Haase and Pratschke (2012) state that this is a predominantly urban measure. Long-term unemployment results in hardship for individuals. From a social aspect, they state that the lack of role models impact on the social hardship, which is further compounded by the high levels of lone parenting. The combination of the analysis and the CSO figures renders the deprivation score for the combined site areas of this research as -14.4% (disadvantaged). However within the areas the range varies from 0% (average) to -26% (very disadvantaged).

4.4 Access and Recruitment

Within this community-based research, efforts were made to involve the targeted community in the planning, community preparation and actual recruitment process (Burroughs et al., 2003). The deprivation index score defines the socio-economic status (Haase and Pratschke, 2012). Working in the RAPID areas, the community occupants develop the general profile of the area in terms of psychosocial and demographic characteristics. Within the actual

recruitment, meetings occurred with two community group leaders who acted as the gatekeepers for the study, both as an information sharing activity and to learn more about the target group. These gatekeepers added credibility to the study. As the theory emerged, theoretical sampling directed the data collection and the gatekeeper's local knowledge was invaluable in accessing the data source needed. The gatekeepers also allowed the researcher to obtain a varied cross section of the participants and thus serve to represent the larger population of similar characteristics. The locally situated stakeholder provided the 'how to' in choosing the most effective methods for recruiting participants from the targeted community. The gatekeeper also served to provide positive public relation feedback, which established credibility within the community. This feedback then directly correlated to the degree of success the researcher had in the recruitment process. The gatekeepers provided information to the participants regarding those that could participate. Of more significance is the understanding that these gatekeepers were able to reassure the sources that there was no ulterior motives to the study other than to explore what grandfathering meant to them. This highlights the suspicions of the participants of any outsider as they perceive it, asking questions about their personal lives. The privileged position held by the researcher in this enquiry was reaffirmed by the participants and the gatekeepers.

To mitigate any bias that may be perceived by accessing participants through the gatekeepers, a broader access to the RAPID areas was employed involving flyers posted in various shops and community centres in the area where men frequent, to attract interested and eligible participants (see Appendix II). Unfortunately no responses were gained from this method. Understanding this outcome will be explored later in the findings where the men reveal how they choose to communicate. Advertisements were delivered in postal mailings to the area (via Post Office depot). Support was obtained from the local churches and organisations to advertise in their newsletters. Various voluntary groups used Facebook and social media, therefore information about the study was posted on these websites. A local five minute radio interview was also conducted to gain access to the potential participants.

There was no a-priori selection of the participants. The selection of men who participated in the study included those that identified themselves as grandfathers and who had physical contact with their grandchildren. No exclusion criteria were applied, thereby capturing the core issue of the grandfathers living in these nationally identified disadvantaged sites. Through theoretical sampling, the data directed the researcher to areas that explored the

emergent theory in greater detail and latent categories as the participants identified by the participants. As the theory emerged, it was co-constructed between the researcher and the participants (Charmaz, 2006).

4.5 Ethical Consideration

Inherent in all research is the necessity to protect the rights of the participants (Polit and Beck, 2006). The emphasis on ethical requirements recognised that the researcher had to balance the ethical principles and guidelines with issues of ‘not knowing’ beforehand and the emerging theory. In other words, the researcher needed to offer the participants enough information about the data collection process without pre-empting the theory that might emerge. Qualitative researchers have identified the challenges for participants and researchers in gaining informed consent, due to the complexities of not being aware of subject topics that may arise (Hollaway and Wheeler, 2004; Sarantakos, 2005). It may have been anticipated that there would be ethical issues in respect of the participants. However, as adults they gave voluntary consent and were not perceived as vulnerable. The researcher’s aims were to adhere to the fundamental principles of ethical consideration as described by Beauchamp and Childress (2001) of autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, and justice. Before the study commenced, approval was obtained from the ethics committee at Trinity College Dublin on 16th December, 2013.

Intrinsic to the research was the necessity to protect the rights of the participants. Anonymity/confidentiality was achieved by the impossibility of linking the participant to the data. Because open interview methods were used, anonymity could not be addressed completely, therefore the right to privacy was addressed through confidentiality procedures. The rights of the participants to disclose what they wish to disclose was reinforced (Hollaway and Wheeler, 2004). All names were changed to pseudonyms to protect participants. The participants were further reassured that all data was confidential and used for this study only. Invitation letters, information and consent forms were sent to the potential participant through the gatekeepers (see Appendices III, IV, and V). The participant then contacted the researcher who arranged to meet within seven days. At this time the information was given and an opportunity to discuss the study was allowed and any questions from the participant were addressed. Time was provided between receiving the information and attending for interview to consider the information and the purpose of the study. This information was also

reinforced at the start of the interview, prior to obtaining written consent. At the time of voluntary consent, the study was explained and participants allowed to withdraw from the study (Polit and Beck, 2006).

As referred to later, (section 4.7) the confidentiality of the information became quite relevant when the men refused to be audio-tape recorded during the interviews. Reassurance was offered that no link between what they said and what was recorded in writing would be made to them. Of note was that at several periods during the interviews prior to the Boston tape event, the men had asked me to switch off the recorder for them to speak unrecorded on the audio-tape but the discourse was not disallowed from the research. On a personal level, I realised shortly after commencing the interviews, that the men had experienced certain similar challenges in their lives. As a researcher I was aware that I was privileged to be allowed to interview these men and took responsibility for my own safety. Prior to the interviews a request was made of the men, not to disclose anything to me that may be perceived as ethically challenging to my position as a person, a nurse and an Irish citizen. The men understood and were pleased that I had thought about the circumstances of their disclosure before interviewing.

The recordings and field notes were seen by the researcher only and stored in a locked cabinet in the researcher's home. The supervisor had access to the transcripts and notes only, but not the recordings. Reassurance was also given that all names and places were coded for anonymity. Computer data was only accessible using a password known only to the researcher. This data will be kept for five years and then destroyed (Data Protection Act, 2003). For protection and anonymity of the participants all names and places were removed from the transcripts. There was reassurance throughout the interviewing that the participants could opt out at any stage. The participants were able to see the transcript very soon after the interview to confirm that it represented the narrative. In addition, contact details of counselling services, HSE and TUSLA services, legal aid and Citizen Information Bureaus were provided for further exploration of any issues that were raised during the interviews.

4.6 Data collection

Lincoln and Guba (1985) state that the unstructured interview is the mode of choice when the interviewer "does not know what he or she doesn't know" (pg. 269) and relies on the

participant telling them. In other words, the researcher wants the participant to tell them the questions that they should be asking and then answer them for the researcher. This enquiry was through individual interviewing, thereby allowing the participant to speak freely in private about their views. As this group are traditionally challenging to access, focus groups would not be suitable. Enquiry in this identified disadvantaged site may raise similarities to Galasinski's (2004) findings, where men within a certain social class may not express their emotions freely in the company of others in their class group. This choice was apt as some of the men in the study alluded to a past life, where they had to remain stoic in the face of situations and occurrences that were antagonistic for them. The quality of the relationship between the interviewer and the participant can be characterised in various ways, from the limited survey interviewer to the phenomenal interviewer. This is similar to the interviewer as a novice or as an expert, when engaging in any enquiry. Of significant note was the respect shown to the researcher by these men, fundamentally based upon a belief that both parties were cognisant of historical events in the geographical area and of the subject of the enquiry.

4.7 The Interview

To capture the participants' issues, an audio-tape recorder was used to record the interviews. Glaser (2002) would firmly disagree with this as he suggests that too much data is collected and the abundance of data allows for the main issue to be obscured. As a novice of Grounded Theory, the use of an audio device allowed me to immerse in the narrative after the interview and also revisit the words and nuances used in the interview. Revisiting of the transcript occurred as the theory emerged and was co-constructed with the participant. The use of the audio device also permitted the researcher to listen to how the questions were asked and improvements were made for future interviews. During the interviews, notes were taken as analysis began and codes were identified from an early stage.

During the data collection and particularly relevant to the theoretical sampling in process, an unexpected event occurred. After accessing and interviewing 18 participants, the news of the Boston Tape scandal broke and was topical on media forums;

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/04/26/us-court-orders-boston-college-to-hand-ira-tapes-to-police-in-no/>

All interviews up to this point were audio-tape recorded and transcribed verbatim. I encountered difficulty accessing men as directed by theoretical sampling and therefore returned to the gatekeepers for assistance. I was advised to wait a few weeks to allow the men to understand the consequences of the media reports. Within three months I was able to access five (5) more men however from this point onwards no audio-tape recording were permitted to be used by the men. This also applied to the seven (7) men I had interviewed earlier and returned to, to clarify that the emerging categories were accurate and develop the categories. I was permitted to take notes throughout the subsequent interviews. At this point I was competent in acquiring the knowledge and notes I required and became a phenomenal/expert interviewer.

4.8 Profile of the participants

In total there were 30 interviews; 18 tape recorded; five (5) unrecorded with field notes; and seven (7) return interviews of the 18 original interviews. In total there were 31 hours of interviews and 153,351 words of transcript from the taped interviews and field notes of untaped interviews. This time did not include the periods spent with the gatekeepers or with the participants in social conversation before and after the interview. The demographical profile of the men can be seen in Table 1 below. The age profile of the men when they became grandfathers was 47 years with a range from 32 years to 62 years. A total of 12 men had been incarcerated; nine (9) participants were ex-political and three (3) were ex-criminal prisoners. Of these 11 defined themselves as internally displaced. Two (2) of the men were remarried with young children and one (1) man had a second family to a second partner. Two (2) men were stepfathers and one (1) man was a long term relative/custodial foster carer. One (1) man was foster carer for numerous children over his life time. One (1) man was a great-grandfather and was the oldest gentleman at 87 years old. One (1) man became a grandfather at 32 years old. The men were evenly recruited from both of the research sites.

On average the men had 3-4 children and approximately 3-4 grandchildren. Other facts relevant to the demographics and context of the men in the study were that they had; one (1) adult child deceased; one (1) foster child; four (4) adopted children; four (4) stepchildren; two (2) foster children; and five (5) great grandchildren.

Table 1: Demographical profile of the participants

Pseudonym Date of Interview	Age he became a Grand- father	No. of Children	No. of Grand- children	Ex- Political/ Criminal Prisoner	Marital status M- Married D= Divorced W= widow G= gay	Children abroad EU	Children abroad Non EU	F=Foster A=Adopted S=Stepchildren SF= Stepfather D=Deceased
Liam 18.2.14	57	3	1	Yes	Married	No	No	No
Joseph 24.2.14	37	5 (2; 1; 2)	2	Yes	2 nd Marriage	No	No	No
Ronan 26.2.14	42	2	3	2	M	No	Yes	No
Gerard 17.4.14	53	3	5	Yes	M	No	No	No
Eamonn 23.4.14	62	3	3	No	M	No	No	F
Sean 30.4.14	41	5	3	Acquitted	D, G	No	Yes (Gaul)	F
Emmet 23.5.14	60	3	8	No	M	No	Yes	F
Martin 23.5.14	62	2	4	No	W	Yes	No	No
Oscar 23.5.14	59	2	4	No	W	No	Yes	A
Paddy 19.6.14	42	5	3	No	M	No	No	No
Ciaran 19.6.14	54	2	2	No	M	No	No	No
Kevin 23.7.14	38	5	3	No	M	No	No	No
Harry 23.7.14	32	1	2	Yes	M	No	No	No
Fionn 24.7.14	42	3	6	No	M	No	No	No
Rory 8.10.14	42	5	2	Yes	M	No	No	No
Cormac 10.10.14	46	6	3	Yes	D	Yes	No	No
Shea 21.10.14	43	5 (3; 2)	5		2 nd Marriage	No	No	No
Brian 22.10.14	41	5	5	Yes	M	No	No	No
George 20.11.14 No recording	55	1	4	No	M	No	No	SF
Eoin 22.11.14 No recording	40	6 (2; 6)	5	Yes	D	No	Yes	No
Donal 19.1.15 No recording	42	4	5	No	M	No	No	No

Callum 19.1.15 No recording	46	4	7	No	M	No	No	1=
Gerard (2) * 20.4.15 No recording	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Joseph (2) * 28.5.15 No recording	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Shane 16.2.15 No recording	62	3	2	No	SF	No	No	SF
Harry (2) * 2.2.15 No recording	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Rory (2) * 13.2.15 No recording	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Liam (2) * 2.4.15 No recording	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Ronan (2) * 20.5.15 No recording	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Brian (2) * 21.5.15 No recording	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

(*2) denotes second interview)

Carter et al (2000) states that within qualitative enquiry the use of interview guide is very popular. To provide ease for the participant, a small set of questions were used to enquire about the demographic details of the participant, e.g. name, how many grandchildren they had etc. However, the conversation was opened by asking the participants, *'What it means to be a grandfather?'* Emergence in the narrative occurred when the researcher listened. Using participants' own language (in vivo codes) at all levels of coding added to the credibility of the findings (Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Charmaz, 2006). In addition, memo-writing allowed the researcher to be creative and identify the latent pattern to emerge and be co-constructed (see Appendix VI). The interviews were self-reports and therefore accurate. It would have

been uncomfortable for these men if I had sat quietly and did not speak, therefore I did paraphrase as was necessary, to clarify and explore further the rich meaning of the participant's subjectivity on the topic, in addition to demonstrating gratitude for their honest contribution. This is further evidence of Charmaz's co-constructive Grounded Theory as the appropriate choice for this cohort. The use of non-verbal prompts/cues were displayed by the researcher to extract richer data, e.g. eye contact, nodding of the head, open body posture, etc. (Silverman, 2006).

This method had reflexive elements which the researcher examined before the interview, during and immediately after in memo writing (see Appendix VII), which were then incorporated into the coding and analysis (Charmaz, 2006). Reflexive notes were also written prior to and soon after the interviews to bracket the feelings and pre-conceived notions of the interviewer. The settings were private, comfortable, quiet and calm, with adequate heating and lighting. They were chosen to suit the participant. Interviews lasted 70-120 minutes.

4.9 Understanding the men in the research

For the reader to gain some context of the men that answered the invitation to this enquiry, the following descriptors give a view into the worlds of the men in the study.

Figure 1: Sample descriptors of the grandfathers in this study

Grandfather who spent time in gaol for political crimes

This man originated from either side of the border area that divides Northern and Republic of Ireland. He lives with his family near to the border to maintain contact with his extended family in Northern Ireland. This position during The Troubles also allowed the combatant to maintain continuous activity in the political cause. Gaol time was spent in the decades of the 60's, 70's 80's and 90's. Gaol for all these men was in Northern Ireland or England. Other political prisoners captured in the Republic of Ireland were gaoled in England and their release differed to those that were gaoled in Northern Ireland. This grandfather has residual issues that have been unaddressed in the Good Friday Agreement and remains contentious with these men. Of significance is that these men were not permitted to travel outside of Europe.

Grandfather who spent time in gaol for other crimes

This grandfather originates from the Republic of Ireland and has been gaoled in an Irish prison for criminal activities deemed as unlawful. These men were not permitted to travel outside of Europe.

Grandfather who is a full time relative foster parent

This grandfather is older in age and has been appointed by the courts service to become a fulltime foster parent for the care of his grandchildren. The role is shared with his wife, the children's grandmother. These grandparents are matrilineal grandparents. The role is an extension of the role played as a father. There is no knowledge of the child's fathers' relatives; therefore, this grandfather has no respite from their care. Offers are made from the social worker services but refused. The rationale for the care of the grandchildren fulltime is based on the awareness that the children could be given to 'strangers' as an alternative to family members.

Grandfather who is now in a relationship with another man

This grandfather was married in a period in Ireland where homosexuality was a criminal and religious offence. Within current liberal Irish legislation, this grandfather has had the opportunity to leave his marriage with his wife to enjoy a relationship with another man. He remains the main carer of his younger children and maintains healthy and loving relationships with his older children and their children.

Grandfather who enjoys children and grandchildren of the same age

This grandfather fathered children as a young man who has now borne children, his grandchildren. This grandfather is now in another relationship and has young children. These children are the same age as the grandchildren.

Grandfather who is unable to enjoy the grandchildren in Ireland

This grandfather is aware that he has grandchildren but is unable to gain access to the children. This is due to the governance of the adult children, mostly the mother, that does not permit access to the children

Grandfather who is unable to enjoy the grandchildren abroad

This grandfather is aware that he has grandchildren in another country. For the grandfather, who is an ex-prisoner, access to the grandchildren is not permitted if the children reside outside of Europe.

4.10 My role as enquirer

Essential in qualitative enquiry is the need for reflexivity and the requirement of the researcher to document their position within the research enquiry and their perspective around the issue of enquiry. Within Grounded Theory, there is a requirement to come clean and fresh to the induced theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). However, many have written since to state that this is impossible and in fact within qualitative enquiry, theories that are induced will always contain a portion of the researcher's personal lived experiences (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). They also emphasise that what makes data valid is the privileged access, with sufficient intensity and duration that the researcher has with the participants. This concept applied in this research. However with this in mind, the use of Lincoln and Guba's (1985) framework of *'Me as an Instrument for data collection'* was a credible tool for me to apply and use.

They suggest that the human as an instrument has unique characteristics that are necessary for naturalistic enquiry. The human as researcher, has the ability to respond to the environment and the cues that occur making explicit the themes that emerge (Responsiveness). They are adaptable to the situation and can collect data about multiple factors, at different levels simultaneously (Adaptability). This area I felt competent in, as my career spans 34 years with experience and intuitive skill interacting with families from the cradle to the grave. As a human instrument with adaptability, the situation under enquiry was viewed at a given time, in one holistic piece. Again, this was a skill that the researcher had acquired, which has been refined over years of practice working within families and communities (Holistic emphasis). Depth and richness can be gathered through the preparatory enquiry and the tacit knowledge combined and possessed by the human instrument, the researcher (Knowledge-based expansion). The ability of only the human instrument to enquire, interpret and synthesise that which is gathered within the space of the interview situation, is known as Processual Immediacy. This can also be described in nursing

practice as Benner's work on Novice to Expert (1984). The ability to act intuitively is part of the expert practitioner's responsiveness, thinking on their feet and interpreting the situation, while within the action of the moment.

Strauss and Corbin (1990) state that Grounded Theory procedures force us to ask within the process, as the knowledge is linked closely with time and space. With the researcher as the human instrument possessing the above characteristics, opportunity to feedback to the participant is exclusive and gains further clarification and amplification of the information received (Opportunities for clarification and summarisation). Within the clarification is the opportunity to validate such responses and thus, possibly, achieve a higher understanding. This is exclusive to the human instrument, the researcher (Opportunity to explore atypical responses). Within this enquiry there were opportunities to revisit some of the grandfathers for theoretical sampling of the data emerging.

With qualitative enquiry comes the doubt of trustworthiness. Again, Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that the human as instrument is as trustworthy as any tool used in positivist enquiry. However, just like any manufactured tool, the human enquirer needs to be refined in order to improve and make them acceptable. In this, the instrument needs extensive training and experience. This also carries another benefit; the human as an investigator can achieve high levels of trustworthiness with the ability to learn and profit from their experiences. This is further enhanced with the support of an expert supervisor. As an instrument there is an expectation that the researcher will have an extensive background in enquiry. They also possess the ability to learn and profit from experience and, when combined with the mentorship of an expert supervisor, the level of trustworthiness can reach higher levels than ordinary standardised tests (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

One of the greatest traits that the researcher took to this enquiry was the level of tacit knowledge acquired throughout their professional career. As a practitioner and student in the health and academic institutions of Ireland and the UK, spanning 34 years' experience in the acquisition of knowledge from persons of all ages. This has been combined with formal and informal education and training in the skill of active listening and the art of reflection-in-action (Schon, 1983). Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe this tacit knowledge as the set of understandings that cannot be defined. Benner (1984) offers this is the 'gut' or 'intuitive' feelings experienced in practice. Heron (1981) develops this concept further by offering that

the reciprocal and open relationship is needed between the researcher and the participant in order to obtain the maximum knowledge from the participant. Heron's understanding is such that to exclude tacit knowledge, is to omit an indispensable portion of the research process, whether its influence in the enquiry is recognised or not. As the human instrument is the sole instrument that can build on tacit knowledge it is not acceptable that this tacit knowledge is left to the reader. The role of this human instrument, me, is to develop the tacit knowledge thereby communicating the knowledge in an explicit and communicative form and convert it to what Heron (1981) describes as propositional form. This is the researcher's stance and proposed support of the epistemological attitude of constructivist Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 2006).

4.11 Member checking

My career as a health professional in community practice has afforded me many years of experience working and engaging with persons from similar backgrounds to the men in this enquiry. This is considered advantageous within the enquiry, as there is an empathetic and knowledgeable understanding of the enquiry site and its population. As identified in the literature, as the enquirer is female, the discourse of the participants may be altered or softened as a direct consequence. The use of the reflexive journal has helped to monitor thoughts and any significant issues that arose. Member checking was beneficial to check with the men that their comments had been translated accurately to include their concerns as some of the men were more articulate than others. Coding, memo writing and returning to the participant to re-interview a second time further clarified their thoughts and emerging concepts. Credibility developed further in the study as I moved from one interview to the next. The men were obviously having discussions on my research and finding details about my lived background. This reassured me further that the stories they offered me were real and authentic. I was also of a similar age to most of the men with a local knowledge of places and events as they recalled for my records.

4.12 Data Analysis

Charmaz (2006) suggests that the logic of Grounded Theory is that it allows the researcher to go back to data and forward to analysis. Returning to the data source allows the researcher to gather more data as the theory emerges and refines that data into an emerging theory. In

doing so the researcher avoids the results being viewed as lacking in rigour and credibility, superficial in depth and descriptive rather than abductive in method. Charmaz (2006) writes that this ensures that all possible theoretical explanations explored and examined offered the most plausible theory.

4.12.1 Coding: Initial, focus and theoretical

Coding began immediately after the interviews. Listening to the recording and reading the transcript simultaneously allowed opportunities to feel for the nuances and the meanings in the transcript. Coding was line by line initially. Charmaz (2006) describes coding as the pivotal link between data collection and the emerging theory. This process was initially to collect the words spoken and describe them. There were copious codes and they were descriptive and of little value. I did, however, enjoy this process as suggested by Charmaz (2006) as it was quick and captured my first thoughts on the interview before analysis began. In order to examine the codes, it was viewed from different angles and perspectives to try and categorise the codes. Lines were converted into gerunds to facilitate analysis. As predicted, the practice experience and the literature seen by the researcher affected this section of the analysis. With total self-awareness, reflection and use of the memo writing, this did not influence the emerging themes and categories.

Some 'in vivo' codes were mentioned - words used by the participants. These were captured as they represented the terms and language that the participants placed on their main concerns. Some examples were; rocking the boat and GRATHER. Constant comparison was also applied to these codes but the codes became important from the participant's perspective. The codes then became more directed as focused codes. It was at this point that the selectivity and analysis occurred within the theory developed. The initial codes were now assessed to decide if they could make sense of the data. Following focused coding came theoretical coding, although this did not occur in a linear fashion. Rather, the analysis was simultaneously initial coding, focus coding and then theoretical coding. Focus coding enables the researcher to further synthesise the data around the main category that is emerging. The data was fractured into pieces to explore and allow theory to emerge.

Finally, the process of linking the categories together occurred in what is known as theoretical coding. This, as with the other codes, emerged from the data without being forced

(Glaser, 2002). Gubrium and Holstein (1997) suggest that Grounded Theory allows the researcher to ask the 'why' question by understanding the relationship between 'what's' and 'how's' as the data is interrogated. When the point arrived when I felt the categories were developed and the main issue had been coded and synthesised, the main concern was finally coded within the context, with theoretical saturation being reached. Charmaz (2006) highlights how saturation may not be reached until the final thesis is complete, as coding and categorising continues with the researcher's thoughts, always considering different aspects to the main concern. Concurrently operating at the time of coding and in order to allow the theory to emerge, was the process of constant comparative analysis. This continued and will possibly continue for me after the thesis is written.

4.12.2 Theoretical sampling and saturation

Theoretical sampling is not about sampling people, but the emerging concepts that support the generation of the theory. This is a defining feature of Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 2006). As there is no emerging theory at the beginning of the research, purposive sampling is required. For reasons identified in Chapter Two, this suggested the importance of exploring the extant research in this area of grandfathering. Following initial coding, comparative analysis and the development of some emerging categories, I enabled through the gatekeepers to access those men that could fill the knowledge gap to support the emerging theory. This analytical work prompts the researcher to predict where and how you can find needed data to fill the gaps in the theory and saturate the categories. It is through the theoretical sampling and returning to the field of enquiry with seven of the participants that I was able to develop full and robust categories, make relationships between them and identify the latent concern of the participants.

4.12.3 Memo writing

The use of memo writing during the coding stage facilitated the emerging data to become clear. These were both reflexive and theoretical in support of sampling. Memos are sometimes referred to as reflexive journals (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). This clarity then allowed the concepts to develop and guided the researcher to the theoretical sampling stage that developed the emerging theory. A notebook and pen was carried at all times. It was in

the periods between interviews, the mists in between, that I understood the latent concepts. Some of these ideas were triggered by comparisons to other events in life e.g. newspaper articles or a radio conversation or musical work. This offered the opportunity to further explore the codes and properties rather than accepting them as they had arisen.

The memos also allowed me to express my biases, particularly if there were any a-priori knowledge or beliefs in the research area. The memos were also used to revisit thoughts/attitudes as the data emerged. Within the memos the questions that may not have been answered were identified and particularly helpful for theoretical sampling and revisiting the initial interviews. This was crucial, as the main concern did not develop at the first interview, and when revisited was not clear. It was however, becoming clearer on the second and subsequent interviews. The memos were also beneficial for providing an audit trail for the theory.

An additional unexpected event was the self-development of the researcher through the discourse of the participant's narrative. An example of a reflexive memo relating to the emergence of the latent concern is seen in Appendix VI. Strauss (1987) stresses the importance of the researcher making explicit their position in relation to the research. A basic tenet of constructivist theory is the belief that the researcher will lay their cards on the table and allows their perspectives and priorities to be taken into account (Lather, 1991; Bryant and Charmaz, 2007). I was mindful throughout the PhD journey that I was of an age and practical experience that might influence the data. The experience held before this programme was the catalyst for exploring this programme of study and enquiry. Therefore, theoretical sensitivity was ever more important and my life experience of working and living in the surrounding geographical areas of this study were noted by me through my reflexive journal. My reflections cover a breadth of topics from my life course including social identity, historical experiences and beliefs from my childhood, growing up at a border town, my working life, my career, my academics, my personal life and my life now in career and doctoral studies. In my reflexive journal I aimed to capture and understand the links or similarities of the participants' stories with my memories or beliefs of the researcher. The process of dates and times of interviews and meetings was also noted in the memos, which offers alignment of the advancement in my own development throughout the process.

4.12.4 Computer Technology

The intention was to use nVivo software to assist in the analysis of the data. This package is specific to qualitative data analysis. Training was received with the provision of support when the data collection commenced. The benefit of the package is the ability to run reports and different presentations of the codes and to be able to generate trends in the data quite quickly. While this is of benefit, it is important to stay immersed in the data, to think about the context of the main concerns that would arise. Following the training, I did not feel that I was remaining close to the sample pieces I had inputted. Although the package allowed for memo writing, Glaser (2002) states that this method affects the level of creativity when compared to using pen and paper. On discussion with the instructor, a highly experienced person in this field, I expressed my desire to work on the data myself. I wished to remain close and tentatively declined further training. The instructor was reassuring and explained, “That many people, of a certain age”, liked to work from Post-its and highlighter pens. Work was easier with the added use of a white board and A3 sheets on the complete wall of my front sitting room. It is also acknowledged that many thoughts and ideas on analysing data may develop or become illuminated within the periods away from the data. For me this was also true and I carried a notebook at all times.

4.13 Dissemination of the emergent theory and findings

As a result of the theoretical gaps from this proposal, the research findings should be of particular interest to academic schools including social policy, gerontology, children’s centres, psychology, cultural studies and social and political economics. Other organisations (specific to children and grandfathers/parents) may also benefit from the findings in methodology, gender studies, human resource management and ageing organisational studies. There is also an identified importance for these findings in Government Departments particularly Justice, Foreign Affairs, Social Protection and Children and Youth Affairs including organisations relating to adoption and foster care. The sharing of the findings and methodological design for this enquiry is expected to be shared across a multidisciplinary/professional arena through presentation at conferences and publications in appropriate journals. Within the school of Social Work and Social Policy, engagement in seminars and conferences will help to disseminate the findings. The study findings will also be shared through the school website, and working papers, articles and conferences. Targeted

peer reviewed journals will be engaged to publish different threads of the research and the findings. In addition to academic value, as the researcher is currently employed in the Public Services and operational at senior level on National childcare committees and areas that involve the care of children, the practical policy value of the information will be offered to organisations and State departments (TUSLA, Department of Justice) to contribute to the policy on men who are grandfathers and on issues identified as promoting the best interest of the child. Provisional meetings have been arranged to discuss the research findings relating to adoption and foster care, with the Rapporteur for Children, Mr Geoffrey Shannon.

4.14 Concluding Thoughts

This Chapter describes how Charmaz's approach to Grounded Theory was operationalised in the conduct of this enquiry through the underpinning propositions. Issues of practicality discussed relate to sourcing and collecting data from the participants. The interviewer's reflection of the process were employed and supported and are the main tenets of Charmaz's Grounded Theory. In this manner, an unbiased approach is visible. Emphasis throughout this section was placed on the unique background and accessibility of this cohort and the role of the interviewer. Without credibility in this role, the research may have been significantly reduced and most probably ceased after the 18th interview. For this, I am grateful to the participants for continuing to engage with this enquiry and through the dissemination process. I will endeavour to allow their main concerns to be heard. The next Chapters (five to seven) describe the theory as it emerged under the properties that form the categories; Life before grandfathering; Life on being a grandfather; and Life as a grandfather with others.

CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS - LIFE BEFORE GRANDFATHERING

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this research is to develop a substantive theory of what grandfathering is as experienced by a particular cohort of men in an urban border area outside of Dublin. Following the principles of Grounded Theory as a construction of reality in a particular moment of time with men who were grandfathers and within a trajectory of an interpretative picture of a studied world, the theory emerged. This did not happen suddenly or at one moment in time but rather as a combination of the generalisable and contextual analyses (pg. 46) weaved through the prism of co-construction with the participants. The emergent theory was unexpected to any suppositions or presumptions before data collection. The direction of coding took the researcher away from the expected, to areas unforeseen from my initial expectations.

The study identified the overwhelming belief expressed by the grandfathers that to be given a second chance to either remedy, or continue on the trajectory of making up to the grandchildren for the sins committed as a father to their own children, was paramount. The theory emerged from the data and was constructed between the researcher and the grandfathers when describing how their feelings were when talking about grandchildren. An overwhelming reaction portrayed by the grandfathers was the value that was placed on someone actually wanting to hear what they had to say on the topic. Throughout the study the honesty displayed by the grandfathers was retracted several times as they felt they were being in some way disloyal to their own children by speaking of the love they had for their grandchildren. This love was expressed as a greater emotion than they felt for their children either as young or adult children. This love is portrayed in much of their narrative and is summed up by one man who said, "*The first grandchild is the baby Jesus.*" This is explored throughout the findings and Chapter Eight.

5.2 An overview of the categories

For the participants, the co-constructive nature of the study allowed them to express the latent concern that was felt but not expressed initially throughout the enquiry. The theory is built

upon the prerequisite that their main thoughts in being a grandfather were being afforded the opportunity to be given a second chance, to redeem the missed or lost opportunities of fatherhood. In addition, there was also the second chance to do it all again in a repeat or similar way that they performed in fatherhood. The prerequisite to obtaining a second chance was the rationality of contextualising the thoughts expressed within the knowledge that their experiences occurred in different worlds within their lifetimes. The antecedent to understanding this rationalisation was the acceptance that they had, in some form, experienced ruptured lives either as fathers or potentially within the role of grandfather. This is visible in the narrative of this Chapter where the conflicts between what they say and do not say, become visible.

Throughout the study, the presence of co-constructionism within Charmaz's Grounded Theory was evident with most participants. This recurrent affirmation of the choice of methodology inspired the researcher and reaffirmed the 'fit' of the methodology with the personal lifelong style of practice and enquiry in her career. The majority of the study participants were not forthcoming with their personal information and have more to gain by withholding rather than sharing their personal histories. Therefore, this reinforced privileged position was played out in a congruent, reciprocal sharing of information. Our mutual understanding of the differing circumstances surrounding the guilt felt at not performing as an optimal father prior to the grandfather role was respectful. I was honoured to be permitted to capture a snapshot of a cohort of men, typical of a geographical area but not generalisable of a class or national context. I was very much aware that these men were offering me a once in a generational unique chance to speak about their experiences.

5.3 Context: Sins of the Fathers

There is a necessity to contextualise the participants' views within this discussion. Unbeknown to me on entering this study was that many of the participants in the process, I was to interview were from Northern Ireland, although living in the study areas for 30-40 years. As a result, this study offers a view of a world lived and understood by men who for the most have been involved in the conflict that has occurred within Northern Ireland with origins to the Irish treaty agreement of 1922. To understand the emerging theory, the lived experience of the participants needs to be understood. Several of the participants (n=9) were

internally displaced from Northern Ireland during the previous decades because of activities related to The Troubles. Within the literature, 11,000 people were internally displaced from Northern to Southern Ireland in the last four decades, of the century (Ralaheen, 2005). Deng (2004) described internal displacement in terms of his UN mandate as:

'...A people who are forced to leave their normal areas of residence as a result of violent conflicts, communal violence, gross or systematic violations of human rights and other humanitarian, human-made or natural disasters in which there is an element of discrimination...the internally displaced have exactly the same problems as refugees in terms of causes and needs but have crossed international borders and there is no international agency to protect them....' (pg. 5).

The different political climates during this period in history have caused the push of people to move and settle elsewhere and with this come the pull of extended families to join the person (Ralaheen, 2005). Although the description mentioned by Deng (2004) is admirable, the grandfathers went further to state that many reasons for the internal displacement included fear of prison and arbitrary arrest in an internment culture; assassinations and violence in surrounding neighbourhoods; and active persons-on-the-run. Most of the men were either Catholic or Nationalist in affiliations. For the remainder of the men in the study, the concept of The Troubles was not mentioned in the narratives. Whether ex-prisoners or not the men in the study were witnesses to the activity and movement of people at this time and in this area.

The position of the six counties of Northern Ireland within the UK and British rule has been a long contested conflict throughout the second half of the last century. This study occurs in one of the border towns between North and South and was seen, for thirty years, to be the most militarised part of Europe west of the Berlin wall and Iron Curtain (Harvey et al, 2005). With great relief to those that live on this island and especially those nearest to the borders and Troubles (as they are colloquially known) and who suffered the effects of The Troubles, the Good Friday Agreement (GFA) (The Northern Ireland St Andrew Peace Agreement, 1998) signalled an end to the conflict. A ceasefire and peace agreement was established with productive rebuilding of people, communities and Government in the years since the agreement.

To understand the context of the men's experiences, it is necessary to acknowledge that the context of the enquiry is set with the historical background of what the men perceive to be a political war, of which they vehemently believe themselves to be political ex-prisoners of that war. Branded, as a criminal is most insulting to these men as they see themselves as ex-political prisoners. This is lived so much so that one father refuses to speak with his son who has spent time in gaol for involvement in drug crimes:

Ronan; "I couldn't even look at him to be honest with you, He has...and it is not a republican prisoner record, it's a criminal record. I only have one son. I'm ashamed of him and embarrassed about him."

He is ashamed and disgusted by his son. As a father, he himself has been in prison for the killing of combatants during The Troubles. However, he makes the distinction between these two sentences as being clear. This is a common interpretation between crimes perceived as combatant or criminal (Harvey et al, 2005). The crux of the issue is that the father in this case self identifies and supported in the GFA as a 'prisoner of war'. Whilst this may be the case, in reality Irish, UK and International States have not followed through on this belief. As a result, these grandfathers are liable for prosecution as either war criminals or, where domestic law applies, as common criminals in respect of any attacks on people and property that they have carried out. For some of the grandfathers they feel discriminated against by their own people in contrast to immigrants to the country who have no official records from their country of origin. The grandfather in the pilot interview sees the State system as discriminating against Irish people:

Liam; "Political sectarianism is Irish on Irish.... and it's anti-Northern."

