

**Locked out, locked in:
Young people, adulthood and
desistance from crime**

Briege Nugent Brown

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The University of Edinburgh

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINAL WORK

I hereby confirm that I have composed this thesis and that this thesis is all my own work. I also declare that this work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Signed _____ on _____.

ABSTRACT

This thesis presents findings from a longitudinal study of young people living in poverty providing a unique insight into their lives. The research set out to explore three themes, namely how young people end contact successfully (or not) from support, their experiences of the ‘transition to adulthood’ and also what triggered, helped and hindered those who were trying to desist from offending. It was revealed that a small number never left *Includem’s* Transitional Support, a unique service set up in Scotland providing emotional and practical help for vulnerable young people in this age group. For those who did leave, many had limited to no other support in their lives and were reluctant to ask for help again even when they were in real need. They were all acutely aware of their precarious situation. ‘Adulthood’ denoted certainty for them and was not viewed as a feasible destination. Members of the group dealt with this differently. Almost all retained hope of achieving their goals and in doing so suffered a form of ‘cruel optimism’, conversely, a smaller number scaled back on their aspirations, sometimes even to the extent of focusing on their immediate day to day survival. Over the course of the study most participants became more hopeless, isolated and withdrawn. Although they still wanted to achieve their original ambitions of having a job, own place and being settled this appeared less likely over time. A key finding from this study is that those who managed least had accepted the idea that independence was about ‘going it alone’ and proving oneself by oneself, but on the other hand, those who coped better viewed independence as being interdependence and welcomed help from others. It emerged that those who had offended had done so to achieve a sense of belonging, rejected by home and education. By desisting they moved from having some element of status and respect to then living a legitimate but often impoverished existence overshadowed by their past. This study opens up a series of questions about the pains of desistance and the pains of poverty. It is suggested that considering desistance and adulthood in terms of citizenship would emphasise the individual’s and societies interdependence so that rights, responsibilities and potential are recognised. At present, I argue that there is a mutual dismissal. Society dismisses impoverished youth and they in turn do not see that society holds anything for them. I call for renewed hope so that inaction and continued poverty and inequality are not rendered inevitable, and for criminologists to also embrace the idea of interdependence so that this issue is dealt with beyond the parameters of this field.

LAY ABSTRACT

This thesis captures what day-to-day life is like for young people living in poverty who are often without the support of parents and are viewed as being in ‘the transition to adulthood.’ A small group were also trying to stop offending and I explored what helped or hindered them in this process. All interviewees had been receiving help from *Includem*’s Transitional Support, a unique service set up to help young people aged 15 to 23 years old. It was revealed that a small number never left and for those who did, many had limited to no other support in their lives and were reluctant to ask for help again even when they were in real need. Those who coped best had other support in place and accepted independence as being about interdependence. As a result of their relationships and connections they were looking forward to taking up new roles in life, such as becoming a father or going to college. Conversely, those who were managing least felt that independence was about the need to ‘go it alone’ and they did not have many relationships in their lives and were reluctant to ask for help. It is argued that this dominant idea of independence is dangerous and something that needs to be challenged in society, particularly for the benefit of those who are most vulnerable.

Adulthood was defined by all as in terms of having stability and certainty with none feeling that this was achievable for them in today’s society. Although most still retained hope of achieving goals such as getting into a job, their own place and being settled, as time progressed and they stagnated, this hope became a form of ‘cruel optimism’. In response to this, a few of the young people scaled back on their hopes and thus minimised their potential but also reduced the risk of disappointment. For those who had offended, they had moved whilst offending as part of gang, from having status, respect and financial security to leading for the most part an impoverished existence. This research gives a crucial insight into the pains of desistance and the pains of poverty. There is a call for these findings to be used to help ‘turn up’ the volume and hear the voices of this population to raise questions about how we can create better policy and practice. I argue that one of the first steps to addressing these issues concerns the need to recognise potential and reach out to these young people so that they do not become a lost generation. Taking the meaning of interdependence seriously, the solutions lie beyond the parameters of criminology and criminal justice. This thesis is not about holding people to account but renewing hope for change so that poverty, inequality and leading a limited life are not rendered inevitable. Without hope inaction is inevitable.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Direct research with young people in what has been defined as ‘the transition to adulthood’ is fairly new and has predominantly been focused on those who are more affluent (Barry, 2006). Milestones such as getting married are now happening at a later stage in contemporary society and Arnett (2006; 2001; 2000) suggests that these intervening years should now be redefined as ‘emerging adulthood’. This kind of analysis emphasises the individual having choice, with parents cast as the ‘safety net’ so that new and different roles are tried out before they are eventually settled upon (Ringle et al. 2008). It is viewed as a time of hope, discovery and freedom. There has however been a dearth of comparative research with those living in poverty. Jones (2002) suggests that this population instead experience accelerated transitions and are catapulted into adulthood with little preparation, ill-equipped to deal with the responsibilities they are expected to take on.