During this time, many of the men within my study would have originated or lived between the two jurisdictions of North and South. In the latter half of the last century, many of the men were displaced from their homes and had to live in the South to avoid being detected and captured by the British army. For the other grandfathers the displacement of these persons to a small town would have been felt in the heightened tensions at the peak of The Troubles in the 1970's and 80's (Ralaheen, 2005).

Of note and significance to the discussions in this Chapter, displacement is not a status, but a state of being or condition. Bettocchi and Freitas (2003) in an UNHCR perspective supported this belief by suggesting that displacement ends when the conditions that gave rise to it ended and freedom of movement and residence are safely available to the displaced. Through the discourse and discussion in this study, the concept of grandfathering is discussed within the context of a lived experience of self and family. This is through experiencing isolation, discrimination, stigmatisation, lack of social supports for economic and health needs, lack of access to credit/mortgages, and, unresolved legal issues around employment, travel and adoption/foster care (Harvey et al, 2005; Ralaheen, 2005).

Experienced by all of the participants were similar issues relating to looking back in order to look forward. This played a large part in defining how they wish to be grandfathers to their grandchildren. In defence of the theory, and from much of the discourse, the grandfathers' narrative demonstrates that they have a choice as to whether the 'sins of the fathers' are now being played out in their grandfatherhood.

The findings from the research will be framed and explored in depth in this and the next two Chapters under the headings of; Life before grandfathering, Life as a grandfather, and Life as a grandfather with family and professionals. Each of the three subcategories is displayed in a diagrammatic format with concepts and properties at the beginning of each Chapter.

The first of the 3 subcategories conceptualised as life before grandfathering, comprises areas expressed by the men in whom they felt their lives had been affected and subsequently ruptured to the point that it had an effect on their fatherhoods and grandfatherhoods. This subcategory is explored further in this Chapter and forms the foundations from where the grandfathers view themselves to be, as a result of their fatherhoods and where they want to be in the grandchildren's lives. The subcategory is then further explored within identified properties/concepts of the narratives.

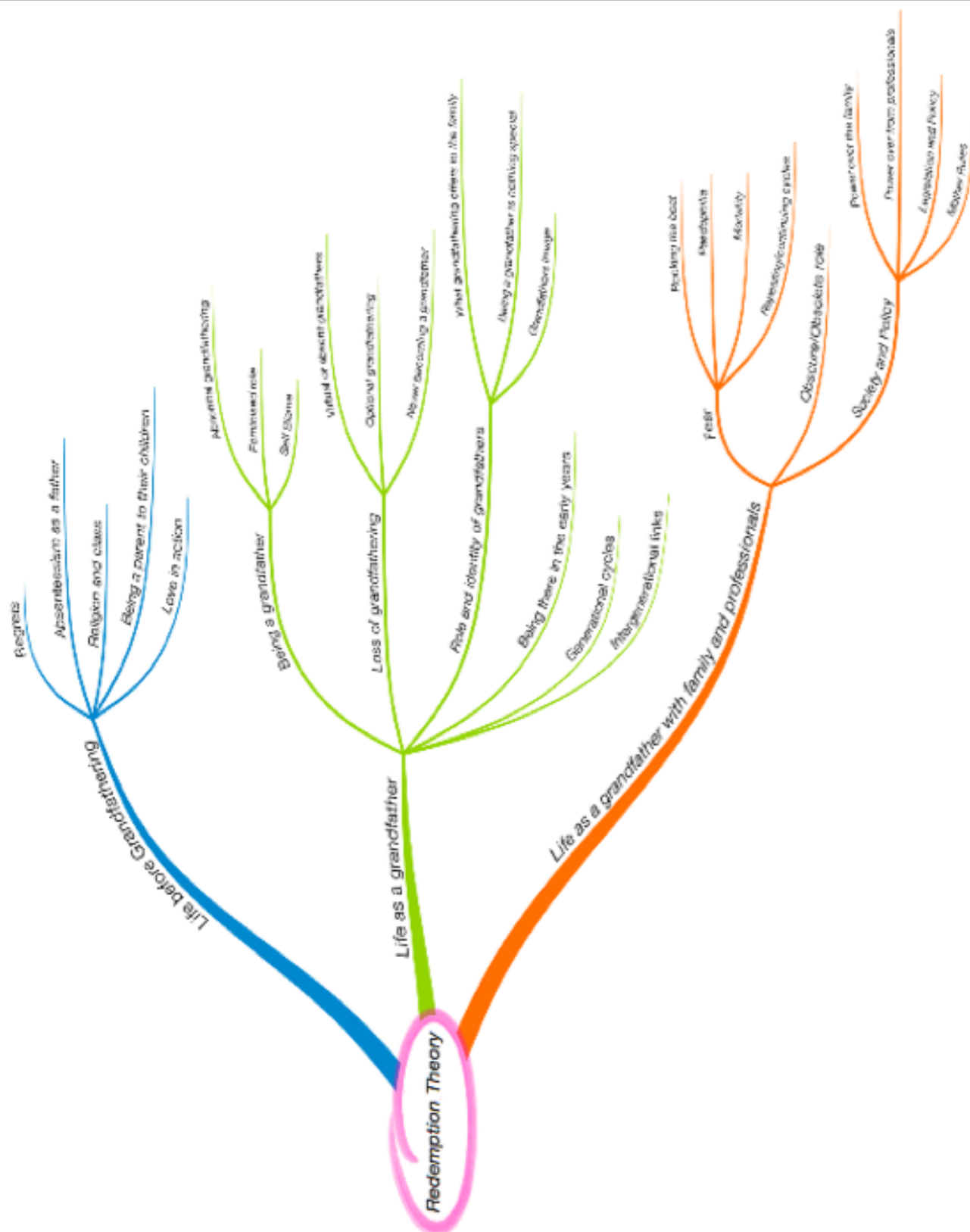


Figure 2: Redemption theory including subcategories and emerging theoretical concepts

5.4 Life before grandfathering

It is within this category that the grandfathers offered a rationale for actions taken when they were younger. They offer reasons for why events will or will not occur again depending on the outcomes that they wish to achieve. Participants stated that they wholly recognised that many of the variables that affected the choices they made in this bygone era would not be realistic or comprehensible in 21st century Ireland. They went further to suggest that it would be hypothetical to even engage in a discourse on the subject. The emergence of the theory from the participants begins in this section, as they describe the nature of living in one era but realising in the present time, that the toll of their actions experienced by their children was unforgiveable. With this in mind, they wish to change their practice and make amends with their grandchildren. Early life before grandfathering refers to the period of adult life experienced by the men when decisions made at that time seemed appropriate, but within this enquiry are now perceived to have had an impact on the grandfather type and role that had subsequently emerged. Properties within this subcategory are related to the grandfathers' regrets, absenteeism as a father, religion and class, being a parent to their children and love in action. It becomes transparent as the theory emerges, that the grandfather's experiences in this early period of their lives had a significant impact on the development of the grandfather that they chose or did not choose to become.

5.4.1 Regrets

The honesty expressed within the enquiry around the regrets felt by several of the participants was unexpected by the researcher and the participants. Properties within this category include regret versus duty of care, loss of youth, forced marriage, loss of choice for spouse and choices taken. Many of the participant's statements were candid and presented an honest disclosure, immediately followed by the retraction of the statement with an explanation for what was said. The regret was personalised and demonstrated in awareness that they were forewarned by their own parents that they would regret their actions;

Liam; "You know when I think back I regret that...my father told me I'd be sorry that I didn't spend enough time with them developing the relationships, doing things that you are supposed to do with your son, cos I didn't, to be honest with you, I probably viewed him as an inconvenience."

For this participant, missed fatherhood was identified in the narrative and contributory to the current poor relationship with his son. The feelings of regret articulated during disclosure of the loss of youth and not spreading their wings to taste a piece of life before getting married:

Gerard; "Never got to sow my oats...but at times I feel life has passed me by in a way.... my wife was expecting when we got married...I had a duty of care."

Societal pressures at the time were such that many of the participants were married in their late teens and early twenties (n=17). They were rushed into marriage. Cohabitation was not an option in 1970s Catholic Ireland. Self, family, society and church enforced the duty of care in the event that a child may have been conceived outside of wedlock. To save face and maintain family respect for self, wife and extended family, a quick marriage at a young age was endorsed as the proper thing to do. For many of the men (n=11) they felt themselves to be frogmarched to the altar:

Gerard; "Maybe if I was being honest I may have married a little too quickly and. ... But the commitment to me children would have been that strong that I would never abandon them...."

And:

Joseph; "I never really got a chance to sow my seeds as a young manbut I mean a lot of my life was caught up in politics."

For another younger grandfather, he identified the novelty of parenting out of wedlock as:

Harry; "Where I came from there were no kids having kids. Like I was still going to school and I had a childlike. I think I was the first in that school to have a child at such a young age.... as soon as possible we were married."

That the grandfathers suggest this option was a forced marriage is an element of today's thinking and contemporary discourse, rather than a thinking of the time. This is with the

awareness, societal acceptance and the current experiences held by the grandfathers cohabiting outside of wedlock or within second and subsequent relationships:

Gerard; "And my wife was expecting when we got married and I'd say that would still happen you know.... how quickly we married.... cos, I still would have had that old fashioned value that I had a responsibility, that sense of responsibility that would run through my married life."

For another young father, he didn't question the event. There was an element of acceptance in his voice as if there were no other options at the time:

Joseph; "Just got married, very young, got married at 17."

Another of the grandfathers who had several relationships with women and several children to these women viewed the world differently:

Callum; "If the relationship broke up, it's broke up and that's it. It's not the end of the world, years ago it might have been...but not for me."

On occasions, several of the grandfathers admitted to the guilt felt at the loss of young adulthood and lost opportunities that their wives were afforded because of their actions. Much of the love, attention and consideration particularly financial support directed at the wives and ex-wives today directly relates to this guilt. As many of the participants shared:

Harry; "From my own perspective when I got my wife pregnant at the time there were things she could have been doing like her education and it just didn't work out the way it should have and there is a little bit of guilt."

Another of the grandfathers spoke admirably of his wife who achieved her master's degree whilst working and caring for their children as a single parent when he was incarcerated:

Liam; "Ye she's a woman who at different times had two maybe three part-time jobs at the one time and was rearing the family. She's a woman who left school early and went back and got involved in further education, got her degree, got her master's

degree you know, so she has been very successful that way, you know, but with the pressure of me getting captured in England half way through her studies and rearing two kids with two part-time jobs when involved in full time education so I don't know how she done it or is doing it.... honestly ...its incredible... how she done it."

And from another grandfather he spoke of his wife and recollected from a personal perspective how he thought of himself:

Joseph; "Well I would have loved to have been able to have the same time then to give to the wife as I have now but I didn't have and----- that was something that was just---- Yeh--- a choice of mine."

This is a reference to the fact that this man was involved in the Northern Ireland conflict and as he explained, he was fighting a war which, at the time, was perceived by him to be more important than anything else.

Another grandfather, who now identified as a homosexual gay man, shared his guilt at the thoughts of what would have happened if he had met a male partner during his marriage or before he was married:

Sean; "I would've felt a lot of guilt right...em...within our marriage first of all that you always thought of, was what if I had met someone, another guy right, and it did happen within the marriage right...but then did not have any children."

While he regrets not being able to express his sexuality earlier in his life during a period where Ireland criminalised homosexuality, he also acknowledges what he would have missed if he had no children and subsequent grandchildren.

5.4.2 Absenteeism as a father

The study was unique and exciting in so far as it attracted participants to the enquiry that may not be seen in other enquiries and not represented in other geographical areas throughout Ireland. However, by the nature of the geographical area being near to the border, many

participants had spent time in prison as a direct result of the Northern Ireland conflict. This time in particular covered the decades of the 1960's, 70's and 80's and these men served prison time in gaols in Ireland and the UK for activity relating to the Northern Ireland conflict. During the first interview, which became the pilot interview a mistake of describing the activity leading to incarceration as a criminal activity was made, and the phrase 'paramilitary' was used. This met with a vehement dialogue of explanation as to why they are not criminals or paramilitary prisoners and that these prisoners have been recognised internationally as prisoners of war. The properties identified in this category include credentialing me as trustworthy; paradox of active involvement in The Troubles; unable to turn back time; standing back from natural bonds with the children.

This first participant explained making a recurrent point of fact that:

Ronan; "Our issues are political due to the conflict and not criminal activity."

It became clear from other interviews that my enquiry, through snowballing and word of mouth, attracted grandfathers from similar historical backgrounds. What is unique is that these men chose to speak with me. Although they were unknown to me directly, I was known to them through my work in the area in previous years and as such was credentialised through my profession as a nurse. As one participant succinctly described me:

Liam; "I know you were the nit (head lice) nurse'."

Within the border areas it is not an uncommon feature to find ex-political prisoners, as many settled in the border area in the Republic following release from prison. This was for many reasons but primarily to remain close to relatives in Northern Ireland within the restrictions imposed on them that re-entry to Northern Ireland would result in incarceration. It does not stop the continuation of discrimination:

Ronan; "But in some border counties people who are tied in with these prisoner groups are still getting house raids and it's causing massive difficulty cos they are not doing anything; they are not tied in anything anywhere else."

Another grandfather who was an ex-political prisoner later stated:

Gerard; “You are legitimately allowed North and South of the border to discriminate against political prisoners. It is actively being pursued at this moment.”

As a paradox to earlier expressions of regrets, when asked for clarification as to whether they had any regrets for entering into a life that resulted knowingly with the possibility of death or a prison sentence that would remove them from the family, they expressed no regrets. As one participant honestly disclosed:

Joseph; “I have no regrets about what I have done...tough.... I don't lie awake at night worrying about it.”

The paradox of the ex-political participants throughout the research was similar to this. They regretted being absent fathers but had no regrets in their participation in the conflict in Northern Ireland.

Liam; “Yes the priority ...to the exclusion of everything else. It's one of my regrets that I have, the poor relationship with my son and I've said to myself that I must be able to ensure that that doesn't happen to my grandkids.”

The fervent wish to avoid the reoccurrence of absenteeism experienced by their children was echoed by almost all of the men interviewed whether prisoners or not.

Although female prisoners were not part of this study, what was unspoken of was the issue of the women prisoners who could not become parents at an older age, unlike male prisoners. Although this study spoke to grandfathers about their lives as grandfathers, the effects of delayed parenting and grandparenting, whilst discussed and partially explained by the grandfathers, was unlinked or translated with regard to female prisoners who fought alongside them. For biological reasons, these women may be unable to engage in delayed parenting and grandparenting. This would be interesting to pursue in a postdoctoral enquiry, before these women become indiscernible.

Other participants, who were not prisoners, were absent for other reasons most notably as they were the main provider in the family, and for the family. At that time for the most, the

man worked and the woman was the homemaker. In retrospect, several of the participants could identify that this time was irreplaceable with their children and that if they could turn back the clocks, they would have been more available for their children and family:

Martin; “I had to work overtime and for the first half of my working life I was working till 7 o’clock at night, you don’t really see your kids. And then for the second half of my working life I was working shift work, which was crazy altogether. It was actually nearly a fortnight, with the three-shift rotas, you wouldn’t see your children.”

This grandfather, like some of the others, offered explanations for the absenteeism as a father. However, as the interviews progressed, some of the men would return to this point and acknowledge that they did not understand the importance of being there for the children and the impact that being absent would have. This was further understood when they became grandfathers and began to enjoy the grandchildren. As one of the grandfathers describes of the time:

Liam; “I probably didn’t appreciate when my kids were younger. I was younger, and I was coming in and out of work. I worked nights as well. They were coming in from school and I was in bed. Getting up then when they were going to bed. But I had to do it to put food on the table.”

For some of the participants they believed that their actions were beneficial to the family. As several of the grandfathers expressed a desire to do extra work at that time for a better living:

Martin; “I remember my father saying it to me, he says “you’re better off on the dole than working shift work because it will destroy your sleeping patterns, it will destroy your head, your family life will be upside-down”, and he was right.”

For some of the grandfathers, this discourse on the past brought back the realisation that the mother was everything in the house. The role of the mother was not valued at the time by the participants. During the interviews however, their discourse firmly gave recognition to the value of the role of the mother and highlights the change to the current situation, where they believe children are being cared for by what the men called, “mother crèches” (see page 69).

Even in the absence of the father, because of gaol or being on the run, the grandfathers acknowledged that:

Liam; "It was the mother who did everything. She held the whole family together, she went out to earn money and work, and I was too busy."

Throughout the study, the men failed to link their absences in the past with the absences of men in children's lives today. Although many of the grandfathers can contextualise and rationalise their absences in the past, the consequences for mothers are the same then as in contemporary Ireland. Many mothers are rearing children without the presence of fathers and with a single income.

The participants identified that not all the time was spent at work, as the culture of the time was to call to the Public House (The Pub) for a period in the evenings, and return home when the children were gone to bed. They just did not want to be with them. As one participant stated:

Paddy; "I never went straight home....it was noisy and a lot of crying....and the only place to see the footie (football) was in the pub on the telly."

There was also the option for them to disappear when 'on the run' from the judicial authorities and just leave for another country. The conflict took priority in their lives. They appear selfish in this belief and chose to opt out and treat it as a priority in their lives over their families. Some of the participants disclosed honestly that:

Ciaran; "Aw yeah that's the way it was."

However, they did understand retrospectively that they were different people when they were younger:

Martin; "I suppose when you're younger and when you get married and even when you have kids there's still a selfish streak in you, and when grandchildren come along nothing matters only them."

For one participant he proactively pursued this selfish behaviour as described as a younger man, who articulated to me with determination and clarity of speech that he maintained an element of estranged behaviours, one that he is not proud of today. As a result, his relationship with a daughter and granddaughter, both of who are now 18-years-old, is quite poor as he chose to ignore and estrange himself from both during their early years:

Joseph; "I had to sort of bail away for another while...I never even thought of the kids."

He had left the care of the children to their mothers and had no contact with them as he had with the children from his first marriage. This participant had remarried and has good relationships with the three women who have borne his children. He is in his second marriage but has had a child aged now 18 years to a partner before his second marriage. At the same time as this daughter was born, his older daughter had a granddaughter. He chose to leave the country and had no contact with these children for approximately eight years. He now has grandchildren and children between the ages of two and eight years. Currently, the 18 year olds visit the father/ grandfather sporadically. The participant is very aware that they are not necessarily visiting him but rather using the opportunity to meet each other and their other half-siblings. This was similar to other participants who identified that their poor relationships early in the children's lives have led to poor relationships in the grandchildren's lives. One grandfather who had children in a second marriage stated that the children would call to the ex-wife's house to see the other siblings:

Shea; "That would be because like eh... my own 2 children they would be in the car and I... xxxx would've been home and I'd be calling to xxxx and the girls would be in the car and they'd get out of the car and would go in and ring for xxxx like xxxx my dad's there that sort of thing and em... there was never any bother to them going into my ex-wife's house and I never stopped it. I never put a barrier to it."

The grandfathers identify the adult children as the peacemakers in the family, which is contrary to the literature, which identified the adult children act as the gatekeepers deciding whether the grandparents gain access to the children. They also recognise and accredit their adult children as providing healing between the siblings and half-siblings. This healing is welcome as a process that follows the hurt felt when the children witnessed their parent's

separation. The grandfathers acknowledge that they were the ones who left the home and left the children. This healing process is occurring without the direct involvement of the grandfather although he enjoys the harmonised outcomes of this healing:

Shea; "They bonded at a kind of early age ...I think there's an influence from the other siblings."

As fathers during the decades of Northern Irish Troubles and within the accepted cultural norm of defining masculine work from feminine childcare, the men chose paths in lives, which were perceived as normal at the time. However, with the perspective of today's world and the realisation of the missed opportunities of time spent with their children, they do realise what they have missed. This however is all within the belief that they have no real regrets on their actions for the greater cause. Paradox of thoughts and conflict of words abound and are openly shared throughout the interviews. Within this different world as young men, the participants also identify other influences affecting their lives.

5.4.3 Religion and class

This section acknowledges the presence of another law in the lives of the men as expressed during their early adult lives. This suggested higher law was at times strictly adhered to in comparison to the State law of the time. Although not clearly stated it was evident that there was a greater respect shown to the church than to the law enforcement agencies. All the men agreed that religion and more specifically the Catholic Church had significant influences on the decisions made or indeed decisions they were forced to make. Properties within this category include children having children, marrying young and broken families. Throughout the discourse the grandfather's narrative reveals the helplessness of the situation of the period, where they did not feel they had many choices in navigating their life plans. This, of course, is not inclusive of the paths identified earlier as routes that took them outside of the home.

For many of the grandfathers, marriage came either very early in their late teens or late when they had served a sentence in gaol. In hindsight they would describe themselves as children having children. They acknowledged with shame, that for those who were involved in The

Troubles, having a child was not as important in their lives as ‘the cause’ and the Northern Ireland conflict. For other men who were not involved in The Troubles, many issues relating to early parenthood were attributed to poverty and ignorance. For one of the grandfathers, becoming a father when he was 17 and the associated issues, were further compounded for him when his child had a child at 15 years old, thereby making him a grandfather at 32 years of age. He describes his disappointment towards this forced grandfatherhood, yet does not acknowledge that this is how his parents may also have felt. Unlike fatherhood, where family planning is negotiated, for the most, between the parents, to be a grandparent is unplanned and one event that the men expressed they had no say:

Harry; “Yes history repeats.....At the start it was a shock. Then reality kicked in and as you do, you be there for your daughter.”

In another interview another grandfather agreed with these comments:

Ronan; “I was 19 getting married.....I had just left school the year before. I stayed at school till I was 18.”

For some of the men who were in gaol early in their lives, on release they found themselves getting their girlfriend in trouble (pregnant) and having to marry early in the relationship. The religious culture of the time would bring shame to the child and the extended family if this child was born outside of wedlock. Some of the teenage dads became very young husbands. During the discourse what was quite poignant was how many of these men became cognisant of the guilt and remorse felt towards their wives and their loss of youth as a result of becoming a young mother. This was unexpected as Rory interrupted his conversational flow to state:

Rory; “Ye she’s lost her youth by having a baby early in her life. She devoted all the time to it and couldn’t have any more. So when we became young grandparents I was angry at first but I knew it would cheer her up. I think she was at a loss for something in her life and then the grandson came along. She was only 31 years.”

Another two participants added to this by saying that the wives who had the children young were also a loss;

Harry; "Looking back on it now I'm not sure my wife was as shocked because she got pregnant at the same age. She was 15; it was a big shock way back then. But we were childhood sweethearts from school and I'm still with her just about ha ha.... So it really is just history repeating itself. She only started college and stuff and we were shocked."

And another stated:

Gerard; "My wife would be roughly 9 1/2 years younger than mecos a lot of my peers would have been married in their early 20s but nowadays it's a little later. And my wife was expecting when we got married and I'd say that did happen you know.... how quickly we married."

One participant, who achieved very high academic marks in the State exams, the poetic romantic vision of fighting for a free Ireland subsumed his vision and he was enthralled with the whole idea to the sufferance of all others in his life. He married young out of duty to an expectant girlfriend and then left to fight in the Northern Ireland conflict.

Ronan; "At the time the movement was the priority...yes the priority ...to the exclusion of everything else."

For another participant incarcerated for criminal rather than political crimes, he was not remorseful for his absence in the children's lives as he discloses:

Donal; "Sorry I wasn't there but it is what it is."

However, later in the conversation he disclosed that his children will not allow the grandchildren to be with him in public, for fear of their safety he also makes the stark statement of acceptance that if the wife had to choose between him and the grandchildren she would choose the grandchildren.

With these men who spent time in gaol irrespective of the reason, what they allude to but do not fully articulate is how they had a fear for the Church in their lives, much more so than a

fear of the laws and enforcers of the law of the State on either side of the border. With the exception of one grandfather, who disliked the Catholic Church because they would not bless his second marriage, all the men spoke with reverence to the church of the time and how it was to be obeyed:

Liam; "We lived in fear of the Church and thought we would burn in Hell if we didn't obey."

For another grandfather he believed the Church was supportive of his activities:

Ronan; "they knew who we were and what we were at.... they gave us blessings."

For another of the grandfathers, on release from gaol he felt immature and paid the price of the time for fear of the Church's retribution....a rushed marriage:

Gerard; "I was 19 when I went in and 28 when I came out I was so I never seen that I would settle down too quickly but amazingly I was married within the year and how it happened I don't know."

It appears during his narrative that what was not referred to was the loss of opportunities in life as a result of the choices made which, have curtailed his potential. Even though he has established a professional teaching career he does allude to lost opportunities for himself and his wife. He elaborated by explaining that his wife acquired education later in life as a lifelong desire and recognised what she had missed out on as a young woman.

For others in the study, the lost youth as a father appears to have originated as a child. Due to impoverished circumstances and large families sharing small dwellings, some of the men, as they describe, were farmed out and sent to live with grandparents or work and live on neighbouring farms. They perceived and described this as coming from broken families and stated that it resulted in a loss of childhood, as employment and caring for grandparents became the primary duty for them. To marry young in these circumstances was deemed a better option and an escape from an intolerable existence:

Callum; "...too large a family with no identity...never shown affection ...you're a bit of a nobody.....as a married man I was a somebody."

The standing amongst peers and within families was such that a married person signified adulthood irrespective of the age. For many at the time, marriage was seen as an option to vacate a crowded existence within the family.

For many honest disclosures, particularly on the earlier parts of their lives, the grandfathers were quite open and shocked at the fact that they had actually disclosed such information to me. Although many brought contemporaneous realisation at the time of the interview, throughout the conversation there was always a perception that there was an unspoken guilt around the narrative. Throughout the discourse, reassurance was given that their comments would remain confidential and that no one would be able to trace the quotes to the person who said them.

One of the grandfathers again linked this lack of display of affection from their own parents, to the fact that within the poor and lower working classes, many of the children died due to illnesses or accidental deaths. He believed that this form of detachment to children and siblings was a coping mechanism within these large families. If a child was taken early the parents were accepting of this fate, as they understood that their parents believed there was only a certain amount of love to go around. As the families were so large then the amount of love was finite. This acceptance he believed was not present within a wealthier family environment:

Gerard; "It's about attachment and having the...eh...capacity of energy inside you to spread this love around all these children. I would be a great reader of history ...and many of the families had experiences of love but they are all in the middle class families where they had the money, and when you stepped up again you were into a nanny situation again."

This was quite disparaging on Gerard's behalf. His view is that experiencing love is associated with wealth. He spoke so fondly of the dad over the mother and his narrative at this time appeared to be in respect of looking for something not received from his mother. Therefore, he justified it through the lens of poverty and class. He stated that the middle class

children he knew at the time were not treated like this. We know the evidence does not support this belief as much is written on the “Classlessness of child abuse” (Donnelly and Oates, 1999).

Grandfathers made the point they were definitive about the number of children the grandfathers would have so that they could afford them luxuries that they never received themselves. This materialistic affordability was quite a common thread throughout the narratives. The absence of luxury items for their own children was associated with poverty. They did not seem to see the correlation between the choices they had made as fathers that would result in a lower income generated for the children. Mentioned by many of the men and identified, as an issue, was how they felt they could rectify this as a grandfather:

Ronan; “It feels fantastic to be able to help her (daughter-in-law) and you want to help like last year we took their mother and the 2 kids, we booked a place in France for the week and we took them all over, spoiled them a bit for the week, pampered them took the pressure off the mom for a bit, she had never been away much, opened up her eyes to.....it was the mother who did everything. She held the whole family together, she went out to earn money and work, and I was too busy.”

One of the two participants, who is a stepfather in name and not legally by marriage, described the relationship with the children as one of being there for them when he could not buy things they wanted as children. However, he can spoil the grandchildren now as a step-grandfather:

Shane; “No legal tie to them and them to me...I’m not their blood father but anyone can be a father... but bringing them up is more important and I am the only father they know and we love each other. I can spoil the grandchildren rotten now as you have a few bob to spare....”

5.4.4 Being a parent to their children

Interestingly, and in contrast to the earlier points of regrets about not being present in the children’s lives when they were younger, when talking about their grandchildren, the

grandfathers state that spatial parameters were not an issue, as many of the men identified enablers such as quality time, virtual or physical, spent with the child as paramount. As a grandfather, they attributed these enablers of connectivity to be strongly linked to their relationship as a father to their own children. For most but not all, they offered this was facilitated and supported by the fact that there was a strong emotional bond between them and their adult children. This bond with their children and supported by the literature, adds to the theorising of connectivity to the children who now act as the gatekeepers to the grandchildren. However, as seen by some of the grandfathers this bond did not exist.

One grandfather felt pressure was placed on him to visit his daughter in a country where he was not allowed entry and the daughter was an illegal immigrant. He described how against his judgement he made application to travel. His access was denied and questions were raised regarding the reason for the visit. The sadness in this event was demonstrated how the living situation of the children abroad was jeopardised by the father's actions. The risk of being deported from the country, because of attachment to the father or because they are undocumented in the country became real. This was too high a price for the father to pay to the detriment of the child. As a result, no further connections and attempts to visit were made:

Ronan; "I had to basically satisfy my daughter and other people who were pushing me to try it. She use to say to me well at least these other people have tried, they have tried to get in..."

For most of the men their role is offered and seen as a patriarchal role. They see themselves as providers for their adult children and their families. The findings are similar to the literature in this area where it is acknowledged that the links were stronger with the daughter's grandchildren than with the son's children.

They also share the fact that they are 'in love' with the grandchildren more than they were with their own children. One of the most honest disclosures throughout many of the grandfathers' interviews was the feeling of love for the grandchildren being much stronger than the love for their actual children. They state that their own children will not know the strength of the love shown to the grandchildren, as it is so different to what they witnessed. Many went on to interpret this as because they are present and available for the grandchildren:

Fionn; “Ye. It’s kind of, you are as proud and all and it hits you like a brick that you’re now a grandfather. It’s a different time different emotions but when you see the baby you feel as proud as punch. It is different.”

And another grandfather said:

Paddy; “.... Em I know there’s this eh what do you call it this love for your grandkids, you just love for your grandkids. It’s an endless love it doesn’t matter they’re your grandkids you just dote on them. You know... it is different to children you know, like love of your child? It’s not saying that you don’t love your kids but I think it’s the, it’s another generation if you like. You know there’s another generation coming. I think I love them more than my own kids.”

This participant, like all of the grandfathers mentioned this and all asked me not to let anybody know they said this of their own children. They felt ashamed of this feeling but were open and honest in the disclosure. Their guilt was palpable and often expressed with tears. They feared this would make them seem like bad parents. This they describe as a major flaw in today’s society and commented on how their children and other parents will live to regret not spending time with their children in the early years of their lives. Once spoken, this comment was asked to be retracted and then permitted again once no links were made to the person who disclosed it. Surprisingly most of the men made this disclosure. There is a dearth of literature in this area, possibly due to the gravity of the revelation and implications if misunderstood by the adult children.

Most of the grandfathers identified that being available for the grandchildren is different to how it was when they were fathers, where they were not involved in caring for their children:

Gerry; “Ye, ye, but I suppose you’re with them that whole period of time which is different than your own children. You’d be at work or going to the pub. Ye you weren’t really there for the caring and minding and bathing.”

Two parents working and not having time to be with the children further compound this idea nowadays. The grandfathers all wanted to go back and do it all again, differently. They tell their own sons that they will regret not spending time with their children whilst they are

young. In the absence of close intergenerational relationships in the care of grandchildren, significant ties are unable to be developed (Mueller and Elder, 2003).

The one issue that was unanimous with all the grandfathers was the necessity to break the cycle of corporal punishment towards and onto the children. Their fathers performed this within their parenting role, and some of them were honest in disclosing how they bestowed this practice onto their children. Most did not explain this, but did say that they respected their fathers, even though this was part of the punishment regime.

For one grandfather, his fear was that he would turn out like his father. He disclosed that as a young man after years of physical and emotional abuse and continuous chastisement from his father, in defence of his mother, he shot and killed his father. His whole approach to parenting and grandparenting was based upon the opposite approach taken by his father. What was not said but felt in the conversation, was that he believed he needed to break this cycle because he feared he would become his father. He explained how he believed the relationship with the children is more tolerant however and that this was a life-learned skill:

Sean; "It is a different love, it's a...I mean yeah I suppose you've learnt as you get older you've a lot more tolerance towards your grandchildren than you had with your own children...It's the tolerance."

The participants identified how not all previous relationships with their fathers were perceived to be bad or not worth repeating in their own lives as parents. For one of the grandfathers, he believed the rule of his father over himself and his children demonstrated and gained great respect in the family. He expressed that the father taught him all he knew and he said he was a great role model who taught him how to be a good father and subsequent grandfather:

Gerard; "Well my father, I have a close affection for my father. I am a man's man and my dad is a hero to me he is... a gentle man but he could lose his temper like everyone else but he was a nice man and he worked hard so you didn't see an awful lot of him in your life but I mean he was a tough enough man during my teenage years. The law was set in the house and you wouldn't deviate from it. Where did he

get that sense of authority that he is always right? But that's a kid looking up at it. Looking back, you did the same to your own children."

What was not evident, but couched in the narrative, was that this man was a lead player in The Troubles of Northern Ireland and described himself as the cause of great grief to his parents. He also disclosed how he was beaten by his father and would do the same to his own children in times past, if they deviated off the normal pathway of life. Being a parent for him was similar to how he was parented. He also believed that corporal punishment should not be used on the grandchildren. The paradox of thought and practice can be seen in much of the study discourse, where the men looked back on some of the life decisions they made, with minimalistic critique.

5.4.5 Love in action

In this study the men spoke of how as children and young fathers, they did not receive or give expressions of love to their children in the manner in which it is expressed today. They would have appreciated and welcomed from their parents an expressed love as mentioned earlier:

Ronan; "... grandkids are loved by us and I think it's obvious we've done whatever we could for them.... I want them to know that they are loved and I want them to have a place for me, I want them to know that they can come and talk to me about anything at any time and to trust me... We never had a shilling, we were just scrimping every week to try and pay the rent so now it's nice."

The change in attitudes today identified by the men was the demonstration of affectionate love in kissing and hugging their grandchildren. This may not have been practiced by all of the grandfathers onto their children. However, they felt it was acceptable in today's society and see their adult children expressing such endearments to their children and to the grandparents:

Liam; "They (his parents) didn't show massive amounts of affection.... wasn't demonstrative enough and I know a lot of people my age is over the top in that. Like I

would still get a kiss from my child at night, well obviously my daughter would but my son at 20 will give me a kiss at night or in the morning and you know it is lovely so, you know I would be very much like that and the kids are very demonstrative too which is a different culture from where it would have been 60, 70 years ago.”

With little shame or embarrassment, the grandfathers admitted to spoiling the grandchildren as they felt were their duty to do so. The perception that this was buying the love of the child was unimportant and would continue, irrespective of the parents’ wishes:

Gerard; “They will want for nothing as long as I live and breathe.”

Kevin; “I would do anything for her and buy her anything as long as she loved me as she does.”

Ronan; “I want them to always remember me nicely. Money is no problem I would get them anything they need...that sounds like I am buying their love...doesn’t it?”

One grandfather, who was a great-grandfather, acknowledged that he was definitely the “money tree” in the house. He stated that his role as a parent was to provide for his wife and adopted children. As they became adults, he states they did not love him enough to share the grandchildren with him except for special occasions and birthdays. There he would demonstrate his love in that moment of time by giving them gifts of money:

Oscar; “The money tree would be shaking for the occasions and when I gave them the money their little faces lit up.”

The grandfathers desire to be loved by the grandchildren is reciprocated in such a way as has not been exhibited by the grandfathers as fathers to their own children. Many reasons as mentioned are portrayed as to why this is the case, but regardless of the reasons, all the grandfathers without exception, stated that the grandchildren would take priority in their lives no matter what their needs. In return, all they wished for is that the grandchildren would remember them fondly. This is not what they expected to occur, as it was not a fact of the relationship with any of their grandfathers, if they were blessed to have known them alive. As it happened, most of the grandfathers had no recollection of knowing their grandfathers. Any

knowledge from a previous time when they were younger was of a stern man whom you did not speak to and did not visit too often. Otherwise, they were remembered through family stories.

What was not explicit throughout this emerging thread was that they could all now offer materialistic love in addition to *emotional affection*. This offer appeared in a forward forecast in reference to their children and grandchildren, for now and in the future. Not much expression was recalled in the narratives related to their children before they became grandfathers. None of the discourse referred to any expression of love with the men's parents, grandparents and siblings. This lack of expressed love was never linked to their absences as seen in the narrative of this Chapter. For the grandfathers, it is the perceived past negligence that motivates them to connect positively with the grandchildren. These open and honest disclosures remain within the narratives and are private within the study. However, it is acknowledged by the grandfathers as contributory as to why they will do almost anything to be involved with the grandchildren. This idea is discussed further later in the analysis.

5.5 Concluding Thoughts

Within this Chapter, the participants identified how they understand that the decisions and roles played as a father were shaped from a different Irish society and have established the foundations of the structures put in place to become grandfathers. This is with the accepted knowledge and understanding that their role as a grandfather is linked and evolved from their role as a father. Emerging from the narrative is the desire to change their involvement in the grandchild's life differently to their involvement in their children's lives. Giving of their time, their person and their material assets represents this involvement. Fundamentally, the men seem to be looking back in order to move forward with the next generation. The 'so what' in this Chapter findings is that for the most, their parenthood was ruptured for different reasons, whether self-induced for national political/criminal priorities, work induced to provide for the families or out of choice. The crux is that they were absent as fathers.

The men have also identified the change in Irish society that offers greater choices for men and fathers about their employment and identity as fathers. However, they voice their fear for their children who do not spend time with their children. The men recognise that they tell

their children, 'to do what I say not what I do', with the fervent knowledge of hindsight in that they have missed out by being absent as a father. The many paradoxes throughout the study begin at this point, in the narratives. They have paid this price. They believe these are the sins committed and that they will attempt to reclaim through their grandfathering role to their grandchildren.

5.5.1 Early fatherhood

Many of the men identified marrying young as a factor that shaped their lives resulting in them seeking to become actively involved as a grandfather thereby breaking the cycle of perceived older grandfathers as they remember. They spoke of this event with some shame as they felt that they might not have explored their own world enough or allowed their wife to explore it, prior to marrying and having children.

The findings resonate and are contradictory to studies that have explored early fatherhood similar to this study. The men identified marrying early and subsequent fatherhood as both a limiting and exhilarating experience.

The timing of fatherhood often determines the paths that fathering takes. This echoes some but not all of the participants' beliefs. The timing of fatherhood sets men on different life course trajectories depending on their own developmental stage. The literature states that higher risks are present for children with adolescent fathers, whereas older men seem to deal with parenthood better (Coley and Chase-Lansdale, 1998). When young men become fathers, it is often unintentional, whereas for older men, having a child is most often an intended event. This can be seen as either a crisis or an uneventful event (Cabrera et al, 2000). The existing evidence suggests that a father's positive parenting may be strongly associated with whether the pregnancy was intended (Brown and Eisenberg, 1995). This suggests that parents may be less involved and supportive with children whose birth was unintended (Axinn et al, 1998). Within this study the men reported that they 'did the right thing' within the expectation of this period in Ireland and married the mother of their child. When discussing their past fatherhoods, the emerging theory began to suggest that many of the participants in this study are possibly practicing as 'older fathers' to their grandchildren, having missed out on the opportunities to practice fatherhood to the fullest capacity when they were younger

men.

As seen with many of the grandfathers throughout the study, when speaking about their children, they believe that young parents are generally described as vulnerable, immature and socially disadvantaged. Johansson and Hammaren (2014) offer that within a Swedish context that is where the similarities end. They suggest that while young mothers are seen as being poor, alone, vulnerable and morally suspect, young fathers are portrayed as being absent, criminal, violent and socially excluded. Although to the reader there may appear to be similarities with the men in this study, this depiction would not represent the narrative as the men describe it. For several of the men they felt that the escapism of early parenting, although for the most unplanned, offered in addition to maturity and a respectful recognition in society, a period of a positive sense of responsibility and development (Reeves, 2006).

These men fathered in a pre-social media era where masculinity was demonstrated through their identities as strong providers, 'breadwinners', protectors and heads of families. Whether incarcerated or not, all the men identified that they were not present for the children. They explain that caring for the grandchildren illuminates this fact. This transition in their role from masculine provider to a much more caring persona for them as grandfathers echoes contemporary literature on how fathers embrace this caring role. This is achieved in many ways through physical, emotional and most recently for the men through social media forums and blogging (Johansson and Hammaren, 2014). It is a slow change in culture; however, it is becoming a new way for men to be judged as a caring emotional father.

5.5.2 Ruptured fatherhood

The literature states that the transition to fatherhood is not only a physical one but also a psychological, emotional and spiritual journey (Bartlett, 2004) and is seen as one of the most important milestones and moments in a man's life (Palkovitz, 2007).

A latent discovery in the narratives of the men is the lack of identity that they feel with the father title over the grandfather title. The findings demonstrate that for several reasons the men were uncomfortable with the discussion on fatherhood. This is evident through the narrative where they demonstrate that they did not actually perceive themselves to be fathers in the way they see the practice of fatherhood in today's society. This diminished perception

of self-identification as a father, although not shared by all the men was in fact underlying in the discourse of most who had defined themselves as absent because of conflict/criminal activity (n=12), work (n=5) or choice (n=3) at the time. By the nature of the absenteeism, Burkes' (2007) identity control theory is echoed in the men's narrative and is discussed further in Chapter Eight.

5.5.3 Changing fatherhoods

Throughout the findings, the grandfathers identified the changing role they have embraced when caring for the grandchildren in comparison to when they were fathers. Mooney and Stratham (2002) identify how fatherhood has changed. This refers to not just the expression of affection but also increased material consumption changes, the busyness of children's lives, and how parenting has become more about the child than anyone else. In his 2012 study, Mooney and colleagues adopted a biographical approach to look at the impact of employment on fatherhood across different generations. They found after speaking with 30 grandfathers, 30 fathers and 29 sons that for the fathers balancing fatherhood and employment, just like their fathers, they too are restricted in their fatherhood roles. This has influenced their desire to progress up the career ladder; maximise their income with extra hours at work; or because there was little flexibility in employment policy for fatherhood. The necessity to work for those who needed to work for income has resulted in migrant fathers who had to move with the work opportunities and 'hands on' fatherhood care was not a priority or option during the recession. For men with a high-powered job, involved fatherhood was also not an option. Those seen to have best opportunities are men with high status and self-employed men that can dictate the times to be available for the children. However, comparable to the men in this study, Mooney and Stratham (2012) suggest that the men who were most involved in childcare were those unemployed or who had transient employment. With this comes the caveat in Mooney and Stratham (2012) research that the mothers are in high-paying jobs. This was not the case for the men and women in this study, who were in lower-paid work.

The overarching aim was to explore and understand what it is to be a grandfather in Ireland. As described in this Chapter the participants must first frame the role in fatherhood and that of their fathers in order to explain to the researcher how they practice grandfathering.

Acknowledged in this section and throughout the next two Chapters is how the role of all adult players in the family, but mostly the male figures appear to be optional where a decision is made as to whether to engage with the children and grandchildren or not. As a Grounded Theory study, the understanding is that the findings belong to a cohort of participants or period and therefore offer a snapshot of findings that are not generalisable. However, these findings resonate with events in today's society where fathers are absent for similar and differing reasons resulting in children being reared by a single parent. As highlighted in Chapter Two not much has been asked from grandfathers in Irish enquiries. Therefore, the findings are unique in understanding the effects of absent fathers as they enter into the developmental stage of grandfathering and are further explored in the next two Chapters.

SIX: FINDINGS - LIFE AS A GRANDFATHER

6.1 Introduction

A changing culture in Ireland in the past two decades has seen an increase in single parenthood, divorce, family planning/contraception, cultural diversity and change in relationships not seen in previous generations in Ireland. Fatherhood was discussed in Chapter Five as being influential in how the men understand their grandfathering roles, a role that has also undergone a seismic change in Irish culture. Although exciting, welcome and novel, the effects of the collective changes occurring in a short period have not been seen in full. The emergence of the theory as it applies to being a grandfather reveals the participants' narratives and discourse around several issues pertaining to being a grandfather within the family setting.

6.2 Being a grandfather

Of the 30 interviewees, three participants were in a subsequent marriage/relationship that resulted in children of the second marriage/relationship being of the same age as the grandchildren from the first marriage. In one case, what was noticeable was the role played simultaneously by the participant as a father and grandfather to children of the same age. During the interview, this grandfather pondered on what name was used by all the children in his household to refer to him. He had older children in their thirties that called him Dad; a child and a grandchild aged 18 years old that called him by his Christian name; children aged 5-7 years that called him 'Dad' and grandchildren 4-8 years that called him by his Christian name. Both the children and the participant had difficulty in distinguishing what name to apply to the role played by the participant. Within the discussion in the interview, the term "GRATHER" was coined as a combination of grandfather and father. This ambiguous role had not been considered prior to the interviews (two in total with this participant).

In the time after the first interview, our discussion raised thoughts and the grandfather asked to speak with me again. Firstly, he explained that the grandchildren called him by his Christian name because they knew he was not their dad and following enquiry, he was told that his older daughter, their mother, had asked the children to call him by his name to avoid

confusion. During the second interview, he disclosed more about the poor relationship with his 18-year-old daughter (from another relationship) and his 18-year-old granddaughter. He placed the breakdown and tentative relationship on the fact that he was absent for much of the time from their births to when they were nine or ten years of age. He believed that the strength of his relationships with the younger children and with his first family when they were young was because he was present in their younger lives. His first incarceration occurred when his first children were over the age of eight years. His second incarceration occurred during the birth of his daughter and granddaughter, and lasted nine years. He decided that he was a 'GRATHER' as a hybrid of all the names and roles he had played. The phrase GRATHER is discussed further in Chapter Seven.

As the enquiry progressed, the other grandfathers decided that this novel title could also apply to several of them who offer fulltime day care or who were fulltime custodial foster parents to the grandchildren:

Rory; "I am the only father figure she has.....so I am a father and a grandfather in one."

Another participant accepted the permanency of his position as a father/grandfather or GRATHER as expressed when he realises during the interview that his daughter is happy to leave her children in his care as a relative foster carer, indefinitely:

Eamonn; "Yeah, yeah, it looks like they will be with me...like for long term."

When viewing this situation closely what is seen is that the actual role-played and boundaries of care delivered are of greater interest. The men suggest that they do not have much choice in how and when they become grandfathers. They try to understand what stage of life they may be at when they expect to be grandfathers but are in reality engaged in fatherhood care of children. The significance of this is seen in this study as many of the men suggested that as they attempt to understand what stage they are at, they are also mindful of the men who do not get to see their grandchildren and suggest that I should try to speak to these men.

6.2.1 Abnormal Grandfathering

For one man who was a great-grandfather, he disclosed that his grandfathering was abnormal because it was sporadic and opportunistic:

Oscar; "I see the children (grand and great-grandchildren) now and again and I mean now and again...contact was accidentally made...I might be walking through the town and I'd see her (granddaughter) or she'd see me and we would end up talking."

And:

Callum; "I know men who don't get to see their grandchildren you should speak with them"

The paradox is such that those that do not practice as a grandfather do not define themselves as grandfathers and therefore would not answer to the request to participate in this study.

For the men, they believe that being a grandfather is an important role to them and in contrast to their own memories of grandfathering; it is one they wish to be engaged in. They see it as the stage after fatherhood and the opportunity to relax a little. For some however, they are forced into the fatherhood role again. Eamonn and his wife are the fulltime relative foster carers of his eldest daughter's two children:

Eamonn; "It's a second family Susan, its hard work, but when we get them to bed at nine and watch telly and DVD's it's alright, but other than that I'm seeing nothing I didn't see previously as a dad and I've more experience."

For others they do not wish to progress to this grandfather stage as it depicts an older person:

Harry; "I was still playing football at the time and having a wee one calling me granddad wasn't good for my image."

What was also seen is the anticipatory void was that many men who may never fulfil the trajectory of grandfathering because of their personal circumstance. For one of the grandfathers who declared his love for another man later in his life, he raises the issue of what his younger partner will miss:

Sean; "I have (number) lovely kids, (number) lovely grandchildren. You know, as my partner would say. You're lucky you have all this. You know because I think one thing is that I – even at my age actually – my partner said you know what I mean he would love to have kids but he never will."

For some of the grandfathers who offer foster and regular day care to their grandchildren, they believe they remain young and active in this role:

Emmet; "I think one of the things is bringing yourself down to their level and being part of their life, what they see, what they perceive in you... Sometimes let them win, don't be the winner all the time let them have their time and things will work out.... it's so much fun."

And:

Gerard; "I'm 57 now...but I always feel like a young person."

However, for another young father after 10 years of marriage, he had felt no attachment to the family and opted out of the family:

Joseph; "You're young, let me see--- If I was being honest, I would say that when the children came along, when I was married, I was married for 10 years, it was long enough. Ehhhh-----if I was being honest I would say that having children when we got married first was just to be expected."

From the men who know they are grandfathers but never get to practice or self-identify as grandfathers, it is difficult to clarify if being a grandfather is experienced in the same way. It may be that they experience being a grandfather through involvement in communities and activities involving children. However, without a role as a father or grandfather of children, these leadership roles are challenging to access:

Liam; "...Wary of newcomers who don't have children of their own."

For one grandfather, who has come out as a gay man, he had some concerns raised within the sporting activities that he supervised over young children. He was shocked that those that knew him well would raise concerns:

Sean; "If you are gay then you can't be around children...that's what they thought'.

The notion that there is an unfulfilled stage in a person's life becomes all the more poignant when seen in a fractured Irish society where access to generational links is becoming more inaccessible. This is further compounded by the obscurity of the role, as it is traditionally known. For several of the grandfathers in this research, the role of father and the title of dad remain foremost in the narrative. For Paul, he states that the children and grandchildren call him by the same title:

Rory; "Yes well the children call me daddy as well."

In addition, for one other man who is a full time foster carer, he realised in the conversation that they do not call him granddad:

Eamonn; "She calls her (his wife) Granny, I'm Dad ha, ha, ha, at my age a daddy."

Some of the men recognise that the term 'grandfather' is possibly becoming obsolete in contemporary Ireland. They do not seem to be offended or disadvantaged by this. In the narrative it appears that, their experiences or memories of their grandfathers are disparate to their practice with the grandchildren. Therefore, no parallels between the two are forthcoming in the narrative adding to the acceptance that the term may be eroding or evolving.

6.2.2 Feminised role

For Gerry, he liked the fact that the current role he plays with the grandchildren adds a feministic element as seen in the role of the grandmother. This is welcome today but not when he was a father. He feels it is equality of the roles and offers that doing the housework when he was a father was also embarrassing:

Paddy; "Eh, with one hand I'd push.... the other hand in my pocket, acting cool. Different now. Actually I was out walking a few times on a Friday and Pat would be saying he minds his grandkids and the two of us meet up in the park with the prams."

There is nothing thought of it now, years ago it would be considered that you weren't a man. That's gone now."

This change in culture of the accepted roles of men is also noted by Ciaran, who states that when handing over the care of the grandchild from one grandfather to another grandfather, they discuss which TV programmes the child likes to watch:

Ciaran; "So I was sitting there watching Peppa pig and who arrives to the door the other grandfather with the toys and he comes in and asks, 'is this the one with the treasure?' ... What are we like watching Peppa pig? Discussing the pig ha, ha."

The masculinity of the grandfather role is eroding with this generation of men, as several grandfathers' state:

Paddy; "But years ago working in the factories you'd never hear the end of it (minding the children). But it is good now."

And Emmet echoed the view of several of the men when they say how they love to care for them:

Emmet; "No, I don't care if they all come and never go home."

This part of the discussion, they do admit, was not a normal activity when they were fathers, and one they particularly shied away from.

Throughout the interviews, the men expressed the delight in having the opportunity to speak about being a grandfather, as they were aware that discussions in the media coverage focused sometimes on both the grandparents but mostly the grandmother. With the views of the grandfather as an individual rarely being explored. The participants appreciate this as they justify why this is important:

Sean; "The wife doesn't live with me anymore she lives separately but the (number) kids live with me. I've always taken care of them.... and now can do the same with the grandchildren."

Moreover, as Shane talks, he realises:

Shane; "I am the house husband...the wife has always been the breadwinner so it is no different with the next children."

Rory also says:

Rory; "Me and the wife mind the grandchildren and if we need more money the wife goes to work...ha, ha."

Continuation of earlier discourse and of paramount significance portrayed by all of the men, in many different guises, was that in reality for them, "*The first grandchild is the baby Jesus.*" George expresses what many of the men alluded to and verified on repeat interviews:

George; "The first grandchild is the baby Jesus.... you just can't help it... the power of the love that you feel."

Once said, many retracted this by stating:

Ronan, Gerard, Paddy, George; "But I love them all the same."

Throughout this study, none of the grandchildren in contact with the grandparents was in paid care or care of a nanny or crèche. If they were not sharing the care with their parents, then the grandparent provided the care. Furthermore, as the grandmothers in particular were still within the workforce many of the grandfathers made themselves available to be there for the grandchildren.

6.2.3 Self Blame

Within this discourse and not really identified was the guilt felt and expressed in several ways by the grandfathers. They all take responsibility for the breakdown in communication between themselves and the grandchildren through the adult children. Being a grandfather for these men is ensuring open lines of communication are maintained between. The question of whether they feel they can operationalise this role is demonstrated and experienced differently by each of the men. Within the narrative, this appeared as a significantly different approach to how their own parents treated them in their adult lives. They never ventured to blame others for the poor relationships and possible subsequent rebuilding of trust. However, it was expressed in the following ways:

Fionn; “he was only 18 and he came in to say his girlfriend was pregnant and it was just a shock to the system and I blew a gasket...I regret it. ...Unfortunately they split after a couple of years and went their own way I was worried we would not get to see the grandchild...she comes round to us just like family...I put my hands up and said sorry but now we have a great relationship at home now.”

And:

Oscar; “For me I come bearing gifts... that’s what this grandfather does to see the grandchildren.”

As a nuance during many of the disclosures around poor relationships with the grandchildren, it was evident that the men blamed themselves. They understood that their actions, political or otherwise were being played out through the adult relationships with their children. There was a feeling of sorrow through this discourse. The sins of the father were returning to haunt them. Justifiable as their earlier adult life could be explained, there remained doubt that outcomes could have been better. Ronan expressed this belief with shocking honesty about his son, as:

Ronan; “you know when I think back I regret that... that I didn’t spend enough time with them developing the relationships doing things that you are supposed to do with your son cos I didn’t, to be honest with you I probably viewed him as an inconvenience.”

Being a grandfather refers to a period of the father’s adult life that for most is unplanned, and for some an undesired association with the elderly assumptions attached to being a grandfather. Identified properties within this subcategory are related to the loss of grandfathering, the perceived role and identity of grandfathers in today’s Ireland, the early years, generational cycles and intergenerational links. The co-constructive nature of the interactions between the participants, their thoughts, spoken words and the understanding of the interviewer, reinforce the felt importance of being a grandfather and living in the child’s life.

6.3 Loss of grandfathering

Whether welcome or not the concept of the ‘virtual’ grandfather is quite new and enables the world to become a smaller place. It is treasured as a form of access to be embraced in the absence of the physical and geographical presence that enables the grandfather’s performance and actions as a grandfather. For several of the grandfathers this form of grandfathering was revealed in a variety of ways. For some the emigration of family members to countries on the other side of the world was understood as a normal event in today’s world. They believed that this is the normal trajectory of a small island on the outer edges of the continent of Europe and has occurred for hundreds of years. The difference in today’s world is the embedded norm of social media. This enables a real time visual experience of the children and grandchildren. This virtual interaction through Skype and other forms of social media is seen as a Godsend, enabling the grandfather to remain a witness to the lives of his children and grandchildren. The periods on Skype are usually planned and anticipated with preparatory news, photos and local gossip for the recipients on either side. For many of the grandfathers the intercontinental distances between them and their children and grandchildren are acceptable and not perceived as a burden. With regard to Emmet, he suggests such distances of travel are similar (in his eyes) to travelling across the geographical spread of Ireland:

Emmet; “It takes five hours to get down the country and my boy is a few more hours than that away. But it’s not any greater of a distance flying to the continent than it is driving to Kerry or Cork, it’s a day.”

That said, for other participants in the group this virtual witness to a child and grandchild’s life is a forced issue because of inability to freely travel to a country because of historical events in Northern Ireland that prohibits entry to the other country. In a double jeopardy scenario, the child and grandchild cannot visit home, as they are undocumented in the other country whereupon, if they leave, they will not be permitted re-entry. Liam sadly describes how he witnessed the wedding of his daughter on Skype and the first sights of his granddaughter on Skype. The disclosure of guilt and pain felt because of his earlier actions as a father are further projected onto his children and spouses, who suffer the sins of the fathers and is described as unbearable and difficult to watch on Skype:

Liam; “A big event, your daughter getting married and you are blessed to see it on Skype but it’s not ideal and that’s fine but now you have a granddaughter that you haven’t seen, it is fantastic to have the internet and view each other around the world. But we also want the physicality and the touch. To hold each other....”

The spouses (wives/partners) feel the impact as they are “tared to the brush” by association. If any connection is made to the husband this, results in them all being prohibited from entering the country. For one of the grandfathers, this occurred when he used his wife’s’ visa card to pay the country entry visa fee. He was identified and as a result the wife was linked to the husband and she too was prohibited from entry. As Ronan explains to me about his friend who practices virtual grandfathering through the lens of Skype:

Ronan; “What people will tell you, photos are ok but Skype at least is some interaction. That’s what they tell you... it wrecks them, they really are cut up about it but that’s what they are saying, without Skype there would be no contact.”

6.3.1 Virtual or absent grandfathers

The use of Skype is viewed as a substitute for not being permitted into a country to visit the children. This is unacceptable to the grandfathers, who feel they have been unfairly redressed in the Good Friday Agreement (GFA). They cannot comprehend how they, as ex-political combatants are classified amongst other common criminals:

Joseph; “I wouldn’t do it....I couldn’t bear not seeing and holding them....I’d do what I did before ...I’d enter xxxx (name of the country) under the radar.”

This participant disclosed how there are many ways to enter a country covertly. For obvious reasons the discussion on this was not taped and did coincide with recent events in Boston around taped interviews of political activists during the same period in Northern Ireland (<http://www.theirishtimes.ie/ira-boston-tapes-gerry-adams-May2014>).

For some other grandfathers it is intolerable:

Gerard; "Grandchildren in another country that I could not hold and see would affect me badly. Even with Skype it's no good."

For this grandfather he did go on to explain how he would not allow one child to emigrate and would rather have the whole family emigrate rather than lose one child.

For many grandfathers, including those who had a history of involvement in the Northern Ireland conflict, the option of not having access to their grandchildren was discarded as a non-viable scenario:

Gerard; "If I thought that anyone would stop me from seeing me grandchildren whether they are family or State.... well I won't tell you what I would do...not when you are taping... (As he laughed out loud he was quite serious of expression)."

For other grandfathers who had a poor relationship with their children, they experienced a poor relationship with the grandchildren. For these men, the name grandfather was not within their persona, as they were never afforded the option to become a grandfather. Within the theoretical sampling of the study, a grandfather suggested I speak to grandfathers who do not see their grandchildren. Theoretical sampling would direct me to source this man for enquiry. However on exploration, as these men do not perceive themselves to be grandfathers, they do not self-identify as a grandfather and do not know who the grandchildren are, therefore, they did not respond to the call for participation in the study. There were however, several of the grandfathers in this study who did not get to see some of their grandchildren and therefore practice as a grandfather to these children. Their voices have been expressed in this study.

For the grandfathers in this study who experienced poor relationships with some of the grandchildren, their interpretation of the causality was:

Joseph; "I wouldn't have the same bond with her as with the other grandchildren as I wasn't there that much."

Shea; "Well there was more of a bonding with xxxx (grandson) because the other girls if they wanted to come, they'd come. If they didn't, they didn't. Access was given to me, but the courts didn't make them come...the girls can go with you if they want."

Oscar; "My daughter had a poor relationship with me and so when the grandkids came along she wouldn't let me see them. I didn't have a bond with them."

And:

Donal; "Because I don't have a bond with them as early as I have a bond with the others."

6.3.2 Optional grandfathering

For some, being a grandfather is presenting oneself as an opportunistic "money tree" that has its "fruit" picked whenever it is required by the grandchildren and adult children. For Oscar he knew no other way to be a grandfather other than to offer money and get to see the grandchildren. If this is how he could be a grandfather, then that is what he would do. For him being a grandfather was conditional:

Oscar; "They call me to the birthday parties when necessary...for the money...they don't see why I can't give them the money because I have so much of it.... ye I have a money tree too."

In contrast, Shea believes that the grandfathers are complacent in opting out of pursuing access. He understands current legislation on grandparental access to grandchildren, and states:

Shea; "Being a grandparent... it's an option."

His reference to the legislation confirms how it allows grandparents to at least make application to the judge to bring the case to Family Court. He further commented on how not many grandparents engage in this process, therefore, making grandparenting optional!

6.3.3 Never becoming a grandfather

A sad but realistic disclosure from some participants was about the man who will never become a grandfather. This was explained as the man who acts as the foster parent and is more functional as the father figure than the grandfather figure. The children are present fulltime in the home and call him Dad, therefore grandfathering is lost:

Eamonn; “They call the wife Granny, I’m dad...ha, ha, ha, at my age a daddy...ha, ha, because they have no other daddy.”

Of more concern is the absence of the opportunity for other men to become grandfathers. Mentioned earlier are the circumstances where gay men are becoming, or not, fathers and grandfathers. Within current legislation, surrogacy and adoption are not permissible in Ireland for gay men. Foster care is an option but lacks the permanency required in parenting. For one grandfather, his story was one where he was married with children and declared his homosexuality in his 50’s. He now has a young partner in his 30’s. The utilisation of Charmaz’s co-construction theory was illuminated when, during the interview, this grandfather realised that he had the best of both worlds, enjoying children and grandchildren within a same sex relationship. However, he was aware that his partner never would experience this situation. This participant was also convinced that his partners’ parents were concerned when he declared his sexuality, as they believe they will never become grandparents:

Sean; “They are probably thinking like...are they going to be grandparents? Is he going to be a grandfather? That’s it exactly. xxxx (my partner) told me that. The mother is looking for a grandchild. She would love one. There is no sign of xxxx (another brother) having a child, that’s the next brother who is also gay, and my partner said the youngest lad is looking like he’s gay as well”

Too often within society the acrimonious split between middle children results in restricted or no access to the grandparents most notably along the patrilineal line of the relationships. Many of the grandfathers felt that this was due to the overall governance from the mother. Emmet suggests that circumstances that perpetuate the grandfather’s lack of engagement in the role are based upon the belief that the practice is policed and governed by the mother:

Emmet; “Most of the time in Ireland the children stay with the mother, so they would see the maternal grandparents. Yeah, and it would work the opposite way if the children were with the father. One of the things I would know because I’ve seen it, is that the grandparents get involved over the split and they take sides with their own and they don’t care whose fault it was, they’re gonna stand up for their own and I don’t see it as a good thing.”

In following Emmets’ and others beliefs about the grandparents taking sides with the children, what is also seen is the development of animosity witnessed if access is not granted to see the grandchildren:

Callum; “Where you would have a family, you could have two grandchildren and the father and mother are not married and I think then there’s a falling out... they’re all over the country, big time. People will say “oh well that’s the laws” and everything, I’m not talking about the rules and regulations, there should be something done. The mother can’t have the only say. The other side of the family should still have connection. How can you be a grandfather if you don’t get to see the child?”

Therefore, in addition to getting too involved in the arguments of the adult children, grandparents are culpable of being complacent when it comes to gaining access to their grandchildren. The point is that there is an element of complacency in some grandparents that allows the parent to prohibit the child seeing the grandparents. Consequently, to allow for mediation and other mechanisms that will facilitate the parents in reducing the incidence of stress to the child, many of the grandfathers acknowledge that they withdraw from pursuing their legal rights to address access in court for fear of ‘rocking the boat’ for the grandchild. They are willing to forsake and lose their grandfathering roles for the sake of the grandchild. Liam spoke of his friend who does not get access to the grandchildren:

Liam; “It’s his daughter’s children but her husband won’t let them see him. There is a law there for him but he won’t use the law because he’s afraid to rock the boat...he even moved back to xxxx from Spain to be closer with the grandchildren and now he has no access.”

Another participant asked me to look at the situation from a different angle from that of the grandfather. He suggested that the grandfather was being complacent acting as an innocent participant in the grandchild's life:

Fionn; "Ye I think you should see the other side of the coin. Maybe the granddad doesn't want to get tangled in it all."

And as described by another participant the grandchildren have all the power:

Joseph; "Ye, I listen to different men who are grandfathers in the "grandfather" sense and that how they would be, ah, shur the grandchildren can wrap me around their little fingers. I think a lot of that is because they only have that little small piece of how and when the child is here and they want their precious little time that they have with them to be a memorable time so they don't want --- very complacent... Don't want to rock the boat."

Policy and legislation has been developed and enacted to facilitate the holistic approach of the family being involved in the child's life. The best interest of the child must be paramount. Whilst this is welcome, what is witnessed in practice is that with the maternal custody or as Brian stated, "mother rules" in play, the grandparents step back. This too has consequences that are yet to be seen in a generation that becomes detached from their extended family and all that this brings to the life of a child.

6.4 Role and identity of grandfathers

When the narrative on grandfathering evolved to discussion on their role as a grandfather, many offered that they have never thought about their role before. As they thought and talked during the interview it became quite clear that while their role may not have been thought of, what they expect within the family was quite distinct and understood by all family members.

6.4.1 What Grandfathering offers to the family

What they all disclosed were values in the care that they offered and how they felt their role was to provide, in certain ways for the grandchildren, that which they may not have been able to offer to their children. For the grandfathers the provision of care knows no boundaries and

encompasses financial, social, educational, emotional, entertainment, developmental, physical and health promotional. The men who were ex-prisoners took great prowess in describing their comfortable homes and the several types of holiday destinations they liked to go to with the grandchildren ensuring the maximum experiences on offer. Because of the prison records held by these men, access to countries outside of Europe is disallowed. Other grandfathers described themselves as financially comfortable and able to provide for certain areas in the child's life that they may not have been enabled to do as fathers. Financial support was foremost in the offerings from the grandfathers. Ronan had a poor relationship with his son and a good relationship with the son's partner, the mother of his grandchildren. He described how he takes great pleasure out of being able to offer such supports like shared family holidays, education, and exercise opportunities amongst many supports:

Ronan; "It feels fantastic to be able to help her."

He also says that the help is not only financial and assistance to the children but also emotional support for the mother:

Ronan; "Its confidential if she wants to tell me something it is just between the two of us, I wouldn't even say it to my wife if she just wants to say something that she knows it won't be carried back you know."

While in gaol, some of the ex-political prisoners had learned another European language and were teaching it to the grandchildren. They enjoyed going on holidays abroad to encourage and empower the grandchildren to speak the language when abroad. They also had gyms at the house and had great interest in using the gym with the grandchildren for health promotional, exercise and mental health elements of welfare. This all appears to originate from their own values on health and welfare, possibly following episodes of time spent in enclosed confined spaces where they studied and exercised to occupy long periods of gaol time. For many of the participants who were ex-prisoners, this time in confined space resulted in reshaping their awareness of their psychological wellbeing made evident as one participant attempts to explain the dark moments that many of the political ex-prisoners alluded to:

Gerard; “After the hunger strikes there is this period where we were fighting the prison about segregation from the loyalist prisoners and we achieved that and then things settled and as the pressure went off I had severe anxiety and was in a situation about... The best experience was the comradeship of fellow prisoners, that’s another day’s work to explore. But you were in a situation where you were in prison and The Troubles were still on, you didn’t want to show weakness to your own because we all had to be strong, and you didn’t want to show weakness to the authority, for your own pride, number 1, and number 2, then they might use that for another reason against you, which is common in prison. So I kept it to myself, internalised it and that experience at the young age still affects me now. I still fight that. But every morning is a challenge for me. You may not feel you are able to take the day on and would rather stay in bed.”

Maintaining good mental health awareness was one of the areas that several of the grandfathers alluded to in the conversations mostly in relation to pleasing the grandchild or not rocking the boat on the grandchild as discussed in Chapter Seven.

Of significance, was the fact that many did not speak of the care delivered to children inter alia nappy changing, feeding, and bathing. I did not look or prompt for this in the interviews however I did notice that it was unspoken of. I returned to seven of the earlier interviews at the end of the study and member checked some of the points that they had discussed. At this time, I asked for elaboration on the provision of care they offered. It was at this point that financial and physical care was discussed in more detail. In addition to the financial offerings as discussed above was support for school uniforms, paying bills for adult children and generally giving random gifts of money if they felt it was needed. For the physical care, direct care on nappy changing, feeding and bathing appeared to be the norm for most of these men. As discussed earlier is not the case for all of the men particularly those who were not strongly attached or bonded to their children. However, for those that performed the tasks with their children it was not an issue raised in the care of their grandchildren. I explained that I was looking for clarity only as I had interpreted that this was so at the first interview. As one grandfather suggested when describing his purpose in being a grandfather:

Shane; "I don't think I would be of much use to my daughter if I could not do all the jobs. My wife works and I am the main child minder...it's no good if I cannot do it all."

In this study the grandfathers did express that although they were involved in the intimate care of bathing, nappy changing and feeding, their enjoyment occurred when playing with the children or taking them on adventures. Many of the men did not refer to the tasks mentioned above therefore for clarity I asked during several of the interviews if this was part of the role. Most of the men agreed that this was considered normal and therefore not mentioned. Some of the men stated bathing was an issue not carried out (discussed in the next Chapter). Irrespective of the types of cares mentioned in this section, the detail of nappy changing was not primary in their narratives. The other supports mentioned earlier in this section (6.2.2.) were most important to the men. One of the only differences in the provision of care was that nowadays they engaged in pushing prams as mentioned above and discussed later. For a few of the men (n=3) however when asked about caring for the children at bath time or nappy changing time, they stated:

Gerard; "That was the woman's work.... I did other things."

The other things referred to by most of the grandfathers and clarified on return interviews ranged from fishing, sports, taxiing to watching Peppa Pig on DVD. For one of the grandfathers, he noted that discussions on the episodes of Peppa Pig occurred with the other grandfather quite often! The investment of this much interest in the child's life would indicate that there is a paying forward as much as a paying back forecast to their actions. The men seem to be demonstrating active involvement and interest with the grandchildren to develop the bond in order to gain recompense, as they get older. As Ciaran laughs, he says:

Ciaran; "I hope he doesn't forget this when I'm older...ha, ha"

The grandfathers alluded to the fact that when defining themselves as a grandfather the natural imagery was of the cliché grandfather who is an older gentleman with a greying beard, glasses and sitting in a rocking chair. Most of the participants laughed as they said this. A couple of the full time carers of grandchildren said, 'if only', implying they could have a rest and relaxation period. However, for the most the idea of being a grandfather was one of

the proudest moments of their lives. The participants all embraced the idea of grandfathering and some made the following statements in relation to the role:

Martin; "Just that... it's a wonderful experience."

And;

Gerard; "I get it easy to love them. It's unconditional. I don't care if it makes me look old"

For another grandfather, who is stepfather to his only stepdaughter:

George; "They are not my blood ...but they are my grandchildren and I won't have anyone tell me otherwise...."

6.4.2 Being a grandfather is nothing special

This was an important comment from a non-consanguine grandfather also stated by other grandfathers who were non-consanguine as to how they were grandfather in name only, where the image had no effect on the outcome of the role:

Oscar; "Becoming a grandfather was nothing special...I had no real role and thought this was normal to be not so involved."