Youth today face a higher level of instability than in the past, with markers of success such as an occupational identity or stable housing further out of reach leading them to be defined as ‘the precariat’ (Standing, 2011). At present the economy is described by some as ‘pear shaped’, whereby there are jobs at the top and some at the bottom, but the middle has been hollowed out and this disproportionately affects young people because it restricts their ability to progress (Allen and Ainley, 2013). As is discussed in more detail in Chapters three and seven, globalisation, deindustrialisation and the economic and social policies of neo-liberalism and legacy of Thatcherism have adversely affected cities across the UK, particularly in the north and in places such as Glasgow and Fife where the research took place. This means that the traditional pathways to work that were readily available in the 1950s and 1960s are no longer accessible in the same way (Pole et al. 2005). Life chances are now more than ever structurally differentiated in terms of race, class and gender (Furlong and Cartmel, 1997). Bearing in mind the precariousness for all young people, it is recognised that on the ‘outskirts’ exist the unemployed and what are regarded as the ‘socially ill misfits...living off the dregs of society’ (Standing, 2011: 8). In other words, in a context of increasingly difficult youth transitions, the prospects for those structurally excluded or marginalised – especially those bearing the burden of criminal convictions or other forms of social stigma - are especially bleak. In the research on

‘transitions’, the concept of ‘adulthood’ has not, despite its apparent fragility, been contested and has remained the ‘destination’ in terms of which young people’s journeys are analysed. The main aim of this research has been to explore the transitions into adulthood in the context of poverty.

This research was conducted during the time of what was introduced by David Cameron as the ‘age of austerity’ in 2009 with a swathe of welfare cuts discussed in more detail in chapter 2. Twelve young people, all of whom have been impacted upon by poverty, inequalities and these policies, took part in a longitudinal study spanning eighteen months. Their real names have not been used in this report but they are referred to as Kevin, Kim, Dan, Paul, Ron, Elaine, Emma, Mark, Amy, Hamish, Scott and Brian. Their participation has meant that a crucial insight into the lives of those who could be said to be the outer edges, of ‘the precariat’ has been captured (Standing, 2011). This study also sought their views on how they felt about the very idea of ‘adulthood’ itself, their goals and the challenges faced throughout this time.

The most vulnerable young people in society are often without the safety net of parents and the ‘corporate parent’ attempts to fill this gap with a range of services playing a role in their lives. The Children Scotland Act 2014 has extended the right of support for those in care from 21 now up to the age of 26 years old. Critically though, this help is activated upon request, rather than simply being there. Scotland’s ‘Getting it Right for Every Child’ (GIRFEC) policy sets out the aspirations to support all children to have the right to a good life, to be safe, healthy, active, nurtured and respected. This study gives some insight into the realities faced by young people in this position. As Hall and Winlow (2015: 72) state, it is crucial for social scientists to focus on those who are ‘repressed’, or ‘have little or no representation on the current political and cultural agendas.’ They contend that these views are consciously misrepresented and press for what they define as critical ultra-realism. However, unlike Hall and Winlow, and as there is no clear evidence to fully support their claims of wilful neglect of this population, I argue instead that due to their lack of power they do not have a platform to be heard. For example, as will be discussed, young people do not normally vote and because they are impoverished, are not consumers to the same level as others. They therefore, could be more accurately viewed as forgotten or overlooked rather than silenced.

The research participants were accessed through an organisation called *Includem* that works with some of the most disadvantaged young people in Scotland, referred to them through social work services. The core service provides intensive support and referrals are made to them and paid for by social work departments. Over a decade ago, *Includem* set up a 'Transitional Service' in response to a gap identified, especially for young adults aged between 16-25, who were no longer entitled to statutory support but still requiring practical and emotional help. There is growing recognition that young adults, that is those in this age group require a specific response because of this stage of their life, immaturity and also malleability (Prince's Trust, 2015; Prison Reform Trust, 2012; Losel, 2011). The 'Transition to Adulthood Alliance (T2A)' is a good example of this growing awareness leading to action, with a coalition of thirteen leading criminal justice, health and youth charities now convened by the Barrow Cadbury Trust.¹ Their aims are to gather evidence and promote best practice for a more effective approach for young adults throughout the criminal justice process. The organisation has made some noteworthy inroads and particularly in 2012 when it created a framework with *the National Offender Management Service (NOMS)* for how to work effectively with young adults (Youth Justice Board, 2012). The Chair of *T2A* summarises the problem of this transitory phase stating:

A transition process that replicates falling off a cliff edge cannot make sense. Too often I have met young adults who are uncomprehending of the changes, resentful at the lack of a helping hand and feel vulnerable and fearful for their futures. We believe that the present system also increases breaches and is likely to increase crime, which makes it imperative that the proposals recommended in this framework are adopted' (Moseley, 2012 cited in Youth Justice Board: 2012: 3).

Practical support offered by *Includem's* Transitional Support is individualised and wide ranging, such as developing skills in cooking or anything else to help them manage living on a day-to-day basis. Emotional support is often given to help build self-esteem. The importance of the relationship between the worker and service user is well established in research and is discussed further in chapters three and four (Smith et al. 2013; Ugwudike, 2013; Dybicz, 2012; Beresford et al. 2008; Smith,

¹More information can be found at: <http://www.t2a.org.uk>

2008; McNeill et al. 2005; Burnett and McNeill, 2005; Farrall, 2002; Rex, 1999; Leibrich, 1994). These studies point towards the importance of the worker imparting that they care, being genuine in their interactions and working collaboratively to find solutions or deal with problems. The service tries to help individuals become aware of and build upon their strengths, talents and self-worth. It is about seeing the person as a whole being rather than the sum of their past wrongdoing, and therefore is like the desistance approach discussed in more detail in subsequent chapters in as much as it attempts to be holistic (Nugent and Barnes, 2013; McNeill and Weaver, 2010; Whyte, 2009; McNeill and Barry, 2009; McNeill, 2006). Doel (2010: 246) summarises 'good relationships' between the worker and service user as taking 'commitment, hard work and imagination.' Furthermore, 'when they work, they can offer a vulnerable or emotionally damaged person the possibility of encountering themselves in a new and positive way, a chance to see themselves through different eyes-perhaps for the first time, as someone worthy of another's interest and respect' (ibid). The Transitional Support Service promotes the connection between the worker and young person but is also acutely aware of the need to consider how this should end appropriately. Unlike the research base on the importance of relationships, there is very little on how services end contact appropriately (Solomon, 2010). Therefore, this study provides an important opportunity to hear from the young people directly about what they think about how services have or could responsibly move away from them.

The ending of contact is vital particularly when good relationships will necessarily have been based upon the development of a strong emotional attachment. Past research shows that ending contact with social work has been a source of anxiety and sadness for some young people (Hart, 2006). Those known to social support services have often experienced partings that are damaging in the past, such as family breakdowns, and if saying goodbye is not handled properly by services it can cause untold emotional damage (Lombard, 2010). There is a distinct difference between 'leaving and being left behind' (Solomon, 2010: 175). Effective handling of endings by professionals may also repair some of this previous harm (Wilson et al. 2008). Conversely, maintaining contact when it is no longer appropriate can lead to a blurring of professional boundaries (Lombard, 2010). Overall, the when and how of saying goodbye presents many dilemmas. Solomon (2010: 178) offers a rare in-depth focus on the importance of suitable endings, stating that when teaching about endings