Oscar does not play a role or have an identity as a grandfather and says his existence is obsolete, as the children have never really employed him in a grandfather role. His rationale for this is because his children were adopted and when they came of age (18 years), they did not require his involvement in their lives any longer:

Oscar; "My grandfathering has been quite limited, and, I'm just wondering I think it has to do with the fact that they were adopted. They came of age and that was that, job done."

Oscar sighs heavily during the interview and appears visibly sad. I asked if he would like to stop interviewing but he explained that he actually felt good speaking on the subject, as no one tends to ask him about it. He described it is as if people know his situation and do not bring up the children and grandchildren in the conversation. He, like many of the grandfathers reverts to the early years of the children's lives as most important for getting to know them. He was working to improve their quality of life and was not available.

Of note is how Oscar is the adopted parent of two adult girls, who detached from him at the age of 18 years. For other non-consanguine grandfathers, their approach to the role was representative of what they would expect a grandfather image to be:

Shane; "The children have only known me as their father and so when they had children of their own and bring the children round they call me the grandfather and I do what grandfathers do.... play with them, mind them and of course...spoil them rotten. My children did not see me as an auld fella. I think they still see me as the father."

6.4.3 Grandfathers image

As mentioned earlier, one of the participants was a grandfather at the age of 32 years. He expressed how he did not like the name granddad. He liked what it represented but he felt as a young man it was bad for his image. He loved it and hated it at the same time. What appeared unspoken throughout the interview was that he loved the grandchildren. However, there was a sense that he felt it brought attention to his parenting skills. He was a young father and he had tried to rear his child to have all the opportunities in life that he and his wife did not have. Therefore, when his child was a parent at the age of 15 years he appeared to take this as a self-critique on his own parenting skills. That was 15 years ago. He believed he would remain a very young grandfather and an even younger great grandfather in his lifetime:

Harry; "When I was young I was only a nipper myself and it's only now my parenting skills have been developed with my grandkids."

As Harry alluded to the perception of poor parenting, what he did not refer to was that this is possibly also a point of issue with his own parents and that of his wife's parents and their parenting skills.

The men's perception of what a grandfather's image looked like was expressed as different to what they had known. As mentioned this older image of a grandfather is not what they perceived themselves to be. They expected all the trappings of respect and authority that goes with this patriarchal role while expecting all the love and adoration afforded to a friendly type image in the family:

Gerard; "The thing that is similar to me father is that me and my father really, really love children and I really love children and me grandchildren too. I get it easy to love them. It's the same thing, its unconditional...it's about respect."

Gerard is referring to the general belief that the grandfather's wish is for a respectful relationship from their children and grandchildren and a demonstration where all children are treated as "human beings" rather than "human becomings." In return, they suggest the children responded to this approach and treated the adults with respect. Within the interviews, none of the grandfathers defended their roles as being similar to roles displayed by their grandfather or their father.

What was clear to the researcher from the narratives was how the traditional masculine role of the grandfather appears to be eroding, as many of the practices performed and advocated are feministic by comparison. This feminised approach was witnessed more in the families where the grandfathers were fulltime carers and child minders of their grandchildren in comparison to those who had limited contact with their children. As heard from the following participants the traditional role is becoming obsolete or redundant from lack of use:

Kevin; "I've the same love for my kids and my grandkids but it is different. Probably too.... because I had decisions to make for my kids and not so many for the grandkids. All I can be is here for them and to support them."

The grandfathers identified as full time custodial or day carers expressed how the changing roles have been beneficial in removing the masculine and feminine roles in parenting and as

described in earlier Chapters, pushing prams and caring for babies and toddlers is rewarding work for grandfathers;

Rory; "I don't think there is a line between the two anymore. I just think it is part of life and it is for us."

Emmet; "The grandmothers were more recognised than the grandfather when it came to minding and caring for the children. But that's different cos they are the ones out working and we are the ladies of leisure."

George; "I know no different. I was hands-on with my children and now with the grandkids. I don't see the roles as theirs or mine. It's all hands on deck."

And:

Ciaran; "I think it's great that society is changing and it's all acceptable. We could be with the children indoors but now it's all men down at the school gates."

If the role as a father figure is acceptable as part of which they define themselves, they also take pleasure in telling me how they are enjoying the feminisation of their roles in later life. Emmet, Sean, Callum, Shane and Paddy all described as older men; discuss their understanding of what it means to be in touch with your feminine side. It is all right to hang out the washing on the clothesline, to mop the floors and cook the dinner while the wife is out. They have always undertaken these tasks but now they can be open about it and not feel ridiculed for it. They also admire their wives for performing this work for years with more children than there are grandchildren.

There was clearly an acknowledgement that the role they practice was nothing like what they perceived a grandfather's role should be. They understood that there had been a strong traditional masculine role as a father, but did not see this as a predominant factor in the role of grandfather. For some, they believed the masculinity went with the authoritative persona and although they want to be seen as the boss, they want a softer more feminine persona where they are engaged in all care relating to the children. The role is no different to how

they behaved as fathers and although not discussed openly, the narrative demonstrated a disclosure of strong masculine and feminine traits within the role-played.

In this narrative Kevin highlights that his responsibilities have changed from the father to the grandfather role. For Rory, absence of these masculine figures within the family results in an absence in the male perception resulting in a complacent attitude by the male within family dynamics:

Cormac; "I didn't have one (grandfather) and my children didn't have one... The grandfathers were dead. ...But there was no involvement of men. There is no experience of having a grandfather...I just go with the flow of the house."

One of the other participants explains this complacency and absence of the male figure in the family by suggesting that the grandchildren see the role of the father and not the grandfather role:

Rory; "I'm still the father and that's what they see. I'd say I'm not the only one; there is plenty like me. I don't think it is recognized as a grandfather. Grandmothers are more recognized than grandfathers, but I am the daddy, my children call me that and so do me grandchildren."

In this comment, the participant acknowledges that the grandchildren understand the lineage and relationship between the mother and the grandmother. However in the absence of the father figure, they identify the grandfather similar to their mother, by calling him daddy. Notwithstanding the role as mentioned and of more significance is the obliteration of the name grandfather. For a few of the grandfathers, they were called dad. However, oblivious to many of the other men was the absence of the word grandfather throughout the discussions. Early in the enquiry, I noticed that for grandfathers who were relative fulltime foster carers and for those who cared for the children for much of the day for their unmarried, single adult children, the term grandfather was not mentioned. When asked what the children called them, most said they were called dad. However, others said they were called by their Christian name. They supported this with the explanation that this is what the children would have heard. When I asked what they call the grandmother, I was told she is called granny or grandma. What the grandfathers did not see was that, in the absence of any other male figure

in the child's life the grandfather was called dad, as the children did not have a dad. However, the grandmother was called grandma because the children had a mother. Returning later in the research to check if this was a true reflection of their particular situations, all of the grandfathers that were asked, agreed with this interpretation. They also offered that they had not thought about this before either of the interviews:

Rory (2nd Interview); "I'm still the father and that's what they see...I'd say I'm not the only one, there is plenty like me. I don't think it is recognized as a grandfather. Grandmothers are more recognized than grandfathers...but I am the daddy, my children call me that and so do me grandchildren."

Another of the participants supports this belief by stating:

Kevin; "...xxxx (Granddaughters name) father never really came into her life growing up. It's only in the last couple of years where her father came into the picture...but there was no impediment with the child growing up. xxxx saw me as a father figure.... I'd say she would say that I would be more father figure than her own father."

Only two of the grandfathers in this situation insisted on the children calling them granddad:

Eamonn; "She calls me dad all the time.... because she has no other dad. I took her to meet her real dad a few times and she still calls me dad. She is eight years old and understands enough. I don't bother anymore. She calls granny, granny."

For Brian he insists on reminding the grandchildren that he is not their dad:

Brian; "I tell them they have a dad...I am their granddad."

This title was mentioned in the previous Chapter where, Joseph, who had grandchildren the same age as children in his second marriage, and for whom the name granddad was never used. His children from both marriages and the one unmarried relationship called him dad and the grandchildren called him by his Christian name. I returned for a second interview to ask why this was so, and was told that he suspected the mother of the grandchildren told them

to do so. He then said he was a grandfather, father at the same time, and coined the phrase “GRATHER” to capture the transmuted name:

Joseph; “Yes you see I’ve never given it thought until now with you, other than the kids just call me Joseph. It’s only when I’m sitting here talking to you that I’m wondering where that came from, cos it certainly wasn’t me and I.eh... suspect it’s my eldest daughter who’s probably said to herself, ye.....it would be confusing for my two kids if their friends were calling me granddad...Ha, Ha, Ha.”

Some of the grandfathers offered that they had a role in bringing the families together when there was trouble regarding a split in the adult children relationships. For those grandfathers experiencing adversarial conditions relating to access to grandchildren, they found that, for the sake of the child, the opposing parties (grandparents) may ameliorate the situation. This is in contrast to other situations where there are complexities and long-term court proceedings to see grandchildren. However, in situations like this everyone benefits. In this way, the children become the catalyst and healing elements within households. This is a known phenomenon in a house around the time of a death in the family, so comparisons can be made to the healing link that a child can create between feuding factions:

Shea; “We can either go the bitter way and make it with more animosity or do this amicably and still be involved in our children’s lives and our grandchildren’s lives rather than going through the family law system.”

What all the grandfathers including those that were not permitted to practice as a grandfather articulated was that they were willing to be called whatever was required in order to see the children. They were happy to be with the grandchild in any capacity as long as it facilitated contact with the child. They also accepted that their own rational thought changed to accommodate the attributes required in maintaining reciprocal relationships. This accounts for the tolerance of the grandfathers being called dad or by any other name. This was all seen as inconsequential to the grandfathers when wanting to be with the grandchildren.

6.5 Being there in the early years

Being there for the grandchildren emerged as a fundamental role, phrased throughout the narrative and linked to so many of the outcomes achieved with the grandchildren. This was strongly identified as they realised, through the interview that they were not there for their own children in the early years. For many of the grandfathers the passion in being a grandfather was explicit when discussing the first-born grandchild but it was not until one grandfather named this concept exactly, that I understood the power of the love expressed. Two thirds of the way through the interviews one grandfather named this love:

George; "The first one is the baby Jesus."

This phrase was mentioned in Chapter Five and is included in this section as the power of the phrase epitomises this property of being there in the early years. When speaking about the first grandchild many of the men expressed their love as, 'love at first sight'. In the return interviews and during the member checking I enquired if this was an accurate description of the first-born grandchild by the other men. It was, seen to be the norm in the interviews. The grandfathers followed up this statement with equal expressions of love for all their grandchildren, whether they were within physical geographical access or not.

The notion that they wanted to be there for the children whenever they were needed was quite strong and expressed in several different ways by the grandfathers. This was irrespective of whether they were geographically close or not. For some men who practiced virtual grandfathering they explained the benefits of the connection:

Emmet; "It's different than rearing your own children, I would say more than, you have access to them on the screen and then when you do meet them there's a good bond and they're part of the family rather than just coming home for a visit to your house."

Fundamentally, they believed that an early bond with the grandchildren was the ultimate goal within the relationships. All of the grandfathers, with no exceptions spoke of the bond between the grandchildren and themselves. They identified it as significantly different to that felt with their own children:

Emmet; "Can go home to their parents after being with us and we know they have a bond with us and they're sharing with us both."

Ronan; "God I just fell in love with her from that second cos I didn't, you know I didn't (Sharp intake of breath) I don't think I was the perfect Da or father so just something ...as soon as I seen her I wanted to hug her."

Kevin; "She was the first...I love the bones of her."

And:

Rory; "Same as for your own children...maybe stronger as ye have more time to be with them in the early years."

For Joseph, as seen in earlier discussion, he understood the loss that was present in his life when he was absent in the early years of his child and grandchild. His relationships with his 18-year-old daughter and granddaughter were only cordial because of his lack of involvement. He fervently vows not to allow this to happen with his second family:

Joseph; "I xxxx up badly with my 18-year-olds (daughter and granddaughter) and I swear that will not happen again."

For those fathers who were involved in full time care, there was a desire to be present to do their duties irrespective of another family member being available, usually the grandmother. Being there was significant and related to the idea that they were not there when their children were younger. This issue was explored at repeat interviews and most of the grandfathers returned to the issues that arose in Chapter Five to rationalise why this situation occurred. Others stated how they find it difficult not being there physically for some grandchildren. For Ronan with reference to the restrictions placed on ex-prisoners from seeing their children and grandchildren abroad, he explains that there will be a price to pay:

Ronan; "Children will suffer in the future. There will be retribution this is seen in other jurisdictions around the practice of religion.... scary prophecy."

He alludes to the issue of a generational retaliation for sanctions placed on restricting access into countries to see the children and grandchildren. Another ex-political prisoner identified the same issue when he stated that the (Irish) State would be sorry, as the children and descendants will not accept this limitation:

Liam; "I think the main points is the access to the children but also there is the fear that if we don't do something that the next generation will not sit back as quietly either...they want for granddads to be part of their families."

For many, as they attempted to express the lived feeling of the bond they felt, it was only as they expressed this bloodline could they articulate how they felt their personhood was passing into the next generation and how good this felt. It is notable that neither of the fathers, who had no blood ties to the children, did not convey this comment.

In forming the early years' attachment, it is noted that most grandfathers were consanguine relatives. Some were adoptive fathers, foster fathers or in two cases stepfathers. For one of the grandfathers, he adopted two of his six children when he married their mother. He was now grandfather to their children. As the discussions around bond and unconditional love unfolded, there was a nuance in the air of what was possibly left unsaid. Time during the interviews was always allowed for the conversation to develop and eventually, whether it related to the name the child had as a surname or to the biological attachment, the issue of bloodline always arose. Brian does not get upset that his children are having female children and that his family name may not be carried to the next generation:

Brian; "That doesn't bother me if the name stops it stops. That doesn't bother me at all. There's enough in my family to populate the world."

This is not the case for Ciaran who admits to pressurising his daughter into having a baby within a few months of her wedding. When a granddaughter was born there was elation. However, by the end of the interview he did disclose how he would like the son to have a boy child to carry the name. The adult son showing no inclinations in settling down and having children of his own further compounds his anxiety on this issue. He was embarrassed at disclosing this, but honest:

Ciaran; “If me son had a child it would be the family name carrying on. I’m the only boy in our house so if my son doesn’t have a child my name from this end of the family will be gone. There will be no son to carry on the name... ye... If my son got married and he had a granddaughter I’d be just as over the moon but there is something in the back of your mind that it would be nice to have a grandson from your son to carry on the name.”

Cormac also alluded to this point when he spoke of the son-in-laws’ parents:

Cormac; “I’d say his father and mother would be kind of good, very supportive. I don’t think they have any other boys so they’re carrying the name on there, over in Scotland.”

Cormac demonstrated with his body and eyes (looked away and shrugged his shoulders) how he felt the paternal side of the family benefited more than he had in this situation. He also felt, through further narrative, this was also linked to the daughter living in Scotland and supported in many ways by the paternal grandparents. He did describe how, regardless of the circumstances he is delighted to be a grandfather and welcomes the growing family when they come over to visit. Unknown to me at this interview was how Cormac was unable to travel outside of Ireland because of criminal activity he was involved in earlier in his adult life. Rory supports the feeling of joy when he describes how it feels to see the family expand:

Rory; “Great feeling then... seeing your children...you know...having the next generation.”

It appears that for some of the men the early year’s bond and attachment was linked to whether the child would carry on the bloodline as they interpreted, through the continuation of the family name. This was reiterated to them at member checking and they denied this was the case. However, they could not offer alternative interpretations except to say they loved all the grandchildren the same.

One grandfather, who was a lifetime foster parent (approximately 70-80 foster placements for children), stated that a bloodline bond did not define his love. He was not related by blood to his wife, although he loved her unconditionally and would die for her. This is how he also

expressed his love for his foster children. His comments sum up the beliefs of other grandfathers who are not consanguine because of adoption, non-relative foster care or step parenting, by comparing it to the love of a spouse:

Emmet; "People often say, "how can you love someone else when they're not your own blood?" that has been said to me, I say, "shur my wife's not either, and I'm not hers!"

In contrast to Emmet's attachment to foster children, another of the grandfathers believes his role is insignificant because his adopted children kept him out of the family because he was not blood related:

Oscar; "My grandfathering has been quite limited and I believe this is because they are adopted."

When linking the family name to the bloodline, one participant was quite impassioned and offered his concerns about the mixing of the gene pool in a small country when many of the adult children are parenting children to different partners:

Harry; "I think also that this has massive implications with so many people having children to so many different partners. So many different connections and I think going forward that people don't know their bloodlines... What about these kids who are meeting other kids that are potentially their half-sisters or half-brothers? Then you have abnormalities that are born in children that have these connections. It's happening now...we should have some sort of passport to show our bloodline."

Several grandfathers who had concerns about different children being born to different mothers or fathers raised this point. It was amazing to hear how they articulated the need to know the bloodstock of the child as you would for a herd of cattle. They believed with the rise in co-habitation, and increase in infidelity that copious opportunities arose to "cross breed" and it could lead to a mutated gene pool in the future generation. Many suggested having a blood passport for the children would maintain strong generations to come.

For one grandfather a much more important issue to consider when a grandson is born was their participation in football:

Fionn; “When the boys are born you know I think...aw...great there’s another footballer...ha, ha, ha, but that’s it.”

The issue of early year bonding and attachment became animated for several of the men when they mentioned how State care for children is now within paid care that was coined “Mother Crèches”. For several of the grandfathers, the ideas of farming children out to these care facilities are anathema to what they perceive they can offer the children. None of the men in this study had their children in paid care if living in Ireland and near to them. They stated how they were available at all times to care for the children. They believed the crèches were the new mothers. They could not comprehend how families would allow their children enter into these places where there were too many children to be really cared for and where infections were shared from child to child:

Martin; “My daughter never had to use one of those mother crèches.... my wife and I always cared for the children.”

Gerard; “I would never allow my daughter to use those crèches to mind the children. They are cesspits of infection.”

Rory; “If I thought my grandchild was in one of those giant crèche things I would go mad... I would give up work to mind the child no matter what.”

The men reiterated their gratitude and acknowledged the benefits their wives had bestowed on their children by caring full time for them when the men were absent as fathers. The issue of other young parents not having the same supports and bond from their parents as offered by this cohort never came up in the conversation. Within the narrative, much of their early year involvement was linked to what they had or had not witnessed from their own parents.

6.6 Generational cycles

The iterative nature of a cycle ensures that the behaviour may or may not be perceived by the men to be repeated in the next and subsequent generations. From the narrative in the enquiry it was evident that there were elements of the lived experiences of the grandfathers that they would like, repeated, to end, or, to see developing or evolving from what they perceived grandfathering to be. Fundamental to the discussion and disclosed by two of the grandfathers, who were now fathers for the second time, was not missing out on the fatherhood experience as they had done in their first marriage with their older children. As the narrative of these new fathers unfolded, they disclosed:

Joseph; “Can’t build a relationship with them in the early years’ cos you are not there. Even a stepdad or foster dad can make a relationship cos they are there constantly. I want to be there for my young children today.”

And:

Shea; “If you lose the connection in the early years you can never replace it. That happened with my first kids and I’m not letting the cycle repeat itself again.”

For these two men, now in a second marriage, there was recognition of the fact that they did not invest sufficiently in the early years of some of the children from the earlier marriage/relationships. They spoke of the importance of all the family growing together. The realisation of the mistakes they had made early in life were not welcome to be repeated and as such, they were determined to mitigate any events to avoid this happening again. Of significance to these cases, was that the mothers of the children in the earlier families were welcoming of the children of the second and subsequent relationships. It was only through this discourse, that the participants actually realised the impact of the mother’s acceptance of the second family into the earlier family and how this facilitated the integration of the siblings. This allowed a normality of family integration where there may have been animosity. This was quite an emotional moment for one father, who had to take some time out of the interview to ring his ex-wife to speak with her and thank her. Again, my thoughts at this moment were of the ‘fit’ of Charmaz’s Grounded Theory in understanding, facilitating and interpreting the issues of importance for these men.

What many of the grandfathers described but did not name directly was the change in self-development. They talked about witnessing the differences within the family and how their relationships were comparable between the generations. What they did not describe clearly, but was evident in the discourse, was the change in approach to the family dynamics. The children of the earlier families were now adults and as such, access to the family in its totality must incorporate respect and maintenance of reciprocal respectful relationships. Therefore, as they spoke of how they had changed the way they negotiated access, what was implicit was the adaptive behaviour. This was a break in the cycle of how they had approached the children as younger members of the family:

Shea; "I don't force anything. My children in the second marriage are building the bridges between my children in the first marriage and myself. The only reason we are talking is because of the kids. So I will follow their lead and hopefully things will get better."

One grandfather, who has poor relationships with his adult children because of his criminal activities states:

Eoin; 'I don't want history to repeat itself. My older children won't talk to me and I'll do anything to be near me grandkids.'

What is also important is that within this respectful relationship is the two-pronged approach where the older children allow access of their children to the grandfathers. The literature refers to this as the peacemakers in the family. In the case of Shea, who has two families, the fact that he has knowledge of the courts system for gaining access to the grandchildren may have complemented the decisions his adult children have taken. Shea also spoke of counselling and mediation services as under resourced but extremely helpful for families in similar situations.

Almost all the grandfathers spoke of the distress they feel or would feel in the event that they could not see the children, if the adult children split up. For some, this was a reality and one they hoped would resolve within a mediated environment. However, for other grandfathers, they had an inherent fear that, in the event of a parental split, they would not be able to see the children:

Ciaran; "Oh well ye... I know the mother's side gets to see the children more than the father's side. I wouldn't want that to happen I would like to see the child having access to both sets of grandparents. If it were the other way round I would be gutted."

For one participant, whose son has children to four separate women, he has had to deal with mothers and babies arriving at the door claiming maintenance from the father. He has also been denied access to grandchildren because the mothers of the children will not allow them to see the grandparents:

Brian; "Woman comes to the door with a baby and asks is xxxx there? And I said yes, yes he is and she says ask him if he wants to see his daughter? So I went up and I told him and then I went for a walk ha, ha...met the mother and the girl. If it's his and I said I'd make sure he sticks around. So we sent for DNA and it was. She then wouldn't let us see the grandchild.... we went to court and sorted that out."

The same grandfather states that he would never allow his daughters to prevent their children's fathers from having access to the children, as the cycle would continue and he would see this as hypocritical:

Brian; "Yes like I said about what other women do with kids I'm sure my girls would try it but I wouldn't let them because I know what we went through and it's a heartbreaker for the family. It would be hypocritical. I think the father does get a raw deal. Like what chance do the grandfathers have if the fathers getting a raw deal all the time? With access to kids and all that...you know yourself. Men have not as many rights as mothers and the kids. The men would come last in my opinion."

For Brian he does not want another person to have to go through the system for accessing a grandchild as he has done. He also wants the grandchildren to have the benefits of all their parents and grandparents.

For one of the fathers this was unavoidable as he was unable to see his children or grandchildren as they emigrated to Australia and he was unable to access entry to the country. For him, the cycle of not having access to the children and then the grandchildren were too much to bear. He was emotionally exhausted and had to attend the GP for medical

treatment. For him the events that led to the first marriage split-up were based upon his lack of availability as a father, because of his activity in the Northern Ireland Troubles. In middle age, he realised he missed his children's early and adult life and felt the relationships were irredeemable. He had young children to a new partner. When the relationship broke down, the choice of his family to emigrate to a country outside of Europe perpetuated the cycle of not being there for the children.

With the exception of two grandfathers, there was not a view that the participants did not recognise that family life in contemporary Ireland will also see an absence of fathers and subsequently grandfathers from the lives of children. Although contextualised in a different time, the cycles are repeating. For these men it was related to the issues raised in Chapter Five. In today's generation if children do not have access to their fathers in their lives because of issues related to custody, access, employment flexibility or parental choice, then the cycle repeats itself for the next generation. This is discussed further in Chapter Seven.

6.7 Intergenerational links

Continuing the effects of repeated cycles, a concern expressed by the grandfathers was the family history not being passed down to the next generation. This, they state, was because of the disjointed families and mix of siblings to different parents. In addition, they point out that in acrimonious splits within a social media world that expresses and shares family events in real time, the absence of children from these events renders an opportunity lost forever. For one older grandfather the value of this connection is explained. Following the death of his wife a photograph of her and the first grandchild is treasured:

Martin; "...the generations are there and it's a great photograph for the grandchildren because they can look back and say 'that's my great-grandmother'. The way the world's going nowadays there's so many people breaking up and so many partnerships developed over their life I think the family trees are gonna be very hard to follow!"

However, another grandfather expressed a few of the participant's concerns around parent's habits in establishing relationships with so many partners and the impact of these

relationships. A dilution of the family knowledge and heritage occurs that traditionally adds wealth and cultural links to the strength of the family. This can occur due to lack of access and within the social world of connections between families. An implication for personal health is identified:

Harry; "And we see that going forward with adoptions and the history of heart disease and they don't know their heritage. What about these kids who are meeting other kids that are potentially their half-sisters or half-brothers? Then you have abnormalities that are born in children that have these connections. It's happening now."

Concerns were expressed about the loss of generational heritage in the format of memories, photographs and family events. In a culture where events are experienced and lived in real time, opportunities to share in first days at school and football matches in addition to First Holy Communions and Confirmations are lost. Furthermore, the family links that are lost have effect on issues relating to heritage, health and succession rights, as expressed by some participants. For one grandfather he was forecasting into the child's future:

Shea; "So you're thinking as a grandfather for what they're going to be missing out, not even what you're missing but what they will miss out in the future. That's important to them. Even for them to start it now because as you know yourself when children get older and they wanna go back and look at family trees, maybe even photographs and they'd come along and say well who's this? And you're deceased and they say that's your grandfather. Then they say how come he was never a part of my life? You don't want to have that conversation."

This flips the thoughts to what is best for the child rather than the adult. The grandfathers are unsure of the cause whether related to the absence of legislation on families or societal lack of interest and acceptance of what they suggest is immoral behaviour. However, the grandfathers perceive the lack of marital links and bonds to support family life as a barrier to developing strong links with the grandchildren:

Martin; "I wouldn't be afraid of it; it's just I think the way the world is developing now. There's much more freedom now for people in their relationships, whereas when

I was growing up and my parents were growing up and even my own children there was sort of a set way of life, for want of a better word, and it was really more or less one partner for life. It's just not good for the children."

The participants identified their concern at the birth of children to different mothers and fathers. One grandfather was quite animated by this and made the point that people have not woken up to this issue yet as they do not see it as their problem. This was in reference to the increase in known abnormalities of children and what they perceive to be the causes of this occurrence. Another grandfather became animated with the issue of ownership of the child/grandchild. He stated that the grandparents should be able to request to know if they are related to a child, irrespective of whether the adult children wish them to know or not. This particular grandfather believed his son and his partner's behaviours to be so immoral as to render doubt over the child's bloodline. This grandfather needed proof before assigning a commitment to becoming a grandfather to the child. A similar issue is raised for the fulltime foster grandfathers. One of these grandfathers is caring fulltime for his two grandchildren without knowledge of who the fathers of the children are. This grandfather, in his 70's, who does not know the paternity of the grandchild, struggles to answer some of the child's questions:

Eamonn; "...Why am I brown and my sister is white?"

And:

Eamonn; "...Where's my brown daddy?"

The sad situation expressed and sadly witnessed by several of the grandfathers is that, they as bystanders see the children being used as a weapon of pain between the adult children. The grandchildren become the inbetweeners:

Fionn; "Well because you see nowadays there are so many grandparents and step grandparents and some families don't let the grandkids see their grandparents and I think that is terrible. Because the kids are right there in the middle, so they suffer."

Several of the grandfathers who had first-hand experience of this type of upset in the family, commented similar sentiments to Donal:

Donal; "They are the pawns in the middle and suffer the most. The rest all get on with their lives and can say sorry when they are old but the damage is done."

Finally, for most of the participants this grandfather sums up the general feeling:

Ciaran; "They should be entitled to see their grandchildren, regardless."

For these grandfathers, there is an element of disappointment that the children they have do not appear to have the same commitments to their children, as the grandfathers perceive themselves to have had as fathers. This again is a paradox, when earlier the absence and need to be involved in the Northern Ireland cause, or work, or leisurely entertainment may also have been perceived as a lack of commitment. The paradox of their understanding and narrative continues.

Many of the men were aware and knowledgeable of the grievances experienced not necessarily by them, but for friends and relatives who have challenges in acting as a grandfather within situations where the middle children are not married. They are aware that there is a link between accesses to the grandchildren being stronger when the daughter in the family has a child as opposed to the son having a child. The access becomes even more difficult when the middle children are not married and when you are trying to access the son's child, as one-participant states:

Brian; "So him and her didn't get on and then she had another child and the two kids were taken off her (the mother) and me and the wife fought and never got them back for months....So my wife fought hand and nail every appointment with social workers and all that there, she made it her business to go to make sure they knew (Court) she had help with the kids and it takes a good woman to do that and she did and she eventually got them back and we can see the child now."

And another grandfather epitomises the difficulty of accessing the child when it is a son's child and became quite upset when he said:

Paddy; “But the son and the girlfriend broke up and lots of silliness going on and now we don’t get to see the grandchild at all... It’s tough for us but it’s worse for the son, he is going through courts and trying his best but long story short she doesn’t want him to have the child”

For many of the grandfathers, it was acknowledged in several ways that the children were the most important human beings in the scenario and that all should be done to ensure that their lives were the best possible:

Callum; “Nowadays it is all about the children and that’s the right thing.”

Although issues may arise between the relationships of children and grandparents most of the grandfathers stated that more should be done in society and through legislation to allow the children to maintain strong connections with the intergenerational family:

Fionn; “I think it’s terrible for one side to use a child as a pawn between two families. I know maybe some situations it might be wrong for them to see certain grandparents but if everything is ok between grandparents and grandchildren they should be allowed to see the grandchildren.”

Where there are acrimonious situations between families especially the adult children and parents of the grandchildren, the grandfathers all suggested staying out of the arguments:

Emmet; “If there were problems I would help them rather than saying... “Well I’m not talking to her because she split up with my son” ... the children are losing out. I’m protecting the children.”

However, again one of the ex-prisoners explains and rationalises how connections on any level cannot be maintained with his son, who is involved with criminal activities. As this grandfather was granted early release, based upon the Good Friday Agreement, he cannot make contact even if he wished to, with his son, as it may jeopardise his relationship with the grandson:

Ronan; “There would be no contact between him and myself from my end at least, cos I would be debarred and returned to gaol...then by extension the child would be tarred to me. That would be the impact cos it’s a legacy issue from the conflict that hasn’t been resolved.”

It is noted in this relationship that the adult son allows the grandfather to have access to the grandchildren in the father’s absence.

The intergenerational ties go further with this cohort of participants as they express through the interviews how their contribution is based upon the notion that they would like the grandchildren to remember them fondly. This is mostly in contrast to how they remembered their own grandfathers, if at all. Although a few had fond memories, for most they had faint memories as one stated:

Martin; “He was an old man you were forbidden to speak with and whom you visited on Sundays after mass.”

6.8 Concluding Thoughts

This Chapter has described through the participant’s narrative how, for them, being a grandfather requires some essential prerequisites in order to demonstrate that the best interest of the child is foremost in the grandfather’s world. Emerging from the narrative these prerequisites, as seen in the comments, are the building blocks of establishing intergenerational relationships. What can also be seen through the interpretation and the co-construction between the researcher and the participant, is that the building blocks are created from the lessons learned from the sins they perceive they have committed as a father, i.e. lesser involvement in the lives of their children. The ‘so what’ in this Chapter findings is how these prerequisites contribute to the emergence of theory that demonstrates their redemption for errors made in their earlier lives.

6.8.1 Facilitators and Barriers to grandfathering

The grandfathers acknowledged in the narratives how their connections with the grandchildren are facilitated through many factors. One of the strongest of these is the geographical position where they locate near to their grandchildren. In order to be a grandfather they believe it is important to be near the grandchildren. This echoes findings in the work of international scholars who have measured differing variations of contact frequency between grandfathers and grandchildren from face to face to telephone and email (Sheehan and Petrovic, 2008). Within this study however the grandfathers stress how being there for the grandchildren is more than just locality and is about spending quality time with the grandchildren (Bates and Taylor, 2012). The grandfathers add to the literature by stating that the greatest facilitator for them to keep quality contact is more than geography and is achieved through social media platforms like Skype. This nearness is not only about distance but also proximity in the world of the child and the child in the grandfather's world. Some of the participants have argued this case and advocate that connections through Skype and other platforms are as good in maintaining connections with the grandchildren as travelling to visit them in person. Literature and research in this area is minimal and relates to older masculinities within grandfathering (Hubbard, 2011).

In support and also contrast to the work of Mann and Leeson, 2010, the men in this study stated that they were happy, for the most part to engage in feministic caring roles in order to maintain contact with the child. There were episodes where some of the grandfathers maintained a hegemonic masculine identity but the nuance was that, if pushed, they would adapt to meet the child's needs and their desire to be a grandfather. Arber and Timonen (2012) suggest that more grandparents are responding to the childcare demands in contemporary families. Tarrant (2013) supports this belief and writes that there is limited understanding of the caring spaces in which grandfather care and intergenerational relationships take place. The findings in this study will help to fill the void of exploring the care landscapes of contemporary Irish grandfathers.

What most grandfathers either identified personally or declared their awareness of, was their lack of access to the child, whether self-induced or enforced by others, proves a barrier to engaging with the grandchildren. For the men in this research they blame themselves solely,

based on the sins they committed in being absent fathers. This has resulted in failure to access grandchildren abroad because they are ex-political prisoners or because of poor involvement as fathers during their early lives. Literature is scant in this area, thereby demonstrating the uniqueness of looking at this particular cohort of men. As a Grounded Theory study, the findings are not generalisable. However, the generation of theory from this specific cohort may reveal correlations with men and women in similar situations, whether parents or grandparents, in relation to gaining access or not to children and grandchildren when they travel outside of European jurisdictions. This is further explored in Chapter Eight.

As is evident in this study, facilitators to grandfathering for the men who are redeeming the sins of their past (because of absenteeism), are the adult children who ameliorate by allowing the grandfathers to see the grandchildren despite on occasion their relationships remain less than normal. In contrast to Irish literature (Egan and McNamara, 2010), the men in this study accredited this peace-making role to their adult children rather than themselves. They did, however acknowledge the work of the ex-wives in facilitating the unions of the different groups of siblings. They acknowledge that their sins as a father have contributed to this situation and attempts at demonstrating remorse and the ability to redeem these sins are made evident in an attempt to undertake the role of a grandfather and maintain part of the grandchildren's lives. In order to facilitate this, the men suggest different types of practices that they will adopt in order to be a participatory grandfather. This is discussed in Chapter Eight and adds to the cluster of typology literature on grandfathering suggested by Bates (2009).

6.8.2 Best Interests of the child

In support of the type of grandfather the men will aspire to become in order to access the grandchild, the participants suggest that hindsight is a wonderful thing. Their parenting skills have improved and enhanced with maturity. They know how to parent now. Nothing is too shocking to them. This was not learned as a young father. For those men who were incarcerated, there was no link to parenting from the prison cell. Evidential literature is developing in this area and is demonstrating significant health impacts on the children of fathers and mothers who were incarcerated (Chui, 2016). Meek (2007) offers that many of

the incarcerated men had differing outcomes when involved with parenting classes and education in gaol. The outcomes were different and had poorer results when the men were released. It is unclear if this is similar to the men in this study, when they were released as young fathers. However, it does not support the narratives of the grandfathers who now claim to be adaptable to any parenting roles they are required to perform. The findings of this research may contribute to the literature in this area of absent fathers in order to avoid repeating cycles where contemporary Irish fathers are absent from their children's lives.

The belief that they would function in any capacity for the best interest of the child was surprisingly expressed in the interviews, through the discourse on the child's bloodline and blood passport. Both of these terms were used but on member checking, they meant the same thing; the grandparents were concerned that what they perceive as the immoral activities of men and women in today's societies are going to affect the best interest of their grandchild. Within an evolution of a diverse culture in Ireland, the family lineage cannot be held to account by families going forward. The concern with some of the men was explained as to their fears for 'local' Irish people (the indigenous population) who are parenting children to different partners in the same Irish population, with full consequences of this action not evident yet. The grandfather's suspect that there will be grave consequences for the health issues of their grandchildren and therefore suggests that a blood passport should be available to the children. Their passion in defending this interest on behalf of the grandchildren was unexpected. There was no literature to resonate the concerns raised and this will be discussed further in Chapter Eight.