to social work students, the question is posed ‘Are you the one that leaves the party early or helps to clean up?’ This it is argued, is not about pathology but reveals how separation is negotiated in the ordinary course of daily life and experiences. It is about understanding the defences developed by each individual that enable the management of separations, being aware of them, but also not imposing them unconsciously on others and instead arrive at a more reciprocal agreement of how contact should end. Wilson et al.’s (2008) guidance to social work services stresses the importance of preparation for withdrawal based on individualised assessment, clear communication, clarity of ending and also for this to be planned for as early as possible and carried out gradually. Solomon (2010: 179) suggests reviewing what has been achieved or not, clarifying that progress is attributed to the service user. It is also recognised that it may be difficult for the worker to ‘let go’ but this is crucial so that the individual can move onto the next stage of their lives. Unlike other studies, one of the objectives of this research was to understand how these twelve young people successfully ended contact (or not) and how they felt about the absence of what had sometimes been intensive support no longer being in their lives. Throughout, I reported back the findings so that any issues that arose or were revealed were dealt with. In this way the approach was similar to action research, as it set out with the hope to lead to ‘social action’ (Lewin, 1946: 35), by adopting a collaborative way of working (Townsend, 2013). Specifically, I communicated with and worked alongside *Includem* to help find solutions. This research, like the literature on action research, emphasises the importance of hearing, seeing and empowering those who are ‘outsiders’ and often ignored, viewing narratives as resources (Rappaport, 1995). *Includem* regularly consult with the young people about their services, but generally, this population’s views are rarely sought. Although this research could not be described as entirely action research as not all participants were involved in concluding better ways forward, there are similarities in the purpose and also some challenges, as is discussed in chapter five. Overall, I was extremely lucky to work alongside an organisation already open to learning and reflexive about their practice.

The other objective of this research, drawing on my background as a criminologist, was to capture the process and experience of those trying to stop offending and what helped and hindered them in this journey. For those living in poverty, crimes such as selling drugs or taking part in illegitimate ‘cash in hand’ work, offers a tangible way

to 'get by' or even to 'get on' in life (MacDonald and Marsh, 2001). Crime can be a way of building social, financial, cultural and symbolic capital (Barry, 2006). Understanding then what happened when this was no longer available and how this could be generated in a pro-social way (or not) could provide significant knowledge on how this could be supported in the future. The desistance literature is explored in depth in subsequent chapters and by doing so it is noted that actually an analysis of young people's desistance is fairly new and this research is an important contribution. There is a call for more prospective research, such as this study, to be conducted during the period of 'primary desistance' or 'act desistance' to understand better what helps or prompts people to take those first steps away from offending (King 2013; Losel et al. 2011). Also, research largely focused on secondary desistance with those who are far on in the journey to desistance stresses how those who have desisted wish to 'give back' to society. However, prospective research with people in the process of early desistance has not found these desires (Healy, 2012), and it is thought that this possibly formulates over time and when the individual is older. Research into this initial period of desistance really then is required to understand better in contemporary society how young people can be supported towards a different pathway and to find ways to reaffirm that they have made good. Taking into account the wider literature on the precariousness of the future, a study with young people in contemporary society on desistance is also an opportunity to understand whether 'turning points' such as getting married or getting a job still bear the same relevance today as in the past (Laub and Sampson, 2003).

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

For the purposes of clarification, the principal aim of the thesis is to explore transitions into adulthood in the context of poverty. In addition there are two key objectives, firstly to explore the impact of (i) disengaging from services and (ii) desistance from offending, on such transitions.

A qualitative longitudinal approach was adopted to construct and analyse the journeys of those who participated. Narrative interviews were attempted four times with all twelve, two, six and twelve months after the initial interview. This resulted in forty-

three interviews with eleven remaining in the study throughout this time. The depth and amount of data generated meant that doing justice to the stories, keeping them largely intact but also answering the questions has not been easy. A social constructionist standpoint was taken to understand how the young people ascribed meaning (Becker, 1963). This was supplemented with a critical realist approach so that some of the wider socio-structural context has been given to help develop a deeper understanding (Bhaskar 1989; 1998). The point of doing this is that I hope that the potential ways forward, implications and also questions that arise as a result of these findings have been and will be better informed.

Throughout I have promoted an 'ethics of care'. This was not in my view just about minimising harm, but also, if I could help I did and want to do more (Gilligan, 1982). I have been doing research with marginalised groups for over a decade and my ethical approach, even when I did not know how it was defined in the literature, has always been the same. This is not just about the recording of stories, but listening to, understanding, empathising and connecting with people. Hearing them, seeing them and if it is appropriate sharing a little about who I am too, but always putting them first. It is also important though to act within ethical boundaries and being caring is also about knowing one's own limits. In short, a lot of the help given when it was identified that it was needed, was by informing the young people of the services they could get in touch with who were better equipped than I to offer support. Moreover, if the person was still not willing to go ahead and make the call or seek help, or in one case they could not afford to do so, I would either encourage or facilitate this. Essentially, getting help, unless the person was at risk of harm was still something that they lead on rather than I. I got to know eleven of the twelve very well and through this research I would ideally like to help benefit them and future young people, by at the very least communicating with services such as *Includem*, as I have done, to understand what they do well and what they could improve. At a higher level, I would like to be able to bring this evidence and the questions that have arisen to policy makers and hopefully help to shape better policy for the future.

McNeill and Barry sum up the role of the 'academic' comprehensively, adding the necessary complexity that this involves; whereby being a researcher is described as not just being about arriving at and presenting findings, but also engaging in dialogue

to construct a way forward which is practical, applicable and achievable. As they argue (2009: 194-195):

It is right and proper for researchers and scholars to act as ‘critical friends’ of the fields of policy and practice. The value of academic research and scholarship must surely rest on its capacity to interrogate policy and practice in relation to its evidence base, to challenge misconceptions and false assumptions, to expose the adverse unintended consequences of policies and practices, and to generate new ways of looking at, thinking about and tackling seemingly perennial problems so as to stimulate constructive and progressive innovation. Naturally, this will sometimes mean that the friendship becomes strained when the criticism is at its most intense. But, equally, there are reciprocal obligations on academics too: if academics are quick to demand research-minded policy and practice, it must sometimes seem to policymakers and practitioners that they are slow to deliver policy and practice-minded research.

ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTIONS

This research provides an original contribution to knowledge in many ways and I would like to summarise here the three main contributions made in relation to the main aim and objectives set out. In response to the principal aim, to explore transitions into adulthood in the context of poverty, this research gives an invaluable insight into the lived realities and how this is experienced and viewed by those directly affected within this group. For the most part, the young people did not view being ‘an adult’ as something achievable or even in some cases desirable. Importantly, goals of wanting to get a job, have their own place and ‘be settled’ were sought, but over time as they stagnated these hopes either waned or became a source of cruel optimism (Berlant, 2011). They dealt with this by scaling back in their desires, and I argue that in limiting their potential, society as a whole is also then limited as a result too. Ultimately, if there is no destination then the idea of transitions come to be questioned, and so what was once viewed as the stage of ‘transition’ has become the state of being in which these young people exist. In an attempt to clarify this analysis, I suggest that in today’s society, young people living in poverty may become a generation trapped in the ‘in between’ stage, existing or lost in limitless liminality (Turner, 1964).

At present, as already stated, there is a mutual dismissal. The young people do not recognise their place in society and equally 'society' does not reach out or regard them as having a place and I argue that and this does not have to be the case. Those who fared 'the best' had an opportunity to question what and who they wanted to be, and crucially met people who believed in them and could support them in moving towards this. I define these enabling individuals as 'meso brokers'. Based on these findings, for those in poverty, these people help them make connections beyond their micro-environment, to link up to opportunities that make their hopes realisable. In these cases, mutual recognition between both parties has taken place, both recognising the potential and building trust in the other (Barry, 2016). Through this study, I contend in agreement with Evans et al. (2000) that agency is bounded and that many of those interviewed were acutely aware of their structural limitations, but also felt powerless to change it.

In response to the first objective, based on the accounts of the young people, the word 'disengagement' does not reflect what actually happens when a case is closed by a service that has worked with vulnerable young people. The *Includem* worker and the young person had in all cases built a strong relationship and actually ending the case was difficult and emotional for both parties. The idea of 'readiness' is shown to be more about the wider connections or 'other' support in the young person's life, rather than on the individual alone. It was also clear that a tapered approach to ending contact was favoured and the most vulnerable were shown to be unlikely to ask for help. I suggest that being a responsible service means reaching out and following up on those supported to try to monitor progress. Essentially though, the responsibility for the well-being of those who are often without parents means that having adequate support should mean that this is taken up by more than one service or even services. Helping young people connect with other young people so that they do not become isolated also may be a way forward. This research raises interesting and challenging questions for future research about the professionalization of support. In the case of Paul for example, as will be discussed, it becomes apparent that when a worker becomes the young person's main, if not only confidante, then it is inevitable that when they leave their life, this is difficult and painful. A more thoughtful consideration then of the lasting impact of not being able to have lasting friendships ought to be considered. It is not within the scope of this research to draw conclusions

on this as it was only raised in a few cases, but it is undoubtedly worth future exploration.