The participants suggest that the children are used as inbetweeners between the arguing parents and consequently the grandfathers are helpless to intervene. Fear encapsulates the relationships. The grandfather believes the use of the children in this manner is not maintaining the best interest of the child. The power of the grandfather to support the case for the grandchild is affected by the relationship to the adult child. This resonates in some way with Dutch research by Kalnmijn (2015) that states the relationship of fathers with their children after they divorce and re-partner has negative effects on the children particularly if the children are young. For the grandfathers in this study who separated and then re-partnered the effects were mixed. For the most part the children were older when this occurred. However for the participant who opted out of his 18-year-old daughter and granddaughter's lives, the relationships remain tentative. Therefore, some findings from the grandfather's

narratives concur with this Dutch research. There was, however, many broken relationships between adult children who were not married parents, and evidence in this area is underdeveloped for this group and within an Irish context. What was noted in the narratives and allied to research by Hubatkova et al, (2015) was the grandfathers were affected by the potential damage being done not only to their relationship with the child but for the child themselves. In the child's best interest, the grandfathers suggested mediation and legislation reform as avenues to pursue to avoid untold damage for the child and the family.

This Chapter studied at the comments of the grandfathers as to their experience in being a grandfather. With their maturity in parenting skills and lived experience of the consequences of adults' actions, they offer wisdom and hindsight that resonate in a contrite manner. Their remorseful absence in their children's lives has surfaced through the properties and subcategories to the emerging *Redemption* theory that is the main latent concern of this group of men. They offer the reader an insight into what can contribute to the issues that affect a child and an adult in the broader family, which they inhabit. They again look back in order to forecast into the future and offer caution for the generation to come if attention is not given to the concerns raised. This will involve individual, family and societal attention and will be discussed further in Chapter Seven and Eight.

SEVEN: FINDINGS - LIFE AS A GRANDFATHER WITH FAMILY AND PROFESSIONALS

7.1 Introduction

This Chapter gives a description of the final subcategory of the theory. This was conceptualised through the emergence of the properties and concepts that were experienced within families, in relationships with professionals and in the broader society in which the grandfathers lived. The construction of *Redemption* theory is linked further in this section as the focus of the issues raised by the grandfathers evolves particularly when discussed their role and their relationships with their adult children, grandchildren and others. It is within these properties that the grandfathers offer rationale for actions that occurred in their youth. They offer reasons for why events will or will not occur again, depending on the outcomes that they wish to achieve. Participants stated that they wholly recognised that many of the variables that affected the choices they made in this bygone era, would not be realistic or comprehensible in 21st century Ireland. They further suggested that it would be hypothetical too, to even engage in a discourse on the subject. The construction of *Redemption* as a theory from the participants becomes more visible in this section, as they describe the nature of living in one era but realising in the present time, that the toll of their actions experienced by their children was unforgiveable. With this in mind, they wish to change their practice and make amends with their grandchildren.

7.2 Fear

Throughout the time spent with the grandfathers, what was ubiquitous in the discourse was the word fear. This was covertly alluded to and interwoven throughout the dialogue in how the grandfathers discussed their time spent with the grandchildren. The grandfathers spoke of fear in the present tense, and not from a time in the past relating to their own lives. This is connected strongly to the expressions of love for their grandchildren as disclosed throughout the interviews. In this Chapter, the following properties are most prevalent rocking the boat, paedophilia, and mortality and repeating cycles.

7.2.1 Rocking the boat

The phrase ‘rocking the boat’ was used prolifically throughout the study. Many of the discussions around decisions made about the grandchildren were based upon the balance of rocking the boat. It must be stressed that this is relative to the world of the grandchild and not the grandparents. The balance of decisions to intervene or act on a law or policy is based upon the principle of an unwillingness among the grandparents want to cause trouble for the grandchild. Some of the grandfathers have no access to the grandchildren or in other situations, may have access to one grandchild over other grandchildren. For some, they stay out of custodial situations and find this is the correct process to approach adversarial issues between the adult children. However, they do feel at a loss and aware that they are missing the grandchild’s important milestones with the grandchild also missing all that they can give as grandparents. While identifying the concerns around why the parents do not allow access to the grandchildren, the grandfathers made ‘Eureka’ correlations to their own children’s loss because of their (as fathers) absences:

Tommy; “I don’t know why they won’t see us. We have so much to offer them. There is so much I could do with the little ones...oh I know now; I did the same.... didn’t I.”

And:

Donal; “Looking back I’m not sure if it was all worth it. I have a lot to give them (children and grandchildren) and they don’t want it.”

And for Eoin he really expressed it as the pay back for all he had done wrong in his earlier life:

Eoin; “This is how it works, isn’t it...I was a xxxx to me other family. I was useless to them and it is all coming back to haunt me. Now I know where I went wrong and I want to fix it but I can’t cos I can’t be there with them.”

For others, they know there is a law to allow them to pursue access, but they refuse to pursue for fear of causing annoyance or destabilising the situation for the grandchild. For many they defend their tolerance of the situation and of the distress felt by rationalising that when the

grandchild is older, they as grandfathers will be there to see them no matter what. What they do not see is the paradox in much of their earlier discourse regarding the early years of the child's life, whether talking about their child (Chapter Five) or grandchild (Chapter Six), is the bedrock for establishing meaningful relationships with their children/grandchildren:

Paddy; "She has actually gone to the stage where she has turned the child against the father and us so we can't even talk on the phone... he doesn't want to talk and all over ridiculousness. Like its unfortunate now and we've been told numerous times you're not going to see him... but when he's a teenager and he will want to come back... its hard but."

As seen in the next sections refers to the "mother rules" philosophy of thinking (discussed later in this Chapter) and to the shame on the adult children for abdicating responsibility for the children, they have borne (Chapter Six).

As mentioned in many of the interviews, if connections are not made and established early in the grandchild's life the chance of establishing relationships later on are reduced. With this comes the fear expressed by the participants that they will lose access to the grandchildren if they do not obey the wishes of the parents. This is particularly important for those whose adult children have split from their partners. For some grandfathers there is admiration towards the adult children who put the grandchild first and allow the grandchildren to see the grandparents. One of the grandfathers stated that the daughter has a barring order against her partner for being abusive towards her. However, this does not affect the connection between the child and their father:

Brian; "He does get to see the child, that's one thing I would be for. On no accounts could he not see his own child just because they fell out. It would be different if he was abusing the child or hitting the child."

Research tells us that a child's exposure to parental domestic violence is as harmful to the child. However the issue of the child being exposed to abuse between the parents was not raised as a concern by this grandfather.

One grandfather feels it is important for him to remain connected to both parents of the grandchildren regardless of the adult children relationship. He feels that the adult children at least agree that the child should still have a relationship with him and his wife:

Emmet; "I would make it my business to speak to both parties and remain with both parties, which I have done. We find that the partner of the other side trusts us."

Another grandfather, who was trying to re-establish relationships with the adult children, found that the daughters' husband facilitated this as he engaged the grandfather in jobs helping with the grandchildren:

Shea; "He'd say would you stay there for a half an hour while I go shopping and I'd be delighted to spend the time with the children...I knew what they were at. I think there's an influence from the siblings, because the children are in other people's houses."

Other grandfathers spoke of the poor relationships between themselves and their children. They state that they still get to see the grandchildren. However they do not seem to notice is that the adult children are aware that the grandfathers are quite vocal in areas around paternal rights to children and grandchildren. In such cases, it is logical to surmise that the children would expect the grandfathers to proceed with legal processes to access the grandchildren as they have an extensive knowledge in this area of legislation. Irrespective of the fear, the grandparents only want to see the grandchildren. Shea knew his knowledge of the courts was enough to allow access to the grandchildren:

Shea; "The daughter allowed her children to play with all the other children.... I knew this was cos she knew I could go to court and didn't want that."

For Brian, the stress of pursuing the legal route to access the grandchild was too much for him and his wife. Having accessed the first grandchild, they could not pursue looking for access to the other three children borne between their eldest son and three different mothers due to the stress of the process:

Brian; “So we would have to go through the courts and the mother to see that child. You are afraid of what might come up. And I don’t know if we want to do that it is very stressful and it’s something we would have to think about.”

7.2.2 Paedophilia

Fear was also associated throughout the discourse for all of the grandfathers in the reference made to paedophilia. Not one grandfather spoke about their lives as a grandfather, without raising the issue of paedophilia. I was not expecting this when I heard it in the first interview and thought that my pilot interview grandfather was quite well read and articulate in expressing his views. To hear it being raised by the participants with some of them not being well educated but who had an immense fear of what it represents for men in today’s world, was quite astounding for me as an interviewer. These men were busy throughout the interviews, discussing their loving relationships with their grandchildren. They showed me photographs and Facebook accounts regarding their grandchildren. They cried with the love they had. Then they talked of paedophilia and the fear today for the sins committed within society in the past. Some of the men could not actually articulate the word for me such was their ability and restricted vocabulary. However, they conveyed the fear all the same. All of the grandfathers enunciated fear and several points on the same issue were formulated as follows:

Paddy; “To be acknowledged now as grandfather, looking at all the years back with all the paedophilia and all that I think there was a stigma attached to picking up a child and putting them on your knee I think that’s phasing out now because you have to push that aside now and it’s great to be able to pick up a grandchild and love them as your own child...there was always that stigma at the back of your mind you know if you were left alone with them. It was just something that was implanted.”

The response to the question, ‘what is it like being a grandfather?’, elicited this reply from this participant. He compared today’s interactions with his grandchildren, to an earlier period in Ireland that is now understood to have had grave outcomes for children abused in the care of adult men.

For Martin the issue is so disquieting that he will only play computer games in the grandson's room if the door remains open:

Martin; "I'll say "leave the door open" and he'd be asking me why, I say "I just want you to open the door" because you don't wanna be screwing up his mind too early, in case he was there with anybody else and the door was closed, if anything would happen... if someone tried to molest him or anything."

For Liam and other grandfathers, when asked about what care they carry out for the children they stated that they do not bathe the children:

Liam; "I wouldn't bath him his mother does that. I'd be afraid.... I suppose it's the stuff that goes about like the paedophilia. I just felt... I suppose when we learned about (a local named man who was a victim), I just wouldn't do it. It was something I was always uncomfortable with.... I would give cuddles and kisses. It would maybe be only if they were naked."

Liam did state later that he would undertake any care if it meant he could stay as a grandfather to the child. Paddy highlights the practice in reality and suggests that contact be avoided to reduce fear:

Paddy; "Ye like you had that thing that you shouldn't be alone with a child. Don't put a child sitting on your knee. It's wrong but that's what happened for all men."

And Ciaran offers:

Ciaran; "Things in the news cross your mind. For me I wouldn't go near another child to change another child's nappy I would be nervous and you're thinking about paedophiles it does cross your mind of course."

Sean, who now defines himself as a gay man, declared that he delayed his admission of his sexuality because society confused the issue of homosexuality and paedophilia:

Sean; "I remember myself 16 years ago and somebody said. 'Aw, yer man's a queer he's into wee boys', and all that there. You see it was dirty, which would've been paedophilia not being gay."

The grandfathers put into words how this issue was very much a perceived rather than an actual fear, held by them alone. They believe that this is not something they thought about before awareness was raised within the Irish culture in the past two decades. That is not to say that they do not acknowledge its occurrence in the past. However, they believe they live in a world that acknowledges persons who seek pleasure from this form of horrific child abuse. With this in mind they are conscious about not playing with the toddlers if they are naked around bath time. They also play computer games and read stories with the children, but never without doors left open especially, if playing in the child's bedroom.

Some, but not all of the grandfathers, admit to playing gender specific games with the different grandchildren and not taking them to sporting activities that may involve changing their clothes e.g. swimming, soccer etc. To generate such fear is irrational and ultimately perpetuates a gender specific approach for some, not all, in their interactions with the grandchildren. Many of the comments did reflect this when they would suggest that the granny would do certain activities with the female children and the grandfathers did other activities with the male children. They did not see this as gender bias, but acceptable that boys play soccer and fishing and girls do dancing and cooking!

For Fionn his involvement was more with the grandson's events:

Fionn; "Like there's more sport with the boys but no it's a different situation but the two girls are very girly into shows and dancing and all that and maybe it is a gender thing because I'm into football teams and all that but I do be involved with them, but any activities the girls are doing I would be there or leaving them to it or collecting from it."

Brian also suggests that he gains a lot of enjoyment taking the grandson fishing but never asks the granddaughters to come, as they prefer shopping and going to the park instead:

Brian; "I'll make sure that he remembers things and taking him for walks and soccer but fishing mostly. The girls and that I take to the park."

7.2.3 Mortality

A few of the grandfathers were quite elderly. One was a great grandfather of 87 years who had a minimal relationship with his great grandchildren and a non-existent one with his four grandchildren. He said with sorrow:

Oscar; "I feel it is all to do with them being adopted. One daughter feels she is not my child and wants nothing from me.... the other thinks I owe her something and that she is entitled to everything."

Oscar eloquently spoke of his wife, long since departed, and how this would not have happened had she been alive. He could not understand that the relationships were financially dependent and that he was a 'pay per view' grandfather. This phrase was coined as he said it felt like if he wanted to see the children, he would have to pay like putting money in to a meter. He paid to see the great grandchildren. If he was out of money, then his time with the great grandchildren was out too. He did however, state that for the obvious reason of his age, his mortality was quite relevant to the relationships and that time was actively running out. Only the older men in the study mentioned the mortality issue spoken of by the grandfathers. It was also mentioned as a concern for the fact that time was running out with regard to having or spending time with the grandchildren. For the man who was foster caring for his grandchildren full time, he worried on a daily basis about what would happen if he died. He fretted over whether the children would be removed from the family and given to strangers:

Eamonn; "Yeah there's no big change except that they... I don't know what's going to happen next week, if I got a kick in the heart and I was gone what's going to happen."

With my own knowledge in foster and relative foster care teams, I was able to reassure him during the interview that this scenario was unlikely, as there were many other adult members in the family that could assist if this happened. I offered to refer him to talk on this issue to

the foster care social workers for which he was grateful. For some grandfathers living with this stress at the latter end of their lives, society has a responsibility to reassure them of the succession plans if tragic events were to happen. This remains a real concern for some men who are primary carers to relative children in their care.

The fears articulated in the interviews were quite real and felt by the grandfathers. They understand the power of the fear and what may happen if things go wrong. The fear for them of not being able to be a grandfather was not something they wanted to discuss or dwell on too long.

7.2.4 Repeating/continuing cycles

The men were aware that they had not thought about this issue occurring in the past. However they were aware of behaviours of their fathers and grandfathers and showed concern to them being repeated. They were conscious to avoid repeating cycles that replicate their own fathers, particularly when they were not behaviours that demonstrated love. Because of this fear they were especially mindful to develop loving and complacent relationships, particularly within adversarial scenarios:

Paddy; “Aw ye, I would do anything to be able to see him. We never involved ourselves never rang to give out to her or never involved ourselves at all. My father didn’t speak to my children cos I was in trouble when I was younger and I don’t want that to happen again.”

Gerard articulates the dilemma he felt of obeying the father but also challenges the belief that his decisions were always correct:

Gerard; “The law was set in the house and you wouldn’t deviate from it. Where did he get that sense of authority that he is always right? But that’s a kid looking up at it. Looking back, you did the same to your own children but I feel very close to me father in that sense but we would have been different people.”

Gerard contradicts himself in his interview by stating that he does not want to be seen as the dictator type grandfather like his own father and does not want the cycle to repeat itself. However, he later goes on to state how he is the head of the family and what he says goes.

One grandfather (not named for confidentiality) had killed his father while protecting his mother. His childhood memories were rooted in love within a violent atmosphere. His greatest fear was that he would continue or repeat the cycle of being an abusive father, like his own father. He has had a lot of counselling to address this fear. However, he speaks of how he has checked his behaviour all through his married life to make sure it was not repeated:

(Unnamed for confidentiality); "I dread the thought that I would be like my father and do anything to hurt me children."

For many of the men, they had not thought much about repeating cycles until the interview and stated that they just carried on with the grandchildren in the same way they did with their children:

Rory; "My woman was working and her mother minded our children so it's just one big cycle. Her mother minding children... I was working she was working so it's kind of coming back around."

For Rory there was no difference to the pattern of rearing his children and now the grandchildren. Of significance is how the cycle of some of the grandfathers is repeating similar to when they were young fathers, where they were not involved in the care of their children. The similarity is related to adult children abdicating care of their children. Concerns are raised for the future when these children will not have known their fathers and as they become adults, their children may have no grandfathers:

Brian; "If the grandchildren do not know their father then chances are they will never know the grandparents on that side."

For Joseph, no remorse is expressed at abdicating responsibility for the children when he left the country for fear of being arrested. He did frame this decision as a means to maintain

activity in the cause in Northern Ireland. However, in reference to the lack of involvement in the family and children's lives, as stated earlier, he did not lose sleep over this. His ability to ameliorate relationships later in life was supported by financial comforts for his family through home comforts and regular holidays. In today's Ireland, there is no romantic notion of a war conflict to explain the lack of involvement in the children's lives. There may also be no financial supports available to spoil the grandchildren as is seen in the cases of these grandfathers. Ronan admits that his issues today relate to his role in the early days of fatherhood:

Ronan; "This is all my fault...isn't it?"

Other changes in Irish life raised the issue for the men around limited monogamy within today's cultural norms in some format throughout the interviews, either directly in their own families or in their neighbourhoods. The idea that partners can change is acceptable within an overarching belief that they now live in a pluralistic society, with more choices than they were accustomed to. However, what is not so tolerable is the abdication of their role in caring for their children as they move from one partner to another. What was not identified by all the grandfathers' bar none was that the children now have several different sets of brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles and grandparents, but that this is not always identified for the children in a relationship split, as they only get to visit the maternal relatives.

Acknowledgement of the abdication of the adult children's responsibility to the children further drives the grandfathers to be available to the grandchildren thereby making the most attempts to gain access. Although most of the men did not like the emergence of so many half-siblings in families today, the interactions and connectivity within the family is encouraged. What was not so clear or spoken of was that they were tolerant of all they disliked and facilitated interactions, in order to ensure that they would have contact with the grandchildren. Some of the comments below highlight this issue:

Brian; "I don't really care about my son at this stage. He doesn't care for his children. We are delighted to see the kids and would do anything for them."

Joseph; "Who am I to judge about others relationships. I have had children to lots of women and I won't be around in the future to worry about them all mixing together...ha, ha, ha."

Callum; "Nobody knows who owns what children...tough for the grandchildren to know... we will have to be sure we know the family history to know they haven't got half-brothers and half-sisters."

One of the stepfathers makes the case for meeting with all the grandchild's siblings during a visit:

Shane; "They are only children and don't know that they are visiting different grandfathers that are not related. Anyway, my kids are all right with this cos I'm not their real father so it has nothing to do with the blood connection. They are all welcome."

In contrast to this statement, Joseph who had no early year involvement with one of his children and grandchildren supports the comment above when describing his input into his estranged child/grandchild:

Joseph; "I have no authority over these two children...I'm the biological father and grandfather, see in the end that means bugger all if you don't have a relationship with your kids... I have a good relationship but not the same as the other kids."

In the scenario of the men who are stepfathers and not consanguine, their stepchildren adore them as father figures and offer them the love and respect dutifully deserved as they understand it should be:

Shane; "I have been the only father he has known and have performed as a dad to the best I could...I think I was ok"

George; "I know I was a good father cos she (stepdaughter) loves the bones of me and I love her in the same way."

In a slight twist on abdication, one grandfather (Eoin) has two families that allow him to have children and grandchildren the same age. The relationship with the children from the first marriage was not good, as during many of their childhood years he had spent long periods in gaol. Having children from the second marriage was important to him. The marriage broke down and the mother and children emigrated to a country not accessible by this grandfather. Within the discourse, he expressed how his concerns for seeing his children were paramount over any access to his grandchildren in this country. For him this was not of importance or an issue he wanted to discuss. The interview ended shortly afterwards.

As highlighted by Harry earlier, there is also the issue that the grandparents abdicate their responsibility for being involved in the grandchild's life. Passion on this subject is seen from this grandfather, who believes that the law should be adapted to ensure that the rights of the child are paramount and that the grandparents should be allowed to see the grandchild if it is in the best interests of the child.

Forced abdication was also highlighted by some of the grandfathers when they identified that their sons or daughters were unable to be actively involved parents as they were involved in criminal activity or had a life of drug abuse and were not permitted by social protection services to see their children. The significance of this contempt towards their sons or daughters was without acknowledgement that they too had abdicated responsibility for their children through engagement in the conflict in Northern Ireland, criminal activity or by detaching from their children for work and leisure reasons in earlier years. This issue, as identified earlier, also resulted in them not being permitted to see their children and grandchildren:

Ronan; "He is not welcome in my house. I am ashamed of his criminal ways where he pretends to be a republican but acts as a drug criminal. We want nothing from this activity. I will provide for the children."

Eamonn; "She's not allowed to have the kids' cos she's still on the drugs. She is happy to leave the grandkids in my care cos then she doesn't have to spend anything on them I provide for them."

One of the grandfathers was not permitted to be with the grandchildren when they come to visit the granny, because his adult children feel his criminal activity jeopardises the children's safety:

Donal; "They don't say it but the wife always sends me away when they are coming to visit. The children come over without the grandkids."

7.3 Obscure/Obsolete role

Throughout the study, from the first recognition of the word 'GRATHER' was the confusion around what names were used for the grandfathers. Understandably in the 'GRATHER' scenario, the grandfather that had children and grandchildren of similar ages noted that the grandchildren called him by his first name. The term 'Dad' was sometimes used as the grandchildren heard their aunts and uncles calling him 'Dad'.

For some of the other participants who governed the care of the children and grandchildren, what was noted by the researcher and during the interview by the grandfathers, was that the grandfather was called 'Dad'. This was said to be because the mother of the children called the father and the children's grandfather 'Dad'. The mother of the grandchild called the father 'Dad', and called the mother 'Granny'. This was notable as the children had a person to call 'mammy', their mother, but that there was no male father figure in a similar position to the mammy, therefore they called the grandfather 'Dad'. For the two men who fostered the children they were known as 'Dad' as that is the role they played. They go on to describe it as a father figure role where the children are with them fulltime in the same way as a child would live with their parents.

Of note is that this situation occurred for those grandfathers who cared for children fulltime whether child minding or full time foster care and where the mothers were not married and no apparent father figure was present in the child's life.

The term GRATHER was coined very early on by one of the grandfathers as an expression to capture the role of father and grandfather wrapped into one:

Joseph; "Remember I'm speaking to you now as a GRATHER not a grandfather...ha, ha, ha."

Cormac was reared with his grandparents therefore, he would describe the grandfather as a GRATHER:

Cormac; "My grandfather was both; he was a father and a grandfather...what you called a GRATHER. I'm more of a father and a distant grandfather."

One of the full time foster carers acknowledged that his role as more of a father like figure than a grandfather figure and offers:

Eamonn; "I wish I was a grandfather that could sit back in my rocking chair. Ha. Ha. Ha."

Eamonn and other grandfathers (n=11) accept the permanency of their position as father/grandfather or GRATHER. The role signifies the blurring of roles and authority between what is perceived to be a father or grandfather role. This is based upon the acceptance that this person is an authority figure, in addition to a provider for the child for all their needs.

Ultimately and within the discussion, the grandfathers concluded that for them the role and identity of grandfather was obsolete in both name and function. The role of GRATHER identified early in the study was much more acceptable and represented the role-played accurately as suggested by the grandfathers.

Within the discourse, there was an anomaly of roles where the grandfather could not identify a father or a grandfather role in relationship to one of his daughters. Although he was a father to this child, he had no contact with this 18-year-old daughter for over ten years of her life. He had children and grandchildren of similar ages and had three children under the age of six years old. He did not feel he was able to act as a dad in an authoritative manner. This daughter visited his home weekly and he attempted to establish a relationship with her. However, he did stress that early on she had made it quite clear where he stood in their relationship:

Joseph; "She said, 'Shur you don't say that to me, you've no right to say that to me, you're not me father'."

This relationship was similar for his granddaughter of the same age. This grandfather is aware and happy that the children are visiting but that their visits were not particularly related to him as a father or grandfather. What becomes apparent within the discourse is that the children are visiting the father/grandfather either to see their half-siblings or their younger aunts and uncles!

Another area of obscurity in the grandfather's role is when the grandchild's father has deceased. This is different to the scenario where the grandchild has no contact with the estranged father. It becomes problematic for this grandfather as he finds himself wanting to support his daughter and the grandchildren and at the same time keep alive the memory of the father in the grandchildren's lives. This result in a less than satisfactory environment where their dialogue is interpreted as having to please everyone and always performing a balancing act:

Fionn; "The only difference in my situation is the daughter, her husband died. So she is rearing the two boys herself so we would be more supportive of her because the daddy is dead. Maybe that's with all the football maybe trying to play more of a father role along with a grandfather role. I'm not saying I do but I support them because the other two (sons) have the wives... I don't know, that's in the back of my head. It could be that I kind of, my wife and me would be close with the daughter. I didn't realise it till now but that must be what I am doing."

As the interviews progressed this theme and description of the role becoming obsolete was notably apt for the majority of the grandfathers. Returning to member check within the last interviews the phrase GRATHER was accepted by the men as apt in describing the mix of roles they perform with and for the children and grandchildren. What the phrase represents is seen as a normal event and one that has occurred in previous family members and is understood to be as a normal transition. The grandfather remains as the parent of the children and the grandchildren.

This continuous parenting role over the children and grandchildren became more explicit when discussing the adult children that allow the grandchildren to call the grandfather, dad. What is evident here is that the father continues to parent the adult child (daughter) and the grandchild in the same way. So, instead of a shifting of roles and responsibility from the (grand) father to the daughter the (grand) father maintains authority and responsibility over all the offspring. The grandfathers below are a sample that believes this is acceptable as it allows the daughters to have time and not have to worry about details that they as the parent can deal with:

Rory; "But there was no involvement of men. There is no experience of having a grandfather. I don't know how to be a grandfather; I just go with the flow of the house. That's just it. Part and parcel. It's not a big thing. I did it with me own children. I am like a parent to them. I did all the work with me own children. I help them out and if they were stuck with money, babysitting, like getting coal and a few groceries. I'd light the fire for them. I'd see this as my role."

Joseph; "They know they will want for nothing with me in charge."

And:

Gerard; "I talk to them the exact same way as my own and I treat them the exact same way as my own and I take it for granted that I have the authority to do that. They know they will never be in need of anything."

What is evident in the narrative is how the men justify ownership of this continuing parenting role through the prism of provision to the adult children of all they could need. The change in society and family dynamics was welcome by the grandfathers as it brought with it a changing face of the family for some of them. The grandfathers alluded to their ability to be liberal within the modern day family environment. Many of them acknowledged that the roles of father and mother were significantly changed and that there were now two parents working outside of the home to provide for the family. Regardless of this, they still distinguished the acceptable roles of fathers as different to that of the mothers. As one participant stated:

Gerard; "The wife and myself have a lovely house and we work hard and we have enough money and little debts. We do everything for the children and grandchildren. It is different to my mother's time when she was at home minding the house. I am glad it is different although the woman still changes nappies and baths the babies."

For Gerard and some of the other grandfathers (n=6) some forms of care remained with the mother but for the most they perceived society to have changed for the better regarding shared care by parents of the grandchildren.

7.4 Society and Policy

A fundamental undercurrent running through the grandfathers' discourse was the belief that the society that they live in today is such a changed one from what they had experienced as young fathers. Because of the restrictions, they felt within their own lives, they stated that the changed society was welcome and more freestyle than they were ever used to. Nevertheless, as seen through much of the discourse, there were many paradoxes in this belief where the men welcome the change in society but also believe that society is failing in preparing children for adulthood.

7.4.1 Power over the family

Within the narrative of the interviews, the men believed that society is contributory to; blurred boundaries between the generations, parenting attachments and detachments not being defined, and the roles played and expected by the adult children being ill defined, as they become parents. As mentioned, the grandfathers remain in the role of carer to the grandchildren as they did for their own children. This situation, was most visible where the adult children were female and unmarried (n=9). In this situation they had houses of their own but had their children in the grandparents' house all day, whether they themselves were in employment or not. They had meals prepared for them by the grandmother and the grandfathers cared for and entertained the grandchildren. It appears that the grandchildren and their mothers returned to their houses only to sleep. This is not an uncommon practice in similar areas to the study's geographical area. To the grandfathers, this is perceived as normal where they live. What is also acceptable is the rule and authority that the grandfather has over

the care and practices of the grandchildren. Although they may attempt to show respect for the wishes of the mothers, their daughters, they all told me that they do their own thing regardless:

Rory; "We are still the bosses (grandparents)...we are the parents."

Liam; "I know I am not a parent but I would be that figure in the family that me children take for granted that, 'if granda tells you what to do you just do it', that kind of thing."

For these men, they believe the duty of care to their children and grandchildren is the same. Many referred to themselves in a jovial fashion as the 'DON', the Mafiosi of the family with reference to the Hollywood Godfather movies. Within this role is the power to oversee the children and grandchildren and the care delivered. They monitor the activities and actions of the children on the grandchildren and have ultimate rule over the type of care delivered to the children. This would include the schools and doctors they will choose for the grandchildren. They also insist on being informed of events relating to the children, particularly when the child is ill or in distress:

Rory; "If one of them was not well we would know cos we are with them. We would tell the daughter to take her to the doctor and if she didn't do it we'd be over to take her."

For one parent who wanted the child not to have any sweets until Sunday the grandfather said:

Joseph; "When she's in our house she gets what we are having and that's that."

In reference to being the head of the family, one participant summed it up for the others:

Gerard; "I'm the boss, The Godfather!! I'm still the father and that's what they see. I'd say I'm not the only one there is plenty like me."

Many of the grandfathers mentioned the word boss or ‘Godfather’ in the same context as Gerard when articulating the control over the family and extended family. Harry explains further:

Harry; “Grandfathering is like, always thinking of the mafia, the Godfather. The Italians have such a tight family bond and the head of the family is usually the grandfather you know not the actual father so that's me.”

For other grandfathers this is seen as ensuring the adult children care sufficiently for the grandchildren. This demonstrates a lack of confidence in the adult children to act responsibly and can be perceived as power over the parents of the child. Of note is that this practice was seen mostly in those grandfathers where the mother (their daughter) was the sole parent caring for the child. As Gerard explains, his ownership of the family justifies this approach:

Gerard; “When one of them is sick like...I may not be directly involved but I am being informed. I am monitoring the situation. I own the family.”

These men do not demonstrate power over in the same manner if the daughter is married. Power over can also be seen as a way of ensuring the grandparents keep the grandchildren near to them.

7.4.2 Power over from Professionals

The two grandfathers that were involved in full time foster care also demonstrated monitoring and power over the grandchildren. One was in fulltime relative foster care of his grandchildren. Although perceived in a different light, as they get paid by the State to care for the children, the practice as a grandfather is delivered as they determine and the social work team notably monitors it. There remains an underlying fear that the children will be taken from them. Eamonn explains the pressure felt in such a situation:

Eamonn; “It would be a terror if they were given away, they won’t be allowed back at all that’s the kind of pressure thing too you know what I mean, you’re saying to yourself, you’ve to make sure to do things right, cos God forbid if anything went wrong they’d (Social workers) take them away and wouldn’t leave them back to the

mother, and that itself puts pressure that normally you wouldn't have. If I, if they were me own kids, if the HSE called it's a one to one but when I have the agency (TUSLA) coming in and out I have to be wary of what you're saying cos it puts pressure on you."

Within this scenario, if the parents are involved more than permitted by the Courts, the grandparents may have to justify this action and may lose care of the grandchildren. Also mentioned by this participant was the fact that he feels he had not undertaken a parenting job correctly with his daughter, she has lost her children. Therefore, there is fear of the consequences of breaking the rules and describe themselves as being stuck in the middle.

The participants that were ex-prisoners (n=12) were very aware of the adoption rules within Ireland that prohibit them from adopting a child. One man, who pursued adoption, as he felt he had a good home to offer a child, was shocked at the vehemence displayed by the social worker team when he attended with his wife for interview. They were briskly dismissed when he declared his incarcerated period and connection to The Troubles in Northern Ireland. He said:

Gerard; "In my case...how dare they refuse us. It was just dismissed so easily."

Some of the participants that were ex-prisoners (n= 12) spoke of their role in relative foster care in the event of the adult children having children taken from them. During the conversations they realised that although they were aware of the rules around adoptions and vehemently disagree with them, until these interviews they had not thought of foster care being prohibited. One man summed up the thoughts and feelings on the realisation that they would be exempt from applying for this process when he said:

Joseph; "You have the amazing situation that is ridiculous, in a modern pluralist society with equal rights and then they tell ex-political prisoner's that they cannot foster a child or indeed drive a taxi anymore. But someone from sub-Saharan Africa or from Eastern Europe where the details of their citizenship in their country has not been recorded or filed and is therefore unknown is allowed to drive a taxi. How is that fair."

This was followed up with thoughts like those suggested by Ronan:

Ronan; “This transfers to the health board and TUSLA and the Government departments here. Exactly. I know of an eastern European family who have ended in relative foster care for their relative’s children. There is no sophisticated system of identifying their records and therefore no questions are asked...I am finding this intolerable. He’s no saint. It is unfair...I am totally exempt. Now imagine considering my background someone telling me I couldn’t look after my grandchildren.... just imagine. That’s where things would change.”

These conversations ended with some strained laughter from the participants.

7.4.3 Legislation and policy

Some participants made the claim that they knew many grandfathers that do not get to see their grandchildren and practice as a grandfather. This also included some of the participants in this study. It was suggested that the legislation is inadequate in Ireland for grandchildren to be with grandparents and should be developed to allow this to occur. This was further refined during the interviews with regard to seeing their grandparents if it is in the children’s best interests. Another grandfather expressed his abhorrence where one of his grandchildren at the age of 15 years had never seen his grandparents on the father’s side. This was further compounded by the fact that these grandparents were both practicing social workers.

Although all grandfathers knew of the laws that support grandparents in making an application to gain access to the grandchildren, there was a general belief from their narrative that this is not pursued. It could also be deduced that there is a fear of the courts systems and that the courts process can result in an expensive legal fees. The general idea from this area of the interviews is that the laws are not strong enough to allow children see their grandparents. Some comments from the participants blame the State for not addressing this problem at all levels within the family systems:

Harry; "When family values aren't getting down to the adult child in society then we're in trouble. That's reality. The government are too busy to look at society and think what is going to happen. You have to know your grandkids- should be a law."

They also believe the grandparents have a duty to pursue access to the child irrespective of rocking the boat:

Callum; "They should be accountable and present and asked, 'what have you contributed to their upbringing?' These grandparents are traceable and there should be governance to make them traceable."

This grandfather believes that the grandparents should be actively pursued by the State in the same way that the fathers are pursued for maintenance payments. For another grandfather, his concern is that in addition to the grandparents not wanting to 'rock the boat' for the child, the situation could be that there is an adult child who is not interested in his /her child. If the other parent is not allowing the grandparents to see the child this results in a double whammy where the courts require the support of at least one adult parent to pursue access by the grandparents:

Shane; "I know the laws have changed recently, they haven't all been enacted but the voice of the child is supposed to be heard now. It still has to be put into legislation but grandparents have laws by which they can get access to grandchildren now. Particularly like say your daughter's partners don't want to be involved but maybe their parents (the grandparents) do want to be involved. But they felt like they weren't able to."

For one grandfather stated that he has no fear of the courts as he has been in the courtroom many times in his life. He also finds the 'in camera rule' of the Family Courts quite appealing:

Emmet; "I've no fear of going to the family law court.... shur it's all private."