Lastly, this study sheds new light on the challenges faced by young people today trying to stop offending and some of the key points will now be discussed. Firstly, crime was shown to be a by-product of seeking a sense of belonging. ‘Knifing off’ or separating from ‘delinquent peers’ was problematic for these young people because it was not replaced with access to pro-social networks (Maruna and Roy, 2007). I argue that knifing off, having contributed greatly to isolation could even be regarded in these instances as being a form of self-harm. ‘Strong’ triggers were differentiated between weak triggers. Weak triggers were related to push factors or avoiding punishment and the need for compliance. Strong triggers on the other hand that prompted the first tentative steps towards desistance and sustained progress were about having good strong relationships with others where new identities could be forged. In this thesis, drawing on the interviews with both Amy and Brian, I introduce the idea of the ‘trampoline effect.’ This is a term used in physics to describe what happens when a ball hits a baseball bat, as the bat compresses and the ball gains energy as a result of the impact. In the same way the idea here is that the impact of hitting rock bottom can force the individual to momentarily break away from the restraints or pull of the downward spiral they have succumbed to, and confront who they have become as a result. This realisation, I argue is like defying gravity, so great is the force of sinking lower. Drawing on Mouzelis (1995), this is about having the opportunity, albeit activated through a damaging process, to step back or be knocked back from the confines of structure and reflect and begin to question, and as a result understand the life that is wanted, a better more hopeful future. This hope is both fragile and vital and at the very least can lead to planning towards a different future to the one they were heading. This plan is likely to hit obstacles, but the point here is that in having a chance to become self-aware and reflexive allows for agency to be developed. This effect though as shown in this research, has no relevance if it is not accompanied by the support of others and the dynamic energy transfer harnessed through relationships. Where support is not in place, desistance can be a painful process leading to an excessive form of situational compliance or impoverished existence (Bottoms, 2013).

Seeing desistance only as success in non-offending is shown to be rudimentary because it fails to account for the more important questions revealed here relating to quality of life. The desistance experienced here could even be said to have become a delegitimised process in the pain it has caused, and this raises questions about whom desistance is for and what is the destination beyond desistance? Viewing this journey as ‘desistance’, it is suggested, confines the individual within an identity that defines them only in relation to their offending. I propose that criminology could help those who are stopping offending move past this by no longer regarding them as ‘desisters.’ This aspect of the research shows that if there is no destination, in the same way as conceptualising adulthood, desistance also is a form of limitless liminality. Redefining desistance then to also be about a pathway to citizenship would put an explicit onus on wider society to play its part, focusing on the individual’s rights as well as responsibilities. Rather than focusing on deficits it would mean promoting mutual recognition and interdependence.

Overall, what is revealed here is that poverty restricts opportunities and even further that it makes leading a valued and meaningful life difficult. Young people today do not regard ‘adulthood’, denoting stability, as an accessible destination and in terms of both adulthood and desistance, the ‘destination’ is not clear. In conceptualising this stage the concept of limitless liminality reinforces the powerlessness felt by those experiencing this. Historical relationships with family for those who had offended were found to be strained with a lack of love and care reported. Amy, Brian, Mark, Kevin and Dan did not have a carefree childhood and had to be responsible from a young age, rejected at both ‘home’ and school. I argue that they do not have a sense of belonging or self-worth and as a result the discourse relating to capital is not relevant or at least incredibly difficult to put into practice. Their micro-environment, their locality, has acted as a physical and mental barrier to them achieving their potential. To truly change their situation and others like them, addressing inequality is needed. For these young people to be recognised, they need to be allowed inside and not viewed as the ‘dregs of society’ (Standing, 2011). Criminology can play a role in supporting this by at the very least challenging the way in which those who have offended are viewed. There should not be a ‘them’ and ‘us’, only us. This is a societal problem beyond criminology, and being honest about the limitations of this discipline and the criminal justice system, to instead promote interdependence across sectors

and including the private sector, and to think and see bigger is a tall but not impossible task (Winlow and Hall, 2013). As stated simply by Bourdieu (1999: 629) ‘nothing is less innocent than non-interference.’