In contrast, Shea is an experienced attendee at the Family Courts with fathers attempting to acquire access to their children. He does acknowledge that he has not had much experience

with the grandparents, as they tend to attend to support their sons/daughters (his experience was only with men) in gaining access. They feel if he (son) gets access then they (sons' parents/ paternal grandparents) will also get to see the child. He does not like the 'in camera' rule of the family law courts, as he perceives it to be strongly biased in support of the mother regarding custody of the child. He is unable to explain this, as it is his belief that, if it were in a general court room some of the outcomes would not be in favour of the mother. He also identifies the whole process emotionally exhausting without sufficient supports:

Shea; "The most traumatised time is when you go through the family law court, when you're split up from your partner or anything like that. Where do you think you need support if you haven't got your family or your friends and you can't discuss your emotions, where do you think people are gonna get help? Why do you think people are committing suicide? They don't think there's enough support out there for them. If you could I would also not have in camera and share what goes on with everyone. It may be a more balanced outcome, then."

For the grandfathers to state that there is a need for legislation to make the grandchildren see the grandparents appears quite paternalistic and authoritarian, although listening to their grief due to their lack of access, their need to see their grandchildren is understood. What I feel Shea was attempting to articulate was the provision of a more amenable solution may be to improve and resource the mediation services that could facilitate shared access to the lives of the grandchildren and the grandparents.

In addition to the grandfathers fearing that they would rock the boat for the child in the family, they are also fearful that they could turn the child against them if they pursued legislative routes against the adult child's wishes in order to gain access. In understanding that the child has rights too, they would not like to see the courts award access and then the child refuse to meet the grandparents:

Fionn; "I know there are (grandparents) rights but they're not used all the time. See I think a lot of people don't want to disturb the families. They stand back they don't want to get involved and make things worse for the child. I think a lot of people have them problems. And then even sometimes the children turn against them. I know one fella and he has a grandchild and the grandchild doesn't even know him and would

walk past him on the street and I think that's very, very sad because it's a big part of your life. I think it's very sad because a child speaks differently to its grandparents than its parents so it's terrible not having that experience."

Another grandfather withdrew his application to the Court for access when the child was sent to an educational psychologist for screening tests for autistic spectrum disorder:

Paddy; "The way things are going now through this assessment we would be afraid of interfering and turning the child against us."

Harry wholly blames the State and the Government for not improving the conditions to deter parents from continuing delinquent behaviour. Their behaviour results in the children being reared by relatives or worse still being kept with the parents where the bad treatment is sustained or ignored by the system and allowed to perpetuate into the children's lives as they grow up. He was passionate in the belief that society is failing children:

Harry; "You have kids having kids who don't want kids because they're in this party situation with drugs and all and their parents might not be interested...but if they wanted to see their grandkids they should do everything in their powers regardless. If they don't make contact it's because they don't want to. The judge knows in a courtroom that if the grandparents show up that they've exhausted every avenue to see that child."

What Harry referred to is the fact that it is possible that some grandparents are happy to sit back and blame the legislation for being inadequate. It was mentioned in several interviews how being a grandparent is not a decision a grandparent makes (Harry). However, it is a choice or option that they may wish to be involved in or not:

Joseph; "Why do we have a good enough relationship, sure I think it's because common sense prevailed because we looked after the interest of the children to have some sort of civilised relationship with them, that the mother and father should have some sort of civilised relationship with us too...it certainly doesn't do the children any good to have people at each other's throats and stuff like that and it's senseless, if the relationship broke up, it's broke up and that's it. It's the logical choice to make if

you take your own personal feelings out of it in other words. It's not the end of the world, years ago it might have been."

Oscar, as an older grandfather suggested that it is a bidirectional relationship and, as adults, the grand children are also responsible for developing the relationship and can make choices and decisions for themselves:

Oscar; "But she's an adult I suppose she can make that choice for herself...whether to see me or not."

Many of the grandfathers' children were in acrimonious battles with the courts over their relationships and custody of their children. Brian demonstrates partial choice in being a grandfather when he pursues access for one out of four grandchildren fathered by his son but not parented by him. In his own way, he wishes he did not choose this option, as the after period was so traumatic:

Brian; "I put a stop to that because it broke my wife's heart and I wasn't going to let that happen again. And as the wife says if the child wants to see us she will see us. It's hard enough with the one grandchild now and I wouldn't put my wife through it again. Because it's like the mothers be holding the children ransom in a sense."

For the other three children that his son has to three different mothers, Brian stated that he would not be pursuing access through the Courts, as the ordeal was so arduous and non-productive. Currently after all the effort made, they can only see the grandchild two afternoons a week and they are supervised visits with the mother. Brian recalls how he made the case with the judge to see the child in the early years, as this is so important. He has seen this with his other children's children. He did not speak about the other grandchildren in the conversation, other than acknowledge them and that they can visit him when they are older. What he does not say however, is how he is being duplicitous in fighting for access to one child and not the other three children. He is happy to be a selective grandfather to some and not others.

From another view, the duty of care of the State to ensure that access is provided to the other children has not been developed in an Irish culture. The toll of some siblings having access to

their parent and grandparents when others do not may have adverse effects on relationship building in the next generations.

As discussed earlier, the lack of involvement in the early years of the child's life can affect the relationship that will develop at adulthood. Some men defined as gay they may never have the option to become a grandfather unless the legislation changes. Sean highlighted this when he said how lucky he was in comparison to his partner:

Sean; "I have the best of both worlds.... poor xxxx has none of this"

In contrast to Government development of legislative laws, the Irish citizens, through referenda, voted on societal change at the highest level and have demonstrated their willingness and power to change. As a Nation, the recent referendum and subsequent legislation into same-sex marriage acknowledged the seismic shift in the liberalisation of a country beyond the former stoic regulation of the Church and State. This demonstrated globally the leadership in this area of society. Legislation on Assisted human reproduction is an avenue under development that can be pursued in Ireland to address this void for men like Sean and his partner.

Irish legislation in 2012 amended the Irish Constitution (1930) and gave rights to the child that have yet to be enacted:

(http://www.dcy.gov.ie/viewdoc.asp?fn=/documents/Child_Welfare_Protection/ChildrensReferendum.htm).

Although the legislation was not directly referred to within the interviews, the grandfathers upheld the belief that all children should be treated as "human beings" not "becoming's." In the narrative, they spoke of how they treat the children individually, and not as collective beings. They are mindful that each of the children is different with different needs. They also refer to the visibility of the children as human beings:

Emmet; "Treat them as individuals and come down to their level.... Treat them like they are visible.... Yes, that's correct, and it does work."

In summing up why the legislative system is so wrong in this area, one of the grandfathers affected by the abstention of the paternal grandparents, offers rationale for the overall problem in practice:

Harry; "In Irish society, it doesn't matter what qualification you have as a politician, you just have to be the local football manager and the people will vote for ye. They are not the people to make the laws. The wrong people are in the jobs. We need policy changed."

What Harry is suggesting and continues in his narrative, is how the law as he perceives it is influenced by the politicians. In this regard he alludes to the issue that some politicians are perceived as being unqualified for the role. Consequently, he feels that the law then is failing children because those with oversight are unqualified to determine the correct legislative direction. Harry believes this current law does not enable the children to gain the best of both grandparents, if one set are willing to abstain themselves from the child's life.

7.4.4 Mother rules

Without exception and mentioned in Chapter Six, the 30 interviews raised the issue and power of how the mother rules and in some cases use the children as weapons of 'mass pain' within acrimonious separation between adult children. The grandfathers who were aware of families including their own, who experienced issues around access to the grandchildren acknowledged as they perceived it how the legal system favours the maternal links over the paternal. A few interpreted this point further, stating that without a change in legislation this will continue to perpetuate and have an adverse effect on the children. What is not acknowledged in the previous sections' when discussing this issue is that when looking at many of the cases in question the grandfathers and the fathers of the grandchildren may have abdicated responsibility or 'opted out' by defecting from the care of the children/grandchildren. Even within a legal system that facilitates joint custody of children, Paddy states that the power is all with the mother:

Paddy; "She's not a nice person. She uses the wee one like a weapon of mass pain against the daddy. It is painful to see but she's allowed to get away with it."

The point that is raised speaks of the paradoxes that have flowed throughout this study. The men have lived through a changing society and through extreme conditions in their own personal lives. To opt out of parenting for all the reasons mentioned in Chapter Five and leave the children in the care of the mother is one choice that was made and according to them a unilateral decision on their behalf. In today's society, they identify how this was wrong and how their young children suffered the loss of the father. This is what drives them to be main participants in the grandchildren's lives. In one way they can identify how not involving both/all (if including stepparents) parents and extended family will result in repetition of their own experiences. However, they also try to forget that this has occurred within their own families. The mother as the main carer remains a fundamental tenet of family life but is not acknowledged in this function or role by the men, who for the most opted out of their children's lives.

That does not mean that legislation cannot be reviewed and a fairer system explored for the benefit of the child and grandchild in such situations. Many of the men state that the legal system is antiquated and not productive or efficient enough to meet the needs of the children in a timely manner. For these men, the conversation never rotates to a self-exploration or critique of their actions in this area.

Ever present in some of the men is a general undertone of disgust for legal and political systems in any jurisdiction or speciality. For Ronan this issue is implicit in his discussion around the unfinished conditions of his release from gaol. He states that politicians are not interested in looking at the issue of unfinished elements of the Good Friday Agreement when applied to his situation:

Ronan; "No it has never been addressed and I suppose a lot of politicians look on it as "You're out, Get on with it."

Ronan identifies how lack of political will to complete some of the issues of the Good Friday agreement have left him with a suspended criminal sentence until the year xxxx (for confidentiality the year is undisclosed). This allows the authorities to have power over him requiring him to live a reclusive lifestyle. What really hurts him is the title 'criminal' when he believes he is an ex-political prisoner and as such has no respect for those that do not acknowledge the personal sacrifice he has made for his country.

With regard to Joseph when he speaks of the law and legal jurisdiction, his reference point returns to the time of his internment and incarceration during the Northern Ireland Troubles. He discards the legal and judicial systems as ineffectual in stopping him ‘doing what he wants’. He explains in detail, without the audiotape (he allowed inclusion in the study but did not want it recorded) how he covertly entered xxxx (for confidentiality the country is undisclosed) during his time, as an ex-political prisoner and feels legislators and law enforcers have no authority over him whether at home or abroad. He is quite serious in his intentions and states how he is special to other people. When I ask to explain what he means he says (these statements are in reference to the internment of prisoners during the Northern Ireland Troubles):

*Joseph; “Well I’ve been involved in the political conflict.
I do not have a ‘record’ because I am not a criminal.
I am accustomed to the special courts because I am special!
I am not saying there is anything special about us but here is what I am saying;
I was arrested under the ‘special’ powers act,
I was arrested by the ‘special’ branch,
I was convicted in the ‘special’ criminal court, and
I was sent to a ‘special’ top security prison,
So somebody thinks I am special.”*

7.5 Concluding Thoughts

This Chapter explores further the role practiced by the grandfathers and the perceived effect, that they have over family and the impact that the State and others have over them. The notion that a second chance is afforded to them to do the right thing further perpetuates and builds on the *Redemption* theory. It also supports the view that this particular cohort has looked back in order to move forward. Their expectations of looking forward have encapsulated the belief that they want to do better through their grandchildren.

7.5.1 Being a grandfather in the future

If the fathers of today are not involved in the care of their children, the men prophesise about the downfall of the next generation of children. They speak of the choices the men are making that will affect the lives of the children. This resonates with contemporary literature that suggests that young men continue to make excuses for their lack of involvement in fatherhood (Carbrera et al, 2000; Jones, 2002; Nilsen, 2011; Chui, 2016). Although the men stress in the narrative that they are redeeming the sins made as fathers they make no connection between the lack of involvement by the fathers of today with their lack of involvement when they were fathers. Whether they look back with a distant view or because they see the immoral practices of today's fathers through a different lens, to them their actions need further exploration. They do however fervently acknowledge that little redemption will be sought by the repeated actions practiced by contemporary Irish fathers engaged in having multiples of children to different partners. Their narratives explain that these actions are being perpetuated, misunderstood and ignored by parents (grandparents and the parents of the children), the State and society.

According to this cohort of men the role and title of grandfather, as it is traditionally known appears to be eroding. There is scant literature specifically in this area although much in the past two decades has been written on the roles of grandfathers, particularly older grandfathers (Bullock, 2005; Jung, 2011; Findler et al, 2010; Tarrant, 2016). Therefore, the addition of these findings and the perceptions of this cohort will help to increase the theory building particularly on this younger and unique man. In further support of the typology of grandfatherhood and additional to the literature in this area (Bates, 2009), the latent concept mentioned by the grandfathers was the ability of grandfathers to justify their selectivity toward the capacity of involvement in their grandchildren, which grandchildren within the family they decide to grandparent, and the amount of power over the grandchildren they wish to bestow. This adds further to the earlier suggestion (Chapter Six) that although they wish to maintain the hegemonic masculine roles, they are willing to feminise the roles if required. Again they demonstrate selectivity in being a grandfather. They are also selective in ignoring the grandchildren over the children from a second relationship. They are selective in actually being a grandfather as defined by the actual role and title. The term GRATHER evolved in the discourse and applies comfortably to many of the men engaged in fulltime care. In the case of grandchildren from a single mother, this is most notable. The traditional role and title

of the grandfather is eroding for this cohort. Even for the younger grandfathers who care for the grandchildren, intermittently the symbolic older persona of the grandfather is admonished in their narratives and contrasts with literature that traditionally looks at men transiting into grandparenting at an older age (Gauthier, 2002; Bates and Taylor, 2012; Tarrant, 2010, and 2013). The title GRATHER therefore appears to be an acceptable title that is more symbolic of the younger grandfather in this cohort. There were however two of the men who raised concerns around mortality. Their concerns add to the literature on stress, anxiety and burden experienced by grandparents (Findler et al, 2010).

Identified earlier is the fact that the grandparents do not choose when to become grandparents. This can further obscure the boundaries identified by the family members and the roles they are expected to take. As many of the grandfathers were in their 30's and 40's when their children became parents, an expectation was latent in the narratives that their children were having children, implying they were not adult parents. In Schwiter's (2010) Swiss study, exploration of the life course trajectory attempts to link institutional regulation and personal behaviour in understanding the life trajectory transition of young people to parenthood. What was found was two-fold. The participants suggested; 1) parenthood is seen as free choice and 2) only those that fulfil a prescribed set of requirement should have children. These requirements include, educational level, employment, those in steady relationships to name a few. Issues relating to the opportunities of single parenting and same sex parenting may not be included in these requirements. This type of governance would not be acceptable in contemporary Irish society. However, future Irish research in this area enquiring and asking such questions would be beneficial to improving the discourse on the parent and grandparent of the future.

7.5.2 Parenting parents

To develop the concept of the new name for the younger grandfather in a mixed role must also demonstrate this extended parental role visible in the narratives of the research. The grandfathers continue to parent the adult child in adulthood. The boundaries between the players in a child's life are blurred, and add to the argument that the traditional role is obsolete or obscure. This is practiced within a patriarchal authoritative role. This is most visible with the families that include single mothers who depend on the grandfather for

supports of all kinds. The men, who were proficient in implementing this type of practice, were incarcerated during their fatherhood. The power over, demonstrated by the grandfathers' authoritative role relates and adds to the seminal work of Foucault and Paulo Frère and is discussed further in Chapter Eight. Through the narratives, it was clear that with the exception of the man who left the country after incarceration, for all these men self-defined as absent in fatherhood for incarceration, work or choice (leisure) (who had families) they maintained governance over their families. These findings do not resonate in the literature on grandfathers. Much of the literature on incarcerated fathers (Chui, 2016) is in relation to maintaining connections and establishing parenting skills and responsibilities in preparation for release from prison. Therefore, the findings will contribute to the broader knowledge of family systems where a parent has been incarcerated.

Foucault (1972) (Faubion, 1994) and Friere's 1970 work is further complementary to the research findings in contemporary Ireland, where the grandfathers experience a conflict of thought identifying a need for more governance from the State and identify too much oversight from the State. Common sense appears in the fathers' eyes to be missing (Freire, 1993). This is exemplified in the case of a grandfather attempting to enact access rights to a grandchild. There is an element of uncertainty of whether they want to be scrutinised and explored in the detail that may be required when pursuing access or foster care as this involves a critical examination of the family including the extended family. The findings focus on the legislation and responsibility of the State to employ common sense and sensibility into the legislation and policy development. From the findings, the grandfathers would interpret the State to be also selective as to how far they are interested in caring for the children of the future. Overall, while it is anathema for the grandfathers to rock the boat for the children, the convolutions and selectivity of their narratives would propose that it would be in the best interest of the child if the grandfathers would not only rock the boat but also stay in it!

The grandfather's narratives in this Chapter identify latent concepts that constitute the *Redemption* theory. For the men, many reasons were offered for their lack of involvement as fathers, resulting in them redeeming their actions through their grandchildren and indeed possibly through parenting their adult children. Identified in this Chapter however are issues relating to choices the grandfathers are still rendering which again are embellished with rationale and logic from their perspectives. As they are young men in fatherhood and

grandfatherhood, it may be apt to visit them again in great-grandfatherhood to examine how *Redemption* for the sins committed as (grand) fathers was employed. Chapter Eight will develop, integrate and synthesise the research findings.

CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSIONS – REDEMPTION THEORY; BEING SAVED FROM SINS COMMITTED, PAYING BACK A DEBT AND GAINING OR RE-GAINING POSSESSION.

8.1 Introduction

The previous Chapters explored the emergent theory, as it was co-constructed between the participants and the researcher. This discussion, however, is viewed within literature specific to the issues raised. This Chapter demonstrates the integration of the study findings with support of existing literature and theory that may offer a broader understanding of the emerging concept and theory of *Redemption*. The aim of this Chapter is therefore to explore *Redemption* theory as it emerged from the research co-constructed between the researcher and the participants within the perspective of other associated theories. These signify issues that contained all the categories and issues that were specific and have implications for the grandfathers in the study. *Redemption* theory describes the latent concern of the grandfathers, who believe they will reap what they have sowed, for decisions made in their earlier life.

Redemption, although expressed in the English language from Old French, is most notably mentioned in the Bible and other religious readings. It originates from the Latin ‘redimere’, meaning to ‘buy back’. As a noun it is described as the action of saving or being saved from sin, error, or evil, as in, “*God's plans for the Redemption of his world.*” The word absolution is also a synonym used within the religious context to demonstrate saving from sin, error or evil. The origin of the word captures the understanding that *Redemption* is the action of regaining or gaining possession of something in exchange for payment or clearing debt. As can be seen in the narrative of the grandfathers, many allude to the act of “paying for love” for instance, in the form of gifts to the grandchildren as a form of seeking forgiveness and *Redemption* for a loss experienced by their own children during the younger fatherhood years.

Subsequently, this Chapter will explore the subject areas of being saved from sins committed, paying back a debt and gaining or re-gaining possession. Suggestions for further exploration and recommendations are interwoven throughout the Chapter.

Table 2: Positioning *Redemption* theory within the findings and existing theory

Emerging theory	Theory	Findings
Redemption Theory	As is	<i>Redemption</i> is the action of regaining or gaining possession of something in exchange for payment or clearing debt.
Redemption Theory (Discussed in Chapters 5,6&7)	My study	<p><i>'Life before grandfathering'</i> refers to the antecedents to rationalising their feelings and behaviours as a grandfather. The crux is that the participants had been largely absent as fathers.</p> <p><i>'Life as a grandfather'</i> refers to the conception that being a grandfather involves demonstrating in various ways that the best interests of the grandchild/ren are foremost in the grandfather's world.</p> <p><i>Life as a grandfather in the context of family and professionals'</i> relates to the facilitators and barriers to interaction with grandchildren, and the issue of power over the family and how it is reflected in the men's practice as grandfathers.</p>
Redemption Theory	Other theory	<p>Findings in the study show broad relationships to theory of identity, power, oppression, control over and gender. These are discussed under the subject headings of;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Being saved from sins committed, 2) Paying back a debt and 3) Gaining or re-gaining possession. <p>Specific theory is correlated with the subject areas of the study findings as mentioned above and seen in Chapters 5, 6 & 7.</p>

8.2 Redemption: Being saved from sins committed

The findings suggest that whether their fatherhoods were ruptured due to incarceration, work or choice, the grandfathers all correlate with Burke's (2007) identity theory and its predictions. Identity control theory (ICT) suggests that human beings have been observed to

behave in three processes that verify their own identity. Firstly, people should possess a set of internalised identity standards that correspond with the identity that they intend to verify; secondly, people behave in ways that are meaningful to the identity they intend to verify; and thirdly, people look and find appraisals about whether their behaviours are congruent with this identity. This theory further asserts that if there are discrepancies between an individual's set of internalised identity standards and appraisals, they will experience negative emotions such as stress and low self-esteem, which can alter their behaviour to cope with the low standards and reduce these negative emotions. Burke's (2007) theory further claims that identity interruption occurs when the person lacks the ability even with the motivation, to behave in ways that are congruent with their perceived identity. This resulted in the development of coping mechanisms to reduce the negative emotions felt by the individual (Arditti et al, 2005; Dyer, 2005; Adorjan and Chui, 2014; Visher and Travis, 2011). One such mechanism is to reduce or remove the identity to a lesser status for the individual. In this study, opting out of fatherhood and family life resulted in negative emotions being enacted by the grandfathers (Burke, 2007). Consequently, their relationships suffered with their children and they blame themselves for situations, which they know in hindsight, they could have avoided.

Burke's (2007) theory also refers to the appraisals felt and associated with social stigma as it affects the immediate and extended family relating to the father being incarcerated. In respect of the Northern Ireland Troubles, there was no stigma attached to this event as they were viewed as prisoners of war by their loved ones and neighbourhoods. Admiration and support was offered to the family and children in respect of the father in prison (Ralaheen, 2005). The fact that the father could not protect the family from this stigma was, according to Burke (2007), a further assault onto the fatherhood identity.

Correlation is however, seen in the other participants who were incarcerated for criminal activity. Stigma was attached and contributed to reduced access to the grandchildren through the adult children (Pfaff, 2008; Massoglia and Warner, 2011; and Porter and King, 2015) and relationship breakdown (Chui, 2016; Massoglia et al., 2011; Condry, 2012; Coakley, 2013; and Ugelvik, 2014).

As a result of the lack of investment into the family the grandfathers get little return on investment (Griggs et al, 2010). Earlier work by Mueller and Elder (2003) support these

findings as they pose that the roles played between the grandparents and the grandchildren extend way beyond the frequency of contact and relationship closeness. These grandfathers offer social, emotional and psychological support, in addition to the instrumental tasks. Leeson (2016) recently identified these tasks in a Danish study as hobby (based around the grandchildren's activities like football, or school concerts) and regular (focused on helping parents with their children like transport to and from school or day care) activities. Moreover, the impact of the contact has been well documented in relation to the shared activities, especially in the work carried out by grandfathers in offering educational, spiritual, emotional work, financial and advisory support to the grandchildren (Mann, 2007; Bates and Goodsell, 2013). Nonetheless, this research acknowledges that the face-to-face connection, although important, is not always essential. Being there in the virtual realm through Skype and Face Time was valued as much as the physical contact. Geography and spatial distance appears to be a misnomer in today's world. Those that reported this detail in the study were not restricted as the ex-prisoner participants were.

The findings identified the complacency of the State in contributing to facilitating access to the grandchildren by the grandfathers. The findings suggest that the Court process is arduous and non-productive, resulting in children not accessing one side of the family. Hamilton's (1964) pivotal work on Kin Selection Theory supports these research findings in that, where the family constellations are multiple and biased against the paternal grandparents, then access to the grandchildren is less. Tanskanen and Danielsbacka (2013) in their study on grandparental investment found that the relationship with grandchildren was strongest when biological relatedness is linked to kin relationships (Anderson, 2006; Pollet and Hoben, 2011). This research draws a parallel to Danielsbacka et al (2011), supporting the grandfather's beliefs that this style of connectivity between the different constellations within a family, adds value to the connections with the grandchildren irrespective of spatial or geographical location.

Absent fatherhood followed by absent grandfatherhood (for those that were incarcerated) was highlighted as a dilemma resulting from attempts to access children/grandchildren abroad. The risk for the children in being deported from the country because of the alliance to the father became real. Foucault's (1972) interpretation of conforming and his desire to be a non-conformist are seen in these actions. The *Redemption* theory is demonstrated in the submissive contrite ways that grandfathers have complied with, to ensure that the children

remain safe and unknown in their new countries. The grandfather is also endeavouring to conform to the demands of the adult child for him to visit. Non-conforming ways are highlighted in their narrative when they suggest there are many ways to enter a country. This perpetuates the cycle of ruptured father/grandfatherhood.

Oliver (2010) deliberates on Foucault that, in order to understand the individual criminal activity, the individual should not be blamed for the criminal acts, but instead the acts and causality are removed from the person as they are representative of a time and space explained through the social environment of the period. The study findings support Oliver's (2010) interpretation of Foucault and state that their treatment in society is unjust and unfair. The findings in Chapter Five identify how the participants compare their treatment to new immigrants in the country where their historical past lives cannot be traced, but who are deemed fit for foster care and employment (Tusla, 2014; Department of Justice and Equality, 2014). A tangible fear for these participants is that if any concerns arose around custodial care of the grandchildren, they may be forbidden from applying for custody. *Redemption* theory is portrayed as the grandfather continues to pay for the sins committed.

This research suggests that ruptured fatherhood is a monumental factor contributing to the development of the *Redemption* theory. Engle and Breaux (1998) support these findings by suggesting that within a global context, many children will grow up without their biological fathers. This exposes children to having to adapt within families bearing a mixture of family constellations. Not all of these will be amicable arrangements, where adverse climates may surround this changing system. In contrast, the ability of the grandfathers to gain possession of fatherhood and grandfatherhood stems from what the findings identify as the 'mother rules' philosophy. Warin et al (1999) suggests that mothers holding the gatekeeper role can restrict the father's role, which eventually has an impact on their grandfather role. The mother in judicial arrangements is seen as the main carer for the children. Attachment between the grandfather and the grandchild is debated in the literature, with writers having detected some patterns of one grandparent being favoured over another at differing child ages (Hagestad, 2006; Harper, 2005; and Mann et al, 2013). The findings in this study add to the theoretical literature, suggesting that the grandfather describes himself as being of real benefit to the children and grandchildren.

Pleck and Pleck (1997) state that the father role, as we know it, has developed from a distant father to a co-parent. This has occurred because of; 1) women becoming a large part of the

workforce; 2) a change in culture and society, 3) differing family constellations creating different subsets of siblings, fathers and grandparents, and 4) increased involvement in the child's life (Cabrera et al, 2000). Paradoxically, the findings report that the "immoral" behaviour of young adults parenting children to several partners, generating half-siblings within the one family system was abhorrent to the participants. The role they undertake as fathers and grandfathers are as a result of their children giving birth to numerous children from many different partners. This occurrence also contributes to why the mothers become the sole parent as the fathers abdicate responsibility.

Fatherhood was undesirable as a topic of discussion for the grandfathers, who felt it reignited poor memories of a ruptured fatherhood. Fathers who are involved with their children have significant impact on a family's development and wellbeing (Flouri, 2004 and Lamb 2000). Comparisons are made with participants today for similar and different reasons (Brannen and Nilsen, 2006; Lamb 2000; Hobsen and Fahlen, 2009; Biggart and Walther, 2006; Lader et al 2006; O'Reilly et al, 2008). Fatherhood and a greater relationality with the child are central to the research (Mooney and Stratham, 2002). The findings in this study concur with this belief and understanding that today's father needs to work hard to meet this emotional relational bond and fatherhood pressure. This is within the context of the recent recession period in Ireland (www.esri.ie). The findings also illuminate the grandfather's perception that ruptured fatherhood will reoccur through repeating the cycles leading to absent fatherhood as seen in this study. This idea requires further exploration with regard to fathers and mothers.

The findings gave total disclosure to the fact that they love the grandchildren more than they loved their own children. With a few exceptions (Buchanan and Rotkirch, 2016), there is a dearth of literature in this area, possibly due to the magnitude of the revelation and implications and consequences if misunderstood by the adult children. Grandparents fear losing access to the grandchildren. They also offer their narration through a patriarchal lens where they are the head of the family. Freire's 1970 theory of the oppressed becoming the oppressor is played out in cyclical processes by some of the grandfathers. They develop from the behaviours witnessed in earlier life, their masculinity and a model of 'manhood' (Freire, 1993, pg. 28). The fathers are parenting parents. Freire (1993) would support this and recognised this as the paradox between wanting to be free and authentic in the same moment. What this asserts, is that the adult children wish to parent the children their way. However

they become submissive to the wishes of the grandparents as they gain personal freedom for work, study or pleasure. In this study, the cycle of extending their fatherhood into grandfatherhood gains further clarity as the oppressed (adult daughter/mother) follows the prescriptive guidelines of the oppressor (father/grandfather) (Freire, 1993). The perception within the findings, that the grandfather had power over the children and grandchildren was identified through re-interviewing the grandfathers. The boundaries are blurred between the role of the grandfather and the adult child. The parents are submissive to this man and stand to gain more by tolerating the situation. The oppressed becoming the oppressor, in this case, the grandfather over the daughter (Freire, 1993). However, we do not know if this is confusing for the grandchildren. It is the young parent who is most likely confused and lacking in confidence, as they witness the authority and accountability over their child being removed. This is an area requiring further exploration and would be beneficial in Ireland through a longitudinal intergenerational approach. In this study, the cycle of extending their fatherhood into grandfatherhood gains further clarity. This is observed as an attempt to self-identify the types of grandfathers they have become.

Through the narrative many of the grandfathers classified themselves into different types of grandfathers depending on the needs of the children and grandchildren. They were; 1) a *'come and go' grandfather*; 2) a *'nothing special' grandfather*; 3) a *'fulltime' father/grandfather (GRATHER)*; 4) a *'Pay per view' grandfather*; 5) a *'never to be' grandfather*; 6) an *'opt-out' grandfather*; and 7) a *'selective' grandfather* (Table 2). This self-classification defines the roles they feel they can offer or are being offered within the family system. They also add to the classifications listed in the literature and are nascent from these particular Irish grandfathers. This is the underpinning thread to a lot of the discourse. It is also the frame by which they describe their grandfathering role. The grandfathers needed to feel worthwhile and contributory at some level to their children and their grandchildren. What emerged during the discourse was that they were willing to accept any classification or name so long as it involved some contact with the grandchildren.

Table 3: Grandfather 'types'

Type of grandfather	Description
A 'come and go' grandfather	This grandfather is most like the traditional grandfather role where the children come to visit and return to their parents again. They are available to play the role when required by the

	<p>adult children.</p> <p>- Martin, Paddy, Ciaran, Fionn, Cormac.</p>
A ‘nothing special’ grandfather	<p>This grandfather sees no difference in the grandfather role to the father role. They view and experience grandfathering as normal and interwoven in the family system.</p> <p>- Gerard, Rory, Brian, Donal, Ronan, Kevin, Harry, George, Callum, Shane, Emmet.</p>
A ‘fulltime’ father/grandfather = GRATHER	<p>This classifies two groups of men;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The grandfather who is in fulltime custodial care of his grandchildren. In this situation, the children call him dad. 2. The grandfathers who have children and grandchildren of the same age. The children within the subsets become confused as to what to call the dad/grandfather when they all play together. <p>- Joseph, Eamonn, Sean.</p>
A ‘pay per view’ grandfather	<p>This grandfather becomes a grandfather when the opportunity arises. This is usually on the request of the adult children or in the case of older grandchildren, as they become adults. This grandfather states that his presence is requested usually for financial gain. This is commensurate with special occasions like holy communions, birthdays and Christmas. He makes the point that if he wants to see the grandchildren it will cost him. He is not required in any other role.</p> <p>- Oscar, Eoin</p>
A ‘never to be’ grandfather	<p>This applies to the man who is a biological grandfather but has never been defined, included, informed that he is the grandfather of the child.</p> <p>- Brian.</p> <p>This is also in reference to gay participants (currently) who for many reasons perceive themselves as “never to be/come” a grandfather.</p>
An ‘opt-out’ grandfather	<p>This grandfather decides not to engage with the grandchildren usually for personal reasons. This man may not self-identify as a grandfather. This man may have also opted out to start another family.</p> <p>- Joseph, Eoin, Shea</p>
A ‘selective’ grandfather	<p>This grandfather makes a decision to access one grandchild over another. This decision is based upon many factors, the most common being resistance in the courts system and from the mother of the children.</p> <p>- Brian, Ciaran.</p>

Without exception, the participants linked their roles to a fear of child abuse. When discussing *Redemption* theory in this context it can be seen as seeking *Redemption* for the sins of participants (as a gender) for what they have done to children. The grandfathers felt able to discuss this concept, being free, being sorry and ashamed for what Irish participants have done to children. They place the blame and shame of this period firmly with participants in Ireland. Interpretation of the narrative is how the grandfather's assessment is understood as child abuse occurs to children whom they believe to be able to talk and communicate possibly over the age of 4 years old/school going. Oliver (2010) explains Foucault's concept of understanding knowledge within the episteme of an era. He implies history of events is always embedded in the thoughts of human beings. As a result, because it belongs in the human perception, it is interpreted in different ways. It may seem that their assumptions are that child abuse only happens in children who are in some way independent of care needs. O'Leary and Buchanan (2016) report that, in a study that explores the perspectives of parents on the role of grandfathers' involvement in the children's lives, in some situations the governance over their inclusion in the child's life is overly monitored by the State professions. They do report that in some cases this is justifiable. O'Leary and Buchanan (2016) state this was infrequent in their enquiry. On the other hand, however, all participants identified the risk of child/sexual abuse.

8.3 Redemption: Paying back a debt

The initial thoughts of second chance as the main concern for the participants were discarded through the processes of theoretical sampling and constant comparative analysis. Some did suggest that second chance meant to continue fatherhood a second time. The majority of the grandfathers however identified in the findings, that second chance means to do things differently when in fact they contextualise their choices within their life events at the time. Therefore, they would live their life course in the same manner (their lives outside of the family) but wish to pay back for what was lost to the family. The data was fractured further and through theoretical sampling, *Redemption* theory emerged.

In a 20-year-old study, Whitbeck et al (1991) identified that the relationship between the grandparent and the adult child often reflects the amount of care and attention that was offered to them as children. These findings identified absenteeism by the father as a major

contribution to the level of involvement the grandfathers have with the grandchildren when they reach this stage of life. Access to grandchildren through this gatekeeper of the adult son/daughter, is dependent on this earlier relationship. Therefore, family systems are interwoven and driven by historical and perceived knowledge of care delivered. The findings in this study illuminate the attempt to achieve *Redemption* by offering copious amounts of care, support and attention within the family systems to make up for shortcomings in their earlier relationships with their children. These attempts to remedy the relationship and pay back for earlier losses channelled the emergence of the theory within this study. Leeson (2016) suggests that many grandfathers harbour regrets for investment into or lack of, in times past. Davy and Smith (2016) have similar comments when they suggest that their study on Maori grandparents also highlights the joy derived from spending time with the grandchildren, time they did not spend with their children. The consequences of this are that the adult children interpret the perceived spent/unspent time and control the access of the children to the grandparents. Mueller and Elder (2003) support this idea reporting that the adult children often serve as gatekeepers who regulate contact between grandparents and grandchildren. The grandfathers are aware that the right to determine access is out of their control.

Paying back the debt in the findings is perceived as determined by others (other adult children and professional services). As Troll (1985) notes, grandparents have very little input into how many grandchildren they have, how close they live to them, how early they arrive in their lives and how often they see them. Correlations of the findings assimilate to Erikson's generative theory (Erikson and Erikson, 1998). The 7th stage of Erikson's theory is mobilised with some of the grandfathers demonstrating an avoidance of their sense of stagnation. As Joan Erikson asserts in the development of the 'ninth' stage (Erikson and Erikson, 1998), to pass through the 7th stage of generativity satisfactorily is a wonderful time to be alive. This may apply to some but not all of the grandfathers. The findings reported that some of the grandfathers perceived themselves to be still in the 6th stage, enjoying a second family or entering late into fatherhood. However, other grandfathers who had children early in their life, reported that they felt they were forced into the 7th stage earlier than expected. The image of the older grandfather is unwelcome when they enjoy good active lifestyles with the grandchildren. It is suggested that at this precipice in grandparents lives, that they are preparing to look at where their life is and where it is going (Leeson 2016). The findings

allude to the image of the older man and with this, there was a nuance in this life cycle shift like a '*whiff of death*' (Achenbaum, 2011).

Being a grandparent is seen as an important form of socialisation and an opportunity to meet personal need (Neugarten and Weinstein 1964; Robertson, 1977). Indeed, Erikson himself writes, the generative stage is not only about the cultural norms of preparing the next generation but also satisfying an inner desire (Erikson and Erikson, 1998). The research findings yielded that many of the participant's life histories, which identify the absence or fracturing of the 6th stage in their lives. Their lifespan approach may not have been fulfilled. For some of the participants they are forced to enter this 6th stage because of custodial foster care. The findings also revealed the anticipatory void for many participants who may never fulfil these stages because of their personal circumstance resulting in stagnation becoming more of the focus. This is of course if you believe that the 7th stage is about the contribution of children and grandchildren to self-actualisation. Further enquiry is required to explore if stagnation is an outcome in the absence of children and grandchildren.

A significant concern relating to the ability to children is the involvement and passing on of the family heritage. Thiele and Whelan (2006) report that the conveyance of histories and traditions is of importance to young adult grandchildren who regard grandparents as important sources of emotional gratification and information. The participants in this study place the blame firmly at the policy developers and the State for not having a long-sighted view of the needs of the citizens. Believe in the judicial systems are not developed to support their case. The findings went further to suggest that they welcome the over-policing of the State, which they state would be heaven-sent for grandparents. The limited paternal access between the grandchildren and the grandparents are discussed extensively in the literature (Barranti, 1985; McGreal, 1986; Somary and Stricker, 1998; Uhlenberg and Hamill, 1998; Bradshaw et al., 1999; and Timonen et al, 2012a).

In support of 'paying back the debt', Bates et al (2013) clustered other writers' portrayal of grandfather roles into surrogate parent (Bullock, 2005; Chan, 2007), financial provider (Blau, 1999; Roberto et al, 2001), playmate, advice giver (Kornhaber, 1996) and family historian (Waldrop et al, 1999). This research went further to suggest that their approach to the grandchild was holistic and included emotional, psychological, physical, educational, and moralistic with all participants offering a health promotion approach to the care of the

children. The latter involved ensuring the grandchildren were exercising and engaged in sports, in addition to eating good nutritious foods.

The findings revealed sweeping statements and nuggets of the lack of shame the participants had in disclosing the levels of financial support offered and suggested they were probably 'buying the child's love'. The act of grandparents treating or 'spoiling' the child is not new (Fingerman, 2004; Achenbaum, 2011; Leeson, 2016) but the open disclosures by the grandfathers in this study are. Bates and Goodsell in their 2013 study, on grandfathers and their relationships to grandsons reported that this action is seen as a demonstration of how much the grandsons meant to the grandfather. This study found some similar elements between the male dyad. Noticeably, the participants excluded the granddaughters from the discussion on generational cycles (Cameron et al, 2013). In this study, there was a nuance that the grandfathers through their 'spoiling' actions were protecting the male genome of the future to ensure that the bloodline would continue. They were attentive and focused on their interests and activities. Paying back the debt for some of the grandfathers is further borne out in bestowing onto the grandchildren that which they perceive not to have given to their children.

The findings divulged the desires to be perceived as young and fun-loving grandfathers was important to most participants and demonstrated disparity with the dated seminal literature on grandparents' behaviours (Neugarten and Weinstein, 1964; Cherlin and Furstenberg, 1985 and Mueller and Elder, 2003), meaning (Robertson, 1977 and Kivnick, 1986) and satisfaction-symbolic meaning (Hurme, 1991). This study did not relate to the formal behaviours identified by Neugarten and Weinstein and indeed suggested that the grandfathers are anxious to be perceived as a fun-loving person as opposed to 26% in the seminal piece in 1964. The feeling of wanting to be remembered fondly is similar to Kivnick's seminal work and particularly the identification of the role of the grandfather in this study as a valued elder. The grandfather wants to be valued into the future and esteemed as a resource person for the child or, as Leeson (2016) suggests, a companion. In line with this study's findings, this valued elder is absent when gatekeeper adult children do not allow access to the grandparents. The grandfathers believe this is a major concern for the future viability of the legacy and historical issues relating to the passage of heritage through a family. This is most likely, as it was not how they remembered their own grandfathers, if at all (Boon and Brussoni, 1996). Although a few had fond memories, for most they had faint memories of,

“...an old man forbidden to speak with and whom you visited on Sundays after mass.” In contrast, within this study the focus was not made specifically to the actual care that was delivered to children in what is known as practices of care (Tarrant, 2013), instrumental tasks (Walthrop et al, 1999; Mann, 2007) and regular activities (Leeson 2016) like feeding, changing, nursing. The participants did not discuss this type of care as a focal issue. Instead, the findings in this study suggest that the care is accepted as normal caretaking of children. The study highlights the desire to pay back to the social and emotional life of the child, offering a holistic approach to being there in a time and space for the grandchildren.

Paying back a debt was challenging for the grandfathers who live a distance away or abroad. Whether this is due to restrictions being enforced (Haase talk in 2013) or personal, the findings suggest that they remain isolated and displaced in their world away from their children and grandchildren. The perpetual negative fallout indicated by Harvey et al (2005) in “The Emerald Curtain” report suggesting that the impact on the next generation of associated discrimination and labelling may evolve to have serious adverse effects in the future. A greater fear is that these cyclical unresolved potentially adversarial issues might implode and yield a generation who will retaliate on the Governments that have not addressed these relatively minor unresolved issues. Their participation in the study was in part to express how difficult it is to be a grandfather in such situations. The findings identify not only the desire to regain possession of the grandfather role but also, for many of the participants with children abroad, the fatherhood role.

Payment of the debt to the children is exposed through the disclosure of ill health experienced by some men. Descriptions of episodes of anxiety and depression throughout their lives (originating from prison) or the inability to maintain the father and grandfatherhood role, and the lack of connection to the family and children has been identified in the literature as contributing to ill health of the paternal grandparents (Cacace and Williamson, 1996). The narrative places part of the blame for poor relationships at the authorities for neglecting this aspect of family care. Policy to establish more conducive environments that are family orientated to encourage the maintenance of links between the incarcerated parent and the child could contribute to alleviating this issue (Haney, 2003; Chui, 2016).

As the participants age, the issue of being able to ‘pay back the debt’ accelerates. International literature reports that younger grandparents offer a greater support for grandchildren than do older grandparents (Fergusson et al 2008; Leopold and Skopek, 2015a,

2015b). In Ireland, as in other countries, grandparents caring for grandchildren are seen very much to have a beneficial impact for both child and grandparent (Hildbrand et al, 2009; Hank and Buber, 2009; Tanskanen and Rotkirch, 2014). Some studies do recognise the potential for abuse of this system within families (Share and Kerrins, 2009; Timonen et al, 2013) and others suggest that the more grandchildren there are, the less involvement the grandparents have (Uhlenberg and Hamill, 1998; Coall and Hertwig, 2011). These findings identified many resemblances to these studies. Conlon et al's (2014) study concurs with this finding, as those in disadvantaged areas are more likely to engage in the direct provision of care and support.

The findings report that the grandfathers take great pride in their child-minding role. Wheelock and Jones (2002) reported that there was a stock of grandfathers available to supplement or substitute the role of grandmothers. These findings concur, as the grandparents were keen to take on the role of second time-around parents, thereby offering the grandchildren, the next best thing to their parents (Wheelock and Jones, 2002). This again reinforced the perceived opportunity to give back to their children that which may have been absent or neglected from their child's lives - the father's presence.

Paying back a debt attempts to enable the grandfathers to break the cycle by regaining possession of the role of father or grandfather. If the cycle continues and the father looks to regain possession as a grandfather, what is not known is whether this reconciliation will be facilitated by the next generation, as it appears to be for most of the grandfathers in this study.

8.4 Redemption: Gaining or regaining possession (of grandfathering)

Grandfathering refers to a period of male adult life that for most is unplanned, and for some may be an undesired association attached to being a grandfather. Identified properties within this category are related to the retrieval of grandfathering as a response to the loss in fatherhood and grandfatherhood. The co-constructive nature of the interactions between the participants, their thoughts, spoken words and the understanding of the interviewer reinforced their concept of the importance of being a grandfather and living in the child's life.

Power in different guises appeared to be a central focus for the grandfathers when discussing gaining and regaining possession. This was portrayed as 'power over' from the social workers, State, society and mothers. The discussion also alluded to 'power over' onto their children, families and grandchildren. The findings identified this link to the desire to gain or if lost, to regain possession. In this section, the theories, amongst others coupled to these findings are the work of Paulo Freire (1970) on 'Oppression and the Oppressed', and the work of Michel Foucault (1972) particularly around 'Observation theory' (Faubion, 1994).

Foucault (Faubion, 1994) interprets observation as a concept of power that can be found in the explanations given for actions taken by the grandfathers. Their attempts to support and justify making decisions on behalf of the grandchildren in their best interests are repeatedly reinforced. They would reject the notion of Freire's (1993) concept of 'power over' vehemently. However, this is the praxis as seen earlier when discussing parenting parents. They may state that they respect and obey the parents but the praxis of the outcomes demonstrates differently.

Absenteeism as a father, irrespective of the rational, is the driving force behind *Redemption* theory. Regaining possession and attachment to the family is paramount. It forms part of their identity at this stage of their lives and offers that sense of belonging. While gaining and regaining possession of the grandfather role is important for the participants in the research they also acknowledge the pressure felt to undertake the parental role. Research in recent years has revealed that grandparents are seen taking on the roles of the child's parents (Ochiltree, 2006). Giddens's (2006) describes this as de-traditionalisation of the family. Internationally research identifies that the change to the head of the family is most notably as a result of social issues affecting the family (Cox 2000; Fitzpatrick, 2004; Worrall, 2006). This shift in family care arrangements is internationally recognised as due to parental drug and alcohol abuse, incarceration, mental health problems, HIV/AIDS, child abuse and neglect, as well as the trend by welfare authorities towards placing children at risk into kinship care (similar to Irish foster custodial/relative care) rather than residential foster care (Johnston, 1995; Joslin and Harrison, 2002; Smith *et al.* 2010; Plant *et al.* 2002; Patton 2004; Worrall 2006; Baldassar *et al.*, 2006; Murray *et al.*, 2012; Galardi *et al.*, 2015 and Markson *et al.*, 2015). There are significant demands on grandparents to care for children who may have substantial behavioural challenges as a result of their exposure to family trauma, abuse or

neglect (Musil et al. 2011; Richards 2001; Fitzpatrick 2004). These participants are internationally recognised as hidden caregivers (Patrick and Tomczewski, 2008).

Furthermore, evidence purports that children thrive while in the care of relatives where they feel safe, secure, stable without losing extended family contact (Crumbley and Little 1997; Hislop *et al.* 2004). In contrast, Backhouse and Graham's (2010) study of grandparents found that emerging in the enquiry were feelings of disappointment and frustration at the injustice of their situation. This was related to comments that suggested they were saving the Government money by being custodial foster parents/ kinship carers with minimal financial and social supports. All grandfathers in this study engaged in foster care were paid and therefore did not raise any such concerns. Within this study, the findings revealed that none of the grandfathers actually referred to personal scarcity of money; in fact the opposite was true. There seemed plenty of financial scope to give treats and presents or, the ability to "spoil" the grandchildren.

In support of the fathers regaining possession of the father/ grandfather role to the grandchildren, the findings report the revelation of a unique type of grandfather who fathers and grandfathers children at the same time, i.e. GRATHER. Burke's (2007) theory is portrayed further with these participants in that it proposes that having two oppositional identities activated at the same time will result in some degree of dissonance. Firstly, one or both of the identities may shift as their meanings change and, secondly, one or the other identity may become less important, or salient, or the commitment to the identity may become lower as the person withdraws from relationships involved with parent, children and grandchildren. Conflict in operationalising the two roles of father and grandfather simultaneously results in one role becoming dominant over the other. Christou (2016) looks at ageing masculinities and identity and purports that her participants like those in this study may have just moved on. Much of the literature on masculinities and grandfathers is of an older man, which is not the focus of this study. The average age on becoming a grandfather in this study was 47 years old (range of 32-62 years). The roles of the participants, which they perform as a grandfather, differ greatly to what they understand the perceived role of the grandfather to be. The findings demonstrate that the participants in this study are regaining possession of their fatherhood.

Irrespective of the reason for absent fatherhoods, the findings reveal how emotionally

expressive they are with the grandchildren, different to that of their children or how they remembered their fathers (grandfathers) being with them (Mooney and Stratham, 2002). The findings identify a supposition that emotional affection demonstrates the breadth of love they have for the children. Most of the grandfather's stated that this was not normal in their childhood or fatherhood. In gaining possession of their grandfatherhood role they are afforded this opportunity (Mills 1999; Madden et al, 2015). In this regard they accredit young fathers today for leading the way. Young fathers use social media platforms to blog (Johansson and Hammaren, 2014) and bear witness to their fatherhoods. They make fatherhood visible (Johansson and Hammaren, 2014). The findings in this study acknowledge that this forum was unavailable to the grandfather. However, they are embracing the opportunities afforded by technology to make visible and regain possession of their roles.

The concept of power was inherent in much of the findings. It became visible in many guises. The research exposed the phrase, "Who owns them?" as articulated by several grandfathers in reference to the magnitude of care and time given to the grandchildren. The findings reveal the fears the grandfathers have as they witness absent fathers in the lives of children (whether from opting-out of the child's life or because the mothers control the access) in a similar manner to their practice as fathers. In gaining access and possession of the role, the grandfathers explain that in order to forecast for the future, repeating cycles should be avoided.

As portrayed by all of the men, in many different guises, was how they revealed the concept of, "*The first grandchild is the baby Jesus.*" The literature supports the fact that maximum effort and help is given to the first born on the premise that they are supporting their own children's developing parenting skills (Fergusson et al 2008). This is also seen if the mother is young. Fergusson et al (2008) argue that this is not seen so much on the older mother as she is more independent, geographically mobile and may feel grandparental help is intrusive. I would contest this belief and offer that much of the literature suggests that this is the parent that may be at higher risk of postnatal depression with fewer supports to rely on (Cox et al, 1987). Literature in this area demonstrates that the work patterns of the parents influence the amount of care offered by the grandparents (Dench and Ogg, 2002; Grundy et al, 1999). Throughout this study, none of the grandchildren in contact with the grandparents were in "paid care", that is, care of a nanny or crèche. Behaviours connected to *Redemption* reflect the fact that the early years in a child's life are the most significant in terms of attachment.

The research findings identified this through the interviews as the most important value to develop with the grandchildren and one, which they had neglected as fathers.

Regaining possession was also identified through the concept of “mother crèches” as the participants offered as a name relating to the facilities for provision of childcare to large numbers of children from early years (www.oireachtas.ie/2016/affordablechildcareact). They forecast that parents and society would have lost something that at least they know their children received from one parent. Foucault’s certainty of institutionalising observation of the population is borne here (Mills, 1999). International literature agrees that the role of the grandparents in caring for grandchildren has been lost with the establishment and increased use by parents of the crèche facilities (Boyer et al, 2012). The findings point to the damage accrued if the loss of relationships with the children and grandchildren is not maintained in the early years. They go further in the interviews to suggest that it is the duty of the State to hold the best interest of the child as paramount by amending the legislation to keep the best outcomes for children at the forefront of all legislation. The development of this theory also highlighted the concept of “rocking the boat but staying in it”. This is understood as pursuing access and regaining possession of the grandfather role even if it is adversarial.

It is proposed that fatherhood has become a voluntary commitment. However, it is also implied that fatherhood is an essential quality of masculinity (Blankenhorn, 1995). The father’s role, whether as a procreator of several children from several mothers or amidst dynamic genetic and procreative advancements, needs consideration to avoid obliteration of the role and successively the grandfather role. In support of the obliteration of the grandfather role, Foucault (1972) pointed to a new kind of disciplinary power that could be observed in the administrative systems and social services that were created in 18th century Europe, such as prisons, schools and mental hospitals. He viewed this power as surpassing politics suggesting power to be a daily spectacle. Physical bodies are quelled and made to conform and behave in certain ways. Disciplinary behaved societies create a discursive practice or a body of knowledge and behaviour that defines what is normal, acceptable or deviant, however this practice remains unstable (Faubion, 1994). Power, according to Foucault is what makes us what we are (Rabinow and Hurley, 1997).

Abolition of the role and name of grandfather appears to be an emerging phenomenon for participants in order to meet the changing needs of the children. The findings also suggest a perceived erosion of the hegemonic masculinity of the role revealed by the participants as

changing the traditionally masculine role of grandfathers. Until recently, much of the international literature has supported the concept that grandmothers are more active in maintaining the family ties than participants (Rossi and Rossi, 1990; Troll, 1985) and that the grandmother maintains a stronger contact with the grandchildren than the grandfathers (Uhlenberg and Hammill, 1998; Horsfall and Dempsey, 2015). This is contested by this study, as the main carers and coordinator of grandchildren in this study are the participants with the added support from the grandmothers. Similarities and differences between this research is seen in Leeson's (2016) Danish study which reports that the current generation of grandfathers in Denmark were fathers who played an active part in their child's birth, care and upbringing. Most of these Irish grandfathers were not available as fathers to participate. However, this has not detracted them from developing these feminine practices as grandfathers.

Development of gaining and regaining possession was further demonstrated as the grandfathers expressed their role as the head of the family. In analysis of the findings, the father demonstrates regaining the fatherhood role, as there is no challenge to this role within the family. On exploration, the discourse for this behaviour centred on practices that they had witnessed in their own families and were fundamentally based upon perceived family values. Mueller and Elder (2003) purport that the grandparent's recollections of their grandparents have an influence on the likelihood of their practice. The grandfathers in the study go further and state that their practice is also influenced by how their own father's did/did not practice as grandfathers (Webster, 2001; Plantin, 2007; Robbers, 2009; Sutton, 2009; Sansiriphun et al, 2015; Park and Lau, 2016).

It has to be acknowledged that memories can be skewed when looking retrospectively. These participants exposed trends of replicating influential/authoritarian behaviours in order to gain possession that they had attested from their own fathers in the same style. To the relevant participants this is a cyclical maintenance of family values from one generation to another. However, to the outsider it appears more like the dominant rule of the oppressor (Freire, 1972).

Without this power over, the grandfathers in the findings assert that they are unable to develop significant ties (Mueller and Elder, 2003). Fingerman (2004) describes the adult affiliated relationship as the non-blood related partner of the grandfather's offspring. In

contrast to her study, the grandfathers did not disclose a hierarchical preference for the parents of the grandchildren.

Reinforcing the desire to regain and maintain the possession of the role, the findings identify the investment and attention shown to parents of the grandchildren (Sorenson and Cooper, 2010). This is not a new concept as Bengston and Kuypers (1971) were one of the first to argue this theory. The findings reveal that social support in addition to supports mentioned previously was offered to the daughters-in-law or mothers of the children, particularly if separated from their son/daughter due to breakdown in relationship, incarceration for subversive activity relating to illegal drug activity, criminal activity and child pornography (Pilkauskas and Dunifon, 2016). Pay back was foremost for these men. This research illuminates the fact that the grandfathers are paying back the debt to avoid cycles repeating, that would see the children following the subversive behaviour of their parents (the grandfather's child). Some of the participants acknowledged that this cycle had originated from them.

As a society, we understand the concept and the intimation that all our actions are being monitored. In order to legitimise power, the recipients must legitimise the person exerting the power (Oliver, 2010). The participants believe that the State demonstrated oppression and had an enormous expansion of power to monitor and control citizens. They conform (Foucault, 1972) but also resist the oppression. Freire (1970) writes that to do nothing about gaining freedom is a farce and that gaining freedom is through the praxis of reflection and action in order to transform it. The findings found that participants in full time custodial care conformed to the social workers and judicial systems. Participants engaged in this care expressed that they were investing in the grandchildren in payment for being absent as fathers. They felt coerced to regain fatherhood to repay this debt.

Within Knudsen's (2012) analysis of data from the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE: Glaser et al, 2014), rational choice theory and normative approaches were explored to look at why older participants can be relatively good grandfathers and particularly ask why grandparents should invest in their grandchildren. The overall conclusion was that grandmothers were better care providers than grandfathers were. However, within the Rational Choice Theory, the supposition is that those that are without a partner should be more eager to care, as they may need more investment for later life. Therefore, it is in all grandparents' interest to develop an indirect investments or insurance

policy with the grandchildren for end of life uncertainties (Wolfe et al, 2000). Normative theory also suggests that social norms hold a bias in favour of grandmother care at end of life (Settersten and Angel, 2011). They further suggest that bias does appear for older grandfathers if alone, as they will have more family and grandchild involvement as opposed to a grandmother, who is most likely caring for an older husband. That said, they conclude that grandfathers can be good carers if they remain in the context of a couple. The literature correlates with the participants in this study who were widowed. Much of their narratives alluded to their participation as invited guests into the lives of the children. These are referred to as the 'pay per view' grandfathers (Table 3). Gaining possession of grandfathering is unobtainable for them.

The findings reveal how all the grandfathers advocate that the art of negotiation and mediation should be upheld through State policy and be universal for all children, to ensure that there are less adversarial encounters with the best interest of the child being truly achieved. Scotland is introducing a system that offers each child a named professional person available to the child (Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC), Scottish Government, 2014). Whilst Foucault (1970) would denounce the observational conformist nature of this policy, for the grandfathers and most notably for the children, it may be a policy that demonstrates true equality for all citizens.

In order to gain and regain the possession of the grandfather role, research on the development of fatherhood needs to refocus the dyads between fathers and grandfathers. The current relationships between the grandfathers and fathers are complicated by the fact that there is no singular set of developmental endpoints or tasks that define competent, supportive fathering for all participants along the continuum of life. This is particularly true where fathering outside the traditional family model is concerned. The current climate, where participants gain possession of fatherhood outside of or in addition to the traditional circumstances, whether as step-fathers, nonresidential fathers, single fathers or fathers of adult children, even though highly involved co-parenting, responsible fathering, and generative fathering have emerged as idealised, generic goals for male parenting (Snarey, 1993; Doherty, et al., 1998; Chapman et al, 2016). Moreover, traditional and generative models of male parenting do not consider the role that the child's developmental stage plays in the development of fatherhood. Participants do not father in a social vacuum. Consideration should be given to the bi-directionality of the father-child relationship in

determining the development of fatherhood. As the child grows and develops, displaying a new set of developmental assets (as well as liabilities), the father is also developing and changing. The ability to maintain the possession of these male roles is affected and therefore the potential to fracture the fatherhood cycle will continue into grandfatherhood. This evidence is borne in the narrative of the findings of this study, where the grandfathers identify their own failings and that of fathers in today's society.

Challenging prospects loom for some of the participants who are unable to gain possession of the grandfather role due to non-consanguine relationships and homosexuality. In sampling, gaining access to participants who do not actually practice the grandfather role was difficult, as they did not define themselves as such and therefore did not respond to the request for participation in the study. The literature is not clear as to their stages of generativity being fulfilled. It may be that societal generativity is best suited to these participants in a leadership role within community (Snarey, 1993). However, without a role as a father or grandfather of children, these leadership roles in society are challenging to access. A changing global phenomenon is the emergence of same-sex/non-heterosexual/gay fathers and grandfathers. Literature in the area of gay grandfathers is scant and in its infancy and appears to be emerging in America (Drew and Smith, 1999) and Germany relating to gay grandmothers (Orel, 2014). This is a natural evolution of gay fathers, as they become grandfathers.

In Tornello and Patterson's (2016) descriptive study of 79 gay grandfathers across America, findings suggested that in addition to similar studies the grandparents who lived closer to grandchildren, who reported good mental health, and who had strong social support were more likely to report close relationships with their grandchildren (Drew and Smith, 1999). However, the dilemma for the gay grandfather is when to disclose a gay identity to children, and eventually to grandchildren (Bozett, 1985; Patterson and Chan, 1996). The fear of the outcomes of the disclosure is focused on avoiding disruption in the intergenerational relationships within the subsystems (Fruhauf et al., 2009). The effects would be felt through the triad of father, son and grandson. Therefore, for the moment, we may not be able to identify the actual number of gay grandfathers in Ireland. The findings enabled participants to articulate their expressions and joy but also acknowledge the perception that his partners' parents held and how they were devastated at the prospect of never becoming grandparents. The grandfathers in Tornello and Patterson's (2016) study differ to this study in that they

self-identified, as gay grandfathers for the enquiry, were well educated with above-average incomes, and had easy access to the Internet.

Up to recent times, Ireland was under State and Church rule where divorce and homosexuality were forbidden. This has now changed with the introduction of legislation on same-sex/non-heterosexual/gay marriage (GOI, 2015) will expedite the non-heterosexual couples having children and, in time, will evolve to non-heterosexual grandparents. This new culture is incipient, as people that are non-heterosexual are becoming parents and indeed grandparents. Although little is known about the quality of intergenerational relationships and the experiences of gay grandfathers, the disclosure and issues raised by one of the participants on were unexpected and unique and indeed can be identified as one of the first Irish studies to identify this emerging phenomenon.

Furthermore, the findings suggested that to gain/regain possession of the role that the State should develop a tracking system to detect the bloodline of a family. This would take the form of a record to identify the heritage and genetic content of the child. As suggested by one grandfather it would be similar to a bloodline passport. What is unique and shocking is that these participants did not know each other in the capacity that it may be a shared view. However, they offered similar systems to promote parental road mapping and avoid adverse issues for children in the future. The fear that half-siblings will procreate in the future is real for the grandfathers in the study, as identified in Chapter Six.

Kivnick's meaning of 'Immortality through clan' (1982) supports the vigour behind a bloodline passport. This is similar to Neugarten and Weinstein's (1964) seminal study in appreciating the desire for the grandfather to display a biological renewal and continuity meaning. When speaking on this topic many of the participants shed some tears. This was strongly linked to the feelings of great love for the first grandchild as stated earlier. When this was discussed, it connected earlier participant's accounts of joy expressed by all of the other men. Some went a little further to state that this was strongest if the child was male. In modern Ireland, although the clan instinct is for the male line to keep the genome reproducing, the obliviousness surrounding bloodlines as a perpetuation of familial hereditary was profound. Kivnick's final meaning attributed to the grandparents was 're-involvement with personal past'. In this meaning, all of the participants expressed their absolute pleasure in being asked about grandfathering. This aroused many feelings within themselves but also their earlier lives and their experiences with their own grandfathers, if they remembered.

8.5 Concluding Thoughts

Within this Chapter *Redemption* theory was discussed against the wider body of literature. Although there is emerging literature specific to grandfathers, it remains minimal. This study is the first to look at Irish grandfathers and as such has identified historical and contemporary issues that are notable over a 50-year time period. Many concepts contribute to the development of *Redemption* theory. However, the thesis endeavoured to address the latent concern for the grandfathers.

A changing culture in Ireland over the past two decades has seen an increase in single parenthood, divorce, contraception, cultural diversity and change in relationships not witnessed in previous generations. The end of the conflict in Northern Ireland has also been of great significance within Ireland. Although exciting and welcome, the effects of these changes occurring together in a short period have not been seen in full as yet.

In Chapter Two, the literature suggested that the evidence on what grandfathering is for participants in Ireland had not been explored, in order to capture the main concerns pertinent to this group. Similar to international evidence, exploration in an Irish context relates to grandparents and mostly grandmothers. Therefore, this was one of the first studies to bring together the different elements raised by the grandfathers and then conceptualise them into three elements of the theory that were related and connected.

The discussion focused on the key issues that embraced all the categories and issues that had significant implications for grandfathers as they construct their future roles, which included sins of the fathers, paying back a debt, and gaining or regaining possession of the grandfather role.

Within Chapter Three, the employment of the key principles of Grounded Theory, particularly theoretical sampling, constant comparative analysis and memo writing, have allowed the emergence of the latent concern experienced by this sample group of grandfathers. This sample was hard-to-reach grandfathers and transferability of the theory may be questioned. However, Charmaz (2006) argues that situating grounded theories in their social, historical, local and interactional contexts strengthen them (pg. 180). This research has shown that the sins of the father committed during fatherhood need to be redeemed in order

for the grandfather to gain or regain the grandfathering role. Therefore, transferability of this theory could potentially apply to other men absent in fatherhood.

The emergence of *Redemption* theory facilitates exploration of the participants' narratives and discourse around several issues pertaining to the grandfather role and their position within the family. *Redemption*, as a theory, allows the grandfathers to come to terms with misgivings in their past lives relevant to their children. Errors of their ways have resulted in unexpected consequences for them as grandfathers. They continue to seek to pay back the debt that they owe to their children by tolerating the status quo or openly supporting the grandchildren through whatever means necessary.

The thesis has described, explained and conceptualised the significance of some of the more elusive areas of grandfathering that have not been excavated in an Irish context e.g. the provision of new classification of grandfather types.

The development of a bloodline passport became a novel concept raised by many of the participants in response to current "immoral" practices of adult children. These issues need further consideration within an Irish context. Assessing the participants who never function in a grandfather role needs to be examined, to ensure that children and adults are viewed inclusively in Irish society. The prospect of the abolition or obliteration of the title and role of the grandfather within mixed and fractured family constellations because of failings in families or State requires further assessment. The study has concerns for the next generation of grandfathers, regretting and possibly redeeming the sins committed as fathers.

Finally, to return to the question of whether the research has fulfilled its aim. The broad aim of the study was to develop a substantive theory that enquired from grandfathers what being a grandfather in Ireland means to them. *Redemption* theory does answer the question and offers insights into the many adjuncts that need further exploration. This enquiry has illuminated a dormant practice that many grandfathers are most likely aware of. The unforeseen concerns have been excavated from this specific demographic through a Grounded Theory design.

The uniqueness of the research adds to the dearth of Irish and international literature on grandfathers. This is the first research of its kind exploring the world of grandfathers from an Irish context. I must acknowledge the privileged position I was given to make visible the

living concerns of these participants within an historical, unique and once in a generational opportunity.

Thank you.

8.6 Demonstrating Reflexivity and Trustworthiness in the study

8.6.1 Reflexivity

As described in Chapters One and Three in order for the researcher to demonstrate that the human is an instrument (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), a tool to collect and analyse without influence, the need for reflexivity is required that demonstrates credibility for the research. Reflexivity requires the researcher at some point to detach from the inherent knowledge and experiences that present this enquiry. As a researcher, it is difficult to detach from the topic under enquiry. Reflexivity is employed to assist the researcher in taking account of their own position in the setting and situation (Holloway and Wheeler, 2004). It is essential to bracket this knowledge that has, in some way, taken you to this enquiry.

It is the participant's version that is important in the study. Many writers suggest that in qualitative research there is deliberate bias, which is necessary, and purposeful (Morse et al, 2002 and Cutcliffe and Mc Kenna, 2004). Deliberate bias is made about the initial type of literature to access, which setting to use and the population to be used. This is also broadly true for this study. However, the provision of the reflexive journal will also assist transferability for the reader. In this way, not only will an audit trail be shown, but as Koch and Harrington (1998) advise, the evidence of self-critique and self-appraisal should be included to show the reader the researchers beliefs and thoughts during the process.

The jottings in the diary will show the reader how an interpretation was made at a particular time (Koch, 1994). In her commentary Koch supports the idea that expert researchers have the intuitive know how to abandon the rules of audit trails but believes this is due to experience. Cutcliffe and Mc Kenna (2004) believe the intuitive 'hunches' can be stifled by audit trails. It is through following the rules and guidelines that the readers can believe that the research is credible and trustworthy. Within the qualitative methods is the idea of

‘bracketing’, which agrees with suspending the subjective views of the researcher to maintain objectivity (Koch and Harrington, 1998).

As mentioned in Chapter Three, reflexive elements were noted which the researcher examined before the interview, during and immediately after in memo writing (see Appendix VI), which were then incorporated into the coding and analysis (Charmaz, 2006). Reflexive notes were also written prior to and soon after the interviews to bracket the feelings and preconceived notions of the interviewer (see Appendix VII). These were both reflexive and theoretical in support of sampling. This clarity then allowed the concepts to develop and guided the researcher to the theoretical sampling stage that developed the emerging theory. Within my notebook, sections were compartmentalised and aligned to Charmaz’s (2006) suggestions, that includes; 1) the schedule for the planning of the study and appointments, 2) a reflection section that allowed me to wander and immerse in thoughts stimulated by the enquiry, and 3) a methodological section that recorded decisions and direction taken during the process.

8.6.2 Trustworthiness

When demonstrating trustworthiness Charmaz (2006) writes that, “*the endpoint is clear to the researcher because they have been immersed in the process*” (pg.181). However, for the reader there are certain criteria for evaluating Grounded Theory studies such as credibility, originality, resonance and usefulness. Of these the supposition is that the combination of originality and credibility increases resonance, usefulness and the value of the theoretical contribution (Charmaz, 2006).

Prior to the research the previous knowledge in the area of enquiry was bracketed to avoid any ‘personal distortions’ of the setting and subsequent participants (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The credibility is also demonstrated through the prolonged engagement and observation within the area of enquiry which was achieved over a three year period. This adds not only scope but depth to the enquiry. As the participants emerged it became clear that they were checking my credibility in order to build trust. Through the continuous use of memos and reflection I developed an understanding of the context of the world they live in contextualised and underpinned by the world of their youth. Demonstration of congruence

and reciprocity are values I hold close and many times this was challenged in the enquiry. The reflexive diaries and the awareness that these hard-to-reach participants wanted to tell their story were motivators in clarifying my own thoughts.

As stated in Chapter One, the motivation to enquire was as a response to an observation in practice where my social justice persona questioned one decision made over another when discussing similar issues. I do not deny that I was apprehensive as to what I would hear during the interviews. I had no concerns for my safety, however, as a nurse I was challenged as to what may be disclosed in the interviews. I was aware that these areas have significant social issues and did not wish to portray myself as incongruent to the people and surroundings. Therefore, I was happy to be directed and honestly demonstrated empathy towards the issues raised.

It was not long into the pilot interview when I realised I had gained access to a grandfather with a particular contextualised background that informed his life. The originality of these findings were exciting with the proposal that, through this person, the sample could be sourced. In Chapters Five, Six and Seven the honest disclosure of their secret personal stories were shared with me and I am grateful.

Through staying close to the data, listening to the transcripts of the participants frequently, and the use of the reflexivity journal, the data emerged initially as hunches which can be deductive. However, through theoretical sampling and constant comparison analysis the data became inductive which as a process and result is described by Charmaz (2006) as abductive.

Finally, the findings were co-constructed between the participants and the researcher (Charmaz, 2006). The reciprocity of the interview process allowed the ‘truth-telling’ to emerge from the participants and is verified through Chapters Five, Six and Seven. This was then captured and conceptualised into building the *Redemption* theory.

8.7 Strengths and Limitations

The findings in this study originate from 30 interviews with 23 grandfathers in a border town in the Republic of Ireland. The findings are not representative of all grandfathers in Ireland.

Enquiry through qualitative methods was used to develop theory to understand what it is to be a grandfather in Ireland.

In Chapter Three, the long-standing debate between the interpretations and style of Grounded Theory as described in a method can be confusing for the researcher. So many of the tenets from each theorist overlap and the issue arises in explaining which method was actually employed. One of the biggest debates within this area is over the use of literature prior to the enquiry (Charmaz, 2006). Glaser (1992) wishes for the researcher to remain uncontaminated whereas Strauss and Corbin (1990) admit that we all bring knowledge to the enquiry. With this in mind, the use of Grounded Theory will always identify issues regarding what is taken to the enquiry and how it is dealt with. There remains a fine line between positioning the enquiry and influencing it (Keane, 2015).

As a mature experienced health professional, the capacity of knowledge from practice and academia was broad and essential for the breadth of clients engaged with. The challenge lies with the need to explore the literature as a requirement to participate in this thesis. With that in mind, the literature review has looked broadly on areas written about grandfathers/parents to satisfy the requirements for entry to the enquiry and to reduce contamination and distortion of the emerging concepts (Ramalho, et al, 2015).

Interviews with 23 participants were undertaken and seven repeat interviews. This may not seem like a lot to some researchers; however, the quality and depth of the stories were enough to identify the latent concerns. Although there was no “premature closure”, (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, pg. 305) there was a limit of time within the scope of a PhD. Grounded Theory is identified as not being generalisable and this is true for this enquiry. However, elements of the theory are transferable to other participants in similar situations both in Ireland and internationally.

It is noted that the participants were all Irish nationals to the island of Ireland. The study did not attract any residents that have originated in other countries. Further studies may enquire from those who have left relatives in other countries to travel to Ireland.

Saturation of the data is required to generate substantive theory. Although availability of additional participants was not obtained, saturation of the data was established by returning to

the participants for further clarification. The complete enquiry was jeopardised around the time of accessing the 18th participant, therefore the demonstration of trust and credibility from the gatekeeper in accessing a further five participants is demonstration of significant strengths within potential limitations.

The enquiry was of grandfathers only and throughout the narratives there was the nuance that I should enquire from the adult children or grandchildren. Tempting, as this may be the enquiry aimed to excavate knowledge on grandfathers. Within the categories identified in this theory, however, the potential to look on a broader scale across the family system is appealing.

The study explored a retrospective and current view from the participants. The context of the disclosure could not be confirmed, discussed or indeed challenged, as these were precarious times. Their accounts relied on accounts of actual practice. Therefore, they may have been influenced by recall bias. There was also a belief that I was getting the 'soft' version of the historical details. This was reflected on in the journal.

The findings are also reported behaviours and, in the absence of observational practices, their interpretation in the real world may differ to the researcher. The study is confined to the geographical areas identified. The impact of the researcher on the narrative also needs to be considered, as the participant may have been over/under descriptive in their narratives. That said, many disclosures seen in Chapter Five, Six and Seven demonstrate the variety of life experiences recalled for the reader.

Finally, deciding when theoretical saturation is reached is self-determining. Although I considered the theory was saturated after 30 interviews if I had continued, there may have been more participants that would have offered accounts that could have altered the theory.

I imagine my thoughts will continue to explore this theory long after this thesis is completed.

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Appendices

Appendix I: Sample interview- Participant three

R **All right Ronan today's the 26/02/2014 and I'd like to thank you for allowing me to interview you. Sometimes I take notes it's of stuff that you say so that I can go back and ask you about it later, you know in the interview is that ok?**

P3 That's fine.

R **I want you to look at a particular aspect all right. And the burning question I suppose, the one thing I want to ask you I realize you are a grandfather is that correct?**

P3 Yes.

R **Can you tell me a little bit about yourself and your family?**

P3 Eh I'm originally from County [REDACTED] and living in [REDACTED] for thirty-four years, thirty-five years? So I've had most of my adult life around Dundalk. Ehm I'm married thirty-five years; I have three grandchildren. Sorry I have three children and three grandchildren. And I'm working - I'm not saying I'm working but I'm mentioning it in this case here - this last eh nine years which is the longest period of employment I've ever had continuous employment. And I've been in prison twice, eh first time for five and a half years and second time for eh three and a half and was saved by the Good Friday agreement.

R **OK...**

P3 I went to prison in 1987 and was released in 1992.

I was captured again in 1996 and I was captured across the water in England, and spent about a year and a half there getting me repatriated back to the twenty-six counties. And then spent another two years in PortLaoise and got out on the GOOD FRIDAY AGREEMENT (GFA). So although I'm out, I'm actually not fully released, I'm actually under sort a temporary release.

R **Until when?**

P3 Until my sentence runs out which is 2022.

So technically if I walk up a street and somebody punched me and I punched them back and they charged me with assault. I mean technically I'd have to finish my previous sentence and then complete this new sentence.

R **Oh**

P3 You know so it's hanging over my head and well for the next eight years.

R **So what age were you then?**

P3 I was eh 27. I'm 54, just turned 54 there last month.

I was living in County [REDACTED] and until I was about 19. Then I moved South of the border around Dundalk and lived most of my life in [REDACTED] really.

R **Yeah, so if you work that out if you were 54 and you're thirty-five years in and around [REDACTED], you were young married, were you?**

P3 I was 19 getting married.

R **19 getting married...yeh...and I suppose...**

P3 I had just left school the year before. I stayed at school till I was 18 You finished school?

I had done my A levels

I was in the movement, yeh, from probably about '74, '75.

R **What age were you?**

P3 Probably 14, 15....

Young....and that's what led to the prison sentences.

Yeh, yeh...I should have said that and both were for...

R **You don't have to say that, you don't have to tell me**

P3 They were political, so I have served my time with the republican prisoners in PortLaoise and it was recognized as being political by being released under the terms of agreement of the GFA, the second time, you know...

R **What affects has that on your life**

P3 It could go very, very wrong for me cos technically I would have to serve out the original sentence before doing another sentence. So if a Gardaí turned around and said he had seen me doing A, B or C and I was convicted of it then I would have to finish the previous sentence before doing whatever time I would get for the second one.

R **And how does that affect you living your life?**

P3 Ah I try not to let it impact too much but subconsciously you're always, you are conscious of it but I try not to let it hang over my head too much. It's one of those things that was left unfinished by the GFA the GFA should have been more finalized

R **Explain that Ronan for me.**

P3 Well we should have been given full release. I think there were legal problems with about 20 of us who had been sent back from England and we couldn't be released under the same method as anyone convicted say in the social court in Dublin so they only released us under extended temporary release.

R **So the GFA is conditional for the likes of you that have come from ... like a transitional from the UK to Ireland as opposed to someone who was convicted in an Irish court.**

P3 Yes, even if it was a special court, I think it's some kind of a legal thing. And they couldn't just release us under the GFA as it was for others...

R **And has that never been addressed for you?**

P3 No it has never been addressed and I suppose a lot of politicians look on it as "You're out, Get on with it"

R **Yes, except it's the first thing you have said to me that it is hanging over your head until 2022.**

P3 People think you're out.... You are Out.... But its conditional ...it's like someone staying in the north for example, the friend I told you about who passed away there a few years ago, he was a former life sentence prisoner. When he was released for the rest of his life, a life sentence prisoner is on eh...the word escapes me.... He can have his life sentence rescinded and brought back in to finish their life sentence.

R **So you live in fear?**

P3 It kinda hangs over your head.

The other thing...I'm not sure but you could be worried that people know about that. And have that power over you?

R **OK...**

P3 It could possibly, it could possibly...backfire...and a Garda, a Garda could be mischievous or malicious or whatever...makes allegations that you have done a, b or c or whatever...Ye cos somebody could start a fight with me and say....

R **There is the assumption that you would be put to gaol and serve the sentence to 2022. You didn't even consider that you might have the opportunity to defend yourself and demonstrate innocence.**

P3 No, I say, worst case scenario, if I was convicted.

R **You still have that opportunity to defend yourself?**

P3 Oh yes, yes.

R **You didn't mention it so I was wondering...**

P3 No I took it for granted. I took the logical conclusion and the worst case scenario.

- R **From that you say the longest employment is now, at nine years.**
- P3 Prior to that you had two long spells in gaol,
- R **And you are busy.... you are involved in the movement, so you are busy**
- P3 You had a job, a different kind of job.
Yes, it was unpaid. It was voluntary.
A voluntary, unpaid job?
And every now and again I got a bit of casual work cos its good to be able to contribute a little bit to the house hold, you know, ...but it wasn't top of my priority list.
- R **Why? Cos you were too wrapped up and busy in your other activities?**
- P3 Cos the priority is the movement?
- R **So if the priority is the movement then how has that impacted on your family life?**
- P3 Ahhhh I'm sure it has had an impact on the family and my relationship say with my ...my...mostly with my elder son.
Tell me the ages of your children?
I have a son of 34 and a daughter of 30.
Ok so it may have impacted on your son
Shur you were never in the house, you were too busy out and running about and maybe I was a bit immature at the time, 19 you know when I think back I regret that... that I didn't spend enough time with them developing the relationships doing things that you are supposed to do with your son cos I didn't, to be honest with you I probably viewed him as an inconvenience. You know...
- R **That's very honest of you**
- P3 Emmm.... It's awful too...
No its not something I am proud of ...its awful to say it...but...
Is it something you have worked on to say?
In later years I think like that
At the time the movement was priority?
Yes, the priority ...to the exclusion of everything else. You know.
Cos we never had family holidays or ...well we never had any money either.
- R **So as a father.... did you have a role as a father?**
- P3 Very limited, it was the mother who did everything. She held the whole family together, she went out to earn money and work, I was too busy
- R **You had rationale for that...**
- P3 That's why I am happy to be working these last nine years, maybe trying to make up with my grandkids and treat them, take them on holidays,
- R **And with your son you say the relationship you have with him, you say,**
- P3 Its poor
Its poor...
- R **Can you tell me why that is?**
- P3 Ahhhh there's a few things too, a handful of years ago he engaged in criminal behaviour and once he became involved in criminal behaviour I just blanked him. I had heard that he was associating with an individual who I would know to be just a piece of shit a criminal who also would have been masquerading when it suited as a republican so when I heard about this I told my wife to go and talk to him.... I was aware that he was associating with this guy. I told her to tell him that I am convinced, sorry, I know the guy is a criminal, he's involved in extorting money from business people, he's involved in extorting money from drug dealers and I am convinced, 99% certain that he is a Garda informer, hence he is being protected for all intents and purposes and she went and told

him this and he didn't believe it, didn't accept it. He knows now of course but it's too late cos he's went to gaol for 3 years himself so I didn't have any contact with him for a number of years.

R **When you say that you asked your wife to tell him, why, why did you not tell him?**

P3 Cos I was angry with him, I couldn't even tell him, I couldn't even look at him to be honest with you, I didn't want even...and if he had given me any cheek I think I'd have probably jumped on him to be honest with you. So I thought it would have been better coming from her but he didn't accept it. He accepts it now. He knows now that the guy he was working with was a piece of shit, the same guy has been running brothels around Co. xxxx and mentioned in papers, he hasn't been mentioned but I know it is him. Different people have come to me so I know it is him that is referred to in the papers.

R **Your son was the fall guy for him?**

P3 Ye my son went to gaol, he didn't. He went at a later stage and should have gotten a larger sentence but he didn't he was out a short while later.

R **And your son has a criminal record?**

P3 He has and it is not a republican prisoner record, it's a criminal record.

R **Do you have a relationship with him now?**

P3 No we haven't spoken for a while

R **How does that make you feel?**

P3 Ah well it's something I feel very sad about. I only have one son. I'm ashamed of him and embarrassed about him. He's trying to get his act together now; he's actually working away from home. He's out this last year. He's working away from home trying to get the money together for the wee family.

R **Has he family?**

P3 Ye two kids, that's me first 2 grandkids, they're 12 and 6.

R **Do you see them?**

P3 Yes, I see them regular. It's the highlight of the week they come and stay with us at the weekend.

R **Before that we will talk about your daughter. Is there anything else about your son?**

P3 No I'm ashamed of him but it seems he is trying to make an effort...it seems like that way

R **So who is the mediator there/ your wife?**

P3 Ye she acts between us, she's a woman who at different times had 2 may be 3 part-time jobs at the one time and was rearing the family. She's a woman who left school early and went back and involved in further education, got her degree, got her master's degree you know, so she has been very successful that way, you know, but with the pressure of me getting captured in England half way through her studies and raring 2 kids with 2 part-time jobs when involved in full tome education so I don't know how she done it or is doing it.... honestly ...its incredible... how she done it ...

R **Yes, but you have done it together and you are still together and she is the mediation between the turmoil of your son so you still have that contact with your son indirectly. And you also have a daughter who is 30?**

P3 My daughter is 30. She is actually living now in America but she is overstayed her visa and is what you call the undocumented, it will be nine years this summer she is away so I haven't seen her for nine years' cos she can't leave America and I can't get in.

R **Oh ok**

P3 So she got married and she had a wee daughter and apart from Skype, I've never seen my granddaughter.

She'd be about 2 now coming very shortly. She's married to another

- undocumented Irish man.**
- R **So she really is stuck over there until they change some laws.**
That's what we are following at the minute the immigration thing....
- R **Is she applying for it?**
- P3 Well I don't know if she is ... apparently there is legislation going through the senate at the moment with the house of representatives so we will have to see how it will pan out. So at least we'll not get into America well I won't. My wife was over there several times and them 2 years ago was refused and the only reason anyone can come up with is the fact that I had made an application and they have linked me with her. Now she hasn't been over for 2 years.
- R **So prior to this she could move. Has she got your surname?**
- P3 Yes
- R **But no one knew the connection. Then the 2 of you made application. Did you genuinely think you would get it?**
- P3 I had to basically satisfy my daughter and other people who were pushing me to try it. She use to say to me well at least these other people have tried, they have tried to get in...
- R **Your daughter said?**
- P3 Yes
- R **Did she feel you were not making enough effort to come out...?**
- P3 Yes, I told her to let things sit, to emmm.... It was a bad move, it would bring attention to her, etc. etc. but I did make an application and was refused on line very quick and on making that application because I don't have a credit card I used my wife's card the €14 for the ESTA and I also used her email address and that's her linked with me a couple of months later she put in to renew her ESTA and was refused.
- R **Did they give her a reason?**
- P3 No, no its Homeland security so you are talking to a brick wall. She is now tarred to your brush. She is now refused travel to the US so she hasn't seen our granddaughter either,
- R **Ever?**
- P3 Apart from Skype.
- R **Skype, so she had seen your daughter before the baby was born?**
- P3 She'd been over 5 times.
The fear is in case we led to her, you know.
- R **It's always a possibility, isn't it?**
- P3 Yes
- R **And then of course your son is not allowed to go to America now
Yes, he cannot get in either cos he has a criminal record
That's all very stressful ...**
- P3 Well me daughter got married in America and she had no family there what so ever.
- R **Did you see pictures?**
- P3 We actually saw it on Skype. We watched it on Skype.
- R **Isn't that fantastic too...**
- P3 It's a hell of a lot better than just a photograph. She got married on the beach
- R **Lovely**
- P3 Lovely and we are fortunate too in another sense that her husbands' family are friends of ours too so it's not as if,
- R **Oh great, so they understand...**
- P3 Ye they understand the whole situation and they are supportive. It was them who organized the Skype for the whole time and the reception afterwards. It was only a small affair; it was only about 20 or so.
- R **Obviously that is a big thing, a big event, your daughter getting married and you are blessed to see in on Skype but it's not ideal and that's fine but now you have a granddaughter that you**

haven't seen,

P3 Giving her a wee hug and a kiss

R **So I suppose as a grandfather, if we look at the situation.... which one so you want to talk about, the grandchildren here or America. We can talk about your grandchildren here first. You're a grandfather to them and are you able to be with them?**

P3 Yes, yes a week wouldn't go by...I don't want to crowd them too much but during the week, well I'll give you an example. This week my granddaughter is doing her tests, assessment tests at primary level for secondary school. At the weekend I was out of the country with my wife and I get a call from the granddaughter, "Granda, granda, I've got this assessment test on Saturday and I've gotta do English, Irish, maths, and a nonverbal reasoning test", the first thing I said was what's a nonverbal reasoning test and she said "I don't know" so I said you may wait and see when we get back on Monday, so when we got back we got on the internet to see exactly what it was. I'd never heard it but had flash backs to the 11+ when I see this stuff so I've had to print stuff off the computer and leave it up to her and tell her to work her way through it and see and I have mire stuff that I've printed off today and go up and help her with it **too so she's great that way.**

R **She's looking for the support from you?**

P3 Yes

R **Why is that?**

P3 Well I think because what I am trying to do with her is we took her to [REDACTED] six years ago. This is maybe going to identify me.... I'm a part time xxxx tutor, so I tutor for xxx and xxx classes so I've trying to do a wee bit of xxx with her to do a little talk in French, tell the time in xxx, and we took her to xxx about six. I told her it was a working holiday and she had to earn her keep so when we got on the buses she had to buy the ticket for us all. When we went to the [REDACTED] she had to order the [REDACTED]. She got a wee interest in the [REDACTED] too. So now what I'm doing is preparing her for 2nd level and give her the head start, cos you know the difference from primary to secondary, its huge so just to take that wee bit of pressure off. I'm doing English grammar and [REDACTED] grammar and [REDACTED] conversation so I think she associates me with that bit of learning....

R **And if she has issues at school she would contact you over that?**

P3 Ye

R **And that's ok with her mam?**

P3 Oh yes there are no problems there, her mum knows I am supportive of all that and she knows how much I love them, there's no problem there at all.

R **And how does that feel for you, being that involved with her as opposed to your son and daughter?**

P3 It feels fantastic to be able to help her and you want to help like last year we took their mother and the 2 kids, we booked a place in [REDACTED] for the week and we took them all over, spoiled them a bit for the week, pampered them took the pressure off the mom for a bit, she had never been away much, opened up her eyes to. There's a big world out there emmm, the wee grandson, he's mad about Lego so we booked for them to go on a holiday in April to Lego land in England, Windsor, ye, so were paying for the mother and 2 kids to go over and my brothers' youngest child as well. We're going to take them over as well. They are all excited about that as well.

R **That's lovely and you are free to travel all these spots in Europe?**

P3 Ye

R **And do you get much, hassle on the way?**

P No I haven't been but to be honest with you I am always kinda quite

wary cos when I was arrested in England I was arrested with [REDACTED] National Identity cards so I kinda thought the [REDACTED] would be half looking after me there, keeping an eye on me but I haven't experienced any direct problems.

R **You use an Irish passport?**

P3 Yes.

R **If I just go back a step Ian, you were saying the relationship with your son wasn't so good, what about the relationship with your daughter?**

P3 My daughter, I have always had a great relationship with me daughter

R **The difference in age is 4 years**

P3 Ye

R **Can you identify why one was a better relationship that the other?**

P3 Not really. Maybe because I was 23 and a half when she was born,

R **Yes, but you were still busy and still not there as you were absent for your son?**

P3 I don't know. I just always seem to have a better relationship with me daughter. There was never any strain that I am aware of.

R **So that hasn't...I suppose if there is a strain with your son it has been very good for you to have the grandchildren,**

P3 Yes

R **Because naturally, family dynamics might have prevented that**

P3 Ye but no there has been no problem at all. I think they know that how much the grandkids are loved by us and I think it's obvious we've done whatever we could for them.... I mean when he was in gaol, we were clothing the kids we were paying their school stuff...

You were supporting them

R Oh a huge financial support...

P3 You were an educational support to the granddaughter and the other grandchild,
Surely.

Is that a boy?

R A 12-year-old girl and a 6-year-old boy

P3 **So there is a good difference in the age...and a 2-year-old girl in America**

R Ye, ye

P3 **So, you are a financial and educational support as it stands.**

R **What other things do you do as a grandfather then?**

Emmm.... every weekend they come and stay at least one night

P3 **So every weekend the mom gets a break as you take the kids for 1 or 2 nights?**

R Sometimes 1 sometimes 2 sometimes the mom comes out too and we sit there and open a bottle of wine and have a bite to eat and watch a good movie and the kids go down to the other bedroom to play the computer games or whatever they wish to play. On a Saturday morning say, we'll get up and I'll maybe do a bit of [REDACTED] with my granddaughter and sometimes what we do is a wee bit of exercise. We have a wee room in the house where we have a weight bench and we try and get them involved in a wee bit of keep fit as well. Just to ingrain it into them about looking after themselves physically a few exercise and stuff and we try and encourage them to go out for a walk, weather premitting there's about a 35-minute walk around the roads of our house and we go for that.

And this role ...you re loving this role aren't you?

R Oh ye I find it rewarding when you feel like you are doing your best for them we opened a credit union account for the both of them, for the three of them and we put a fiver a week away for them as well so when my eldest grandchild turns 18, were looking forward to

handing her the book with a few quid in it so things like that we like to talk them out for a wee treat. Take them out to the Italian, early bird special.

Is this a big thing where you like to spoil them?

R I like to be able to treat them while I can. I never had 2 shillings
P3 when I was growing up my self...

You never had?

R Tuppence. You know I never had a shilling, so now I'm working it's
P3 nice to be able to do it. It's nice to be able to pay to send them to Lego land. It's nice to be able to take them to [REDACTED], we took the granddaughter when she was only 6 over to Euro Disney as well so it's nice to be able to do them things cos when I am out of work here I will almost find it impossible to get work again.

And, it is lovely to be able to do that with the grandchildren but is there a reason why you are all out.... the ultimate question is, if the movement was active now would that be the priority now and not the grandchildren? Would this role as a grandfather...?

R Would it change? I don't think so to be honest with you.... I think
P3 I've maybe matured, older ...

Why is it not the same as when you were 19...can you explore that?

R First of all, it is completely hypothetical but I know that say the end
P3 result of the conflict was the Good Friday Agreement and I know that if things started up again it is going to go back to a GFA part 2, its not going to be used. So I couldn't really justify it

There's no place for the movement again?

R No I think it's so hypothetical it's not realistic...we've move on
P3 completely. It's not going to happen again. all we have at the minute is a few wee groups almost gangs of people and I don't know what they hope to achieve and what they are thinking they are achieving; they are not much more than an inconvenience to everyone.

You did say there aside from the hypothetical issue that you have matured and gotten older and moved on. What does that mean?

R Ye ...emmm.... It's one of my regrets that I have, the poor
P3 relationship with my son and I've said to myself that I must be able to ensure that that doesn't happen to my grandkids. I have a special relationship a special bond with them and I done want that to change for any reason, you know...

Can I ask, in order to have that special relationship you have to be with them you have to be in their lives and I suppose you don't have that bond with your son as you weren't there with them you weren't there in his life, is that the same, is that what you are trying to say, what you did then has had an effect in that way and that you really?

R Yes, well I've had no relationship with my son and I want to ensure
P3 that I have a positive relationship with my grandkids. I want them to know that they are loved and I want them to have a place for me, I want them to know that they can come and talk to me about anything at any time and to trust me.

That's what it means for you to be a grandfather ...

R That I'll always be there for them...not just that I'm trying to
P3 buy their affection ...sometimes now when I think about it, now sometimes, what I said there, does it come across like I am trying to buy their affection?

No, no it doesn't actually.

I've just been able to, been able to treat them.

R **I think that's the point...you didn't have the money back before,**
P3 **you were a volunteer, your wife did all the work as you said, I don't think that's what you are saying at all, I'm thinking what**

your saying is that you have the capacity to share this...

Yes...

The wealth you have at the moment with your grandchildren...

P3 We never had a shilling, we were just scrimping every week to try
R and pay the rent so now it's nice.

P3 **And how long.... your son is out and you are still able to enjoy
the company of the grandchildren.**

R He's out but he's not living in the house cos he's working away
because he works in construction and there's no work here with
P3 construction so he's working away.

Ok...and he's sending money home.

Ye, ye

R **And is he married?**

P3 Well that's the next thing. They are setting up to get married and set
R a date for this year but they have had to postpone it like just jumped
P3 the gum I think she caught wedding fever at one stage and they
don't have the money and I told her at the time she's donate things
arse about face here most other human beings save and gather the
money up for a few years and then set a date. You set a date I said
and both of you were unemployed...its crazy ...so they've
postponed it but he's away trying to gather the money to get
married.

**Lovely. But still your relationship is not great but he still allows
you to have the capacity to be involved big time with his
children.**

R Oh ye, ye

**And how does that make you feel...is it a conditional
relationship?**

P3 No, no, no I think he knows that when he was in gaol...

P3 **Siren from ambulance outside.**

When he was in gaol for a couple of years and going through that
mad phase that we were there for the kids and his partner couldn't
have coped without us financially or emotionally, she had no
support from her own family so we were looking after the kids
paying the electric bill and the gas bill and paying school uniforms
and kitting them out at Christmas, you know? So they weren't
deprived at Christmas and stuff like that

**And it is materialistic and financial support but you also
mention the fact that she comes around and has a social evening
with you so it's a social support for her as well too so it's not just
that you are there conditionally, that you are available to her
always.**

R I'd like to think that she could trust us now and if she'd like to talk
to me about anything she can come and talk ...do you know.

P3 **Safe**

And I wouldn't judge her

R **Not judge her?**

P3 And its confidential if she wants to tell me something it is just
R between the 2 of us, I wouldn't even say it to my wife if she just
P3 wants to say something that she knows it won't be carried back you
know

Ye

So I think there is a trust there.

R **Andis there any other reasons why...?**

P3 Well, I'll tell you why...when my first granddaughter was born she
R came almost 8 weeks premature, she was in the SCBU in [REDACTED],
P3 and I went down a couple of hours later to see her to see how her
mother was getting on, etc. and when I looked into the wee

incubator, she had her head turned away and she had tubes coming out of her nose and tubes coming out of her arm and she had the strength from somewhere to lift her head and turn around and look at me and honest to God I just fell in love with her from that second cos I didn't, you know I didn't (Sharp intake of breath) I don't think I was the perfect Da or father so just something ...as soon as I seen her I wanted to hug her

(Knock on the door- go mo leis scaoil- we have that meeting at 11.30). I beg your pardon; ■ am I taking too long? No, no we are to meet someone in the coffee shop across the road. It is ok, carry on.

You are after saying there "Cos I wasn't a good Da"

I wasn't a good Da or father cos I wasn't there so,

R **Is that why you are such a good grandfather?**

P3 I think there is maybe something there.

R **Have you ever looked at that yourself?**

P3 Ye I have and I've thought about it and I'm thinking of trying to do

R better for them than what I did for my own kids, you know, but apart

P3 from that I really do love them...

No, it is absolutely clear how you express that love with the child at birth

R **Thank you ■ for your time. If I need to come back for a follow up interview will that be ok?**

Yes, Yes of course

(42;19)

P3

Appendix II: Poster advertising and seeking participants



TO ALL GRANDFATHERS

- Are you a grandfather living in the areas of **XXXXX or XXXXX**
- Involved or not with your grandchildren, I want to hear from you about being a grandfather.
- If you are interested please get in touch with Susan on the contact details above.

Appendix III: Letter to participants inviting them to participate in study

XXXX,

XXXX,

XXXX,

XXXX

kents@tcd.ie

086 815XXXX

Dear Participant,

I am conducting a research study in part requirement of a Doctoral degree at Trinity College. The aim of this research is to find the main concerns for grandfathers within Irish society. Your thoughts and feelings are at the heart of this study.

I hope to recruit a maximum of 30 grandfathers to interview and obtain their views. The first participant will be employed as the pilot study participant. This participant will then allow me to explore the direction the enquiry may take. Each grandfather will be interviewed once but I may need to confirm with you later that the transcription of the interview is accurate and reflects your views. I may also need to explore issues raised in the original interview in more depth. You will be free to change anything that you find inaccurate. If you would like to volunteer, the interviews will be held at a location convenient to you at a time suitable to you. The interview will take approximately 50 minutes. Your response will be audiotape recorded in confidence. This information will only be available to my research supervisor (A tutor in Trinity College) and me, the researcher.

I have provided contact details for your convenience as shown. If you have any questions can you please contact me at the above mobile phone number, address and e-mail address. Enclosed please find an information leaflet on the proposed study. After gathering of the information, the researcher may need to confirm with you that your answers to the questions have been recorded accurately. This can be done on the phone or at a meeting time suitable to you. On completion of the study, a summary of the results will be available to you.

With Regards,

Researcher Kent

Appendix IV: Information leaflet about the study

Name of Researcher; Susan Kent
 xxxx,
 xxxx,
 xxxx,
 xxxx
kents@tcd.ie
 086 815xxxx

Title of Study;

“Grandfathering in Ireland- A Grounded Theory study”

Introduction;

You are invited to participate in this study if you fulfil the criteria as mentioned in this leaflet (see paragraph 3). The purpose of this study is to explore the main concerns of grandfathers in Ireland. The researcher intends to gain greater knowledge of the main issue of concern for grandfathers in Ireland.

Description of Study;

Changes within Irish society are seeing the presence of grandfathers as main carers for children in the absence of grandmothers and the middle children. This study proposes to explore the main concerns of approximately 30 grandfathers. This study will involve an interview using an audiotape recorder and will last approximately 50 minutes. The researcher may also take notes during the interview. The session will include open questions that will stimulate thoughts on the topic under exploration. Later from the interview, the researcher may need to contact you to confirm if the information given is correct and to possibly

elaborate on points made but not explored in the first interview. The interviews will be at a location convenient to you, e.g. at your home or community care centre. The room chosen will provide privacy, confidentiality and allow for minimum interruptions. The interview will occur at a time convenient to you. The interviews will take place between January 2014 and September 2014. The researcher may need to clarify the transcripts with the participants later. A summary of the findings will be available to the participants after the research is complete.

Who is eligible for participation in the study?

Inclusion Criteria

- Those men who identify themselves as grandfathers and who have physical contact with their grandchildren.

Exclusion Criteria

- Anyone who does not identify himself as a grandfather.

Benefits of the study;

It is anticipated that this study will allow the grandfathers to identify the main issue of concern at a particular time in Irish society. It is hoped that the findings of the study will inform future social policy development for this cohort.

Confidentiality;

The researcher will ensure that no connections are made between the identity of the grandfather and the comments made. This is done through coding of all information and removal of all names addresses and geographical areas and landmarks. All information obtained by the researcher is stored in a locked cabinet in the researcher's house. The

researcher and the researcher's supervisor are the only persons with access to the information. This information will not be used in any other or future research.

Compensation;

This study is covered by standard institutional indemnity insurance. Nothing in this document restricts or curtails your rights.

Participation;

Involvement in this study is voluntary. Participation in this study will not prevent you from withdrawing at any time without penalty. The researcher has also the right to stop the participation in the study without your consent. Member checking for the researcher will involve exploring the participant's reactions to preliminary findings and interpretations. It will establish the credibility of the data and will be employed at the end of the data collection when the information is being analysed. Phoning the participants or meeting with them to clarify themes will achieve this.

The researcher is a Registered Public Health Nurse and if a case of unsafe practice is disclosed, the researcher, in keeping with their professional code of practice (An Bord Altranais, 2000) will be required to report this to the appropriate authorities.

Approval for the study;

Permission for this study has been granted by;

- The Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Dublin, Trinity College, Dublin.

Further Information;

Any further information on the study, on your rights and participation in the study can be obtained by contacting Researcher Kent who can be contacted at the above.

With Regards,

Researcher Kent

Appendix V: Participant consent form

Dear Colleague,

The purpose of this research is to explore the main concerns of grandfathers in Ireland. Information will be obtained through tape-recorded interviews lasting approximately 50 minutes. The information will only be available to the researcher. All tapes will be transcribed and I may need to contact you later to confirm that the details of the transcript reflect your feelings. At that point, you will be free to change anything you are unhappy with in the transcription. I may also need to revisit the points made in the original interview to gain a further insight to that concern.

The final report will only contain anonymous quotations and will be available to you at the end of this study. There may not be any direct benefits to you as a participant in this study. If during the interview unsafe practice is disclosed, the researcher, in keeping with their professional code of practice (An Bord Altranais, 2000), will be required to report this to the appropriate authorities.

Declaration of Participant,

This is to certify that I, ----- (Print Name), hereby agree to participate as a volunteer in the above named project. I give my permission to be interviewed and for the interview to be tape-recorded. I understand that I am free to refrain from answering any questions during the interview and I may withdraw my consent and involvement at any time, without penalty. At the completion of the research, the tapes and all information will be stored by the researcher and not available to any other persons. I am aware that the finished research may be published but I am assured that my name or the name

of the health centre will not be associated with the research. I am aware that the researcher may stop the interview at any time and that any evidence of unsafe practice will be reported accordingly.

I understand that there will be no health risks to me in taking part in this research. I have been given the opportunity to ask whatever questions I wish and they have been answered to my satisfaction.

 (iv) *Signature of participant*

Date

Declaration of Researcher,

I, the researcher have explained the nature and purpose of the research study, the procedures and risks involved. I have offered to answer any questions and answered any such questions. I feel the participant understands my explanation and has freely given informed consent.

 (v) *Researchers Name*

Contact Details

Researchers Signature

Date

Appendix VI: Example of early memo on the concept of “Ruptured fatherhood”

Concept of ruptured fatherhood

2nd interview (24.2.14)

The participant used the words “father-grandfather” in the one word to signify how he sees his role within the family. There is a feeling from him that not much emphasis is placed on either of the names individually as his role at the moment is viewed with equal importance to the children and grandchildren. There is a reluctance to speak of the older daughter and granddaughter that he had little involvement in. Father and grandfather are relevant in the discussion to the new members of the family. I understand, but think this is frivolous in capturing the totality of the roles. I am not sure if this man is not disclosing something to me, or just being creative. At the end of the interview we co-construct the word “GRATHER”, for a man who has children and grandchildren roughly the same age.

3rd interview (26.2.14)

Again in this interview the participant wanted to talk about the grandchildren more than the children. The issue of ruptured fatherhood is raised when the men do not talk about their fatherhoods. Terms of endearment were offered to the grandchildren and expressions of love. The interview demonstrates how this period is possibly not remembered fondly and therefore hidden in the discussion of the grandchildren in a similar way it is masqueraded in the previous interview.

4th interview (17.4.14)

It was at this interview that the participant said, “Delayed fatherhood” and I realised that the men previous were identifying, concealing and possibly withholding the fact that the earlier fatherhoods were “ruptured.” This man did not have his children until he was released from gaol however the previous two had children before incarceration and therefore they had “ruptured fatherhoods.” They were possibly not revealing the truth as the participant in the 3rd interview highlighted he was ashamed of his son but also that he was absent for him. Need to look for this with the other grandfathers especially as some are not ex-prisoners.

There is a link between this memo and the memo on absent fathers. I need to explore and possibly merge.

Appendix VII: Example of a reflexive note post interview

This was the first time I have interviewed this man. I had difficulty getting this room and I was worried during the day that I would be late to meet as this man was going out tonight and obliged me by allowing me to meet and interview. After the small conversation and organising a cup of tea for him, I obtained his consent and we began the audiotape recorder.

Initially, I was not feeling good, as I did not know how well I would be able to get these men to talk to me. It seems that they in some capacity were aware that someone was asking about grandfathers. This in itself teased their love of the role and they answered the call from the gatekeeper to talk to me. I wanted to have a neutral place and had agreed with the man to meet at the local community centre. I knew some people there who could offer me a room that was private and where we would not be disturbed.

When we began the interview the man identified another participant was his brother. This is why he took part because he could tell him that it was all about the grandchildren. This would be normal in the areas to scope and sound out the person beforehand. I was pleased with this as he still turned up so there was interest in this work. Before starting the interview, he could tell me who I was and that he knew where I lived as a child and that I was a nurse. Strange to say but again I felt this gave credibility to the work because he turned up for interview.

Initially I felt that he was waiting for me to ask many questions. I explained that it is more like asking him to tell me his story of being a grandfather from whatever start in life he wished to take. There may have been an expectation that this was a strictly question and answer session.

What I had noticed with some of the men who were not incarcerated was that he did not seem as articulate in describing the detail of the family life. I remembered that I began to paraphrase for him to try to tease more detail. This began to work. However, then I had a slightly anxious moment when I feared I was affecting the method. The fact that these men do not engage in this type of enquiry too often allowed me to relax a little. I decided to hear what was said and would decide if I had affected the data afterwards. In hindsight, I know using Glaser's method of minimal questions would have been ineffectual with this man. As it was the interview lasted 55 minutes. I know this is shorter than other men however he did identify some elements that I was trying to conceptualise in the work. So again, I felt it was a good interview. He suggested I speak with another man who had no contact with the grandchildren because they were taken to Australia.

I thanked him and went to the coffee shop to make notes before I left. One of the caretakers that I knew from times past joined me for a cup of tea and asked what I was researching. When I told him he was animated. He was not a grandfather but his daughter was pregnant and he was hoping to play a big part of their lives. This man asked me if I would be making a book out of it. I was flattered but laughed. I then thought that part of the discussion earlier with the men was around making visible their concerns. Not only in relation to the generation of theory but also raising issues that they feel important. I know that the thesis will generate publications but something else began to germinate. Within my sphere of work, I have contact with many agencies and Departments in Government and policy development around children. Maybe there was something I could do to raise awareness of the issues raised in the interviews.

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