STRUCTURE OF THESIS

The overall structure of the thesis is to firstly set out the current impact of poverty and policy response in Scotland, literature on transitions to adulthood and desistance and to identify the gaps in knowledge that the study set out to fill. This was, as discussed approached by establishing the principal aim to explore transitions into adulthood in the context of poverty, and objectives of capturing the impact of disengaging with services and desistance from offending. The findings are presented in three different chapters with each one addressing a specific aim or objective. In the final chapter the conclusion draws all of the findings together to reaffirm an earlier ‘new’ conceptualisation of both adulthood and desistance that is of these young people existing in limitless liminality. By illuminating their position in this way, I feel that this sets a strong basis to begin the conversation for potential ways forward to benefit or support young people better who are living and often trapped in poverty.

In the next Chapter, the macro-context of the impact of neo-liberalism, deindustrialisation and globalisation in the creation of inequalities and poverty is presented, foregrounding a discussion of policies targeting young adults in Scotland. By providing this context and discussing the policies, it is evident that good policy alone cannot change the situation for young people affected by poverty. It is not that they are ignored by policy, but rather that the answer lies beyond just the government and rather requires a commitment from all sectors and possibly beyond normal jurisdictional boundaries to be dealt with. This is an important basis for subsequent chapters leading to a more informed conversation begun of the potential ‘ways forward’. Chapter three presents a review of the literature on ‘transitions to adulthood’, firstly setting out the social construction of childhood, adolescence and adulthood and exploring the concept of ‘emerging adulthood’ (Arnett, 2006). This is a definition used to capture that experiences such as getting married are being delayed and particularly affluent young people are having an extended period of discovery and

choice before settling down. The applicability of this to those young people living in poverty is questioned. Drawing on national and international evidence it is concluded that this is not an accurate or relevant depiction of this population, who instead are more aptly defined as having an accelerated and early entry into liminality, the stage of being ‘in between.’ Overall, through this analysis of the literature it becomes clear that gaining knowledge of the lived realities of these young people is vital to illuminate, understand and hopefully better their position. The chapter closes by offering a redefinition of adulthood to be citizenship and presents some models of citizenship, emphasising the role that wider society could play and shifting the focusing from the responsibility being on the individual alone.

Chapter four is a review of the literature on desistance from offending and draws on the previous chapter to highlight the specific challenges faced by young people today. For example, the ‘traditional’ turning point of getting a stable job is now much less likely and so the study could help to clarify what contemporary youth view as ‘turning points’. In bringing both of these bodies of literature together, significant barriers to achieving or sustaining desistance are revealed and a need to understand better what prompts and helps young people highlighted. This chapter builds on the previous, concluding that desistance is a two-way process between society and the individual (Barry, 2013), and just like adulthood, the case is made for desistance to also be redefined as citizenship.

Chapter five is an in-depth discussion of the ontological and epistemological standpoints on which the study has been carried out. As already stated, the views of the young people and how they ascribed meaning and thus a social constructionist outlook was taken, supplemented with a critical realist approach so that the testimonies were contextualised. The value of qualitative longitudinal research (QLR) is discussed and the literature and analysis expanded and refined. It is suggested that QLR is like time-lapse photography as each interview records a moment in time with gaps filled in through looking back. This allows the researcher to get up close to those being interviewed and making the ethical challenges transparent emphasises the importance of ethical integrity when doing any research, but especially it is argued, with those who are vulnerable. Overall, this is a time consuming process and the need for time to be well spent, or ‘doing justice’ to the stories is vital. I suggest that this is

achieved by creating as honest or as accurate an account as possible of their lives, uncovering and reporting the details, capturing the interactions within the interviews and locating myself as the researcher also within the accounts. This is about relaying the emotions felt, and the subsequent impact and resolve created to do more to try to help change things. A challenge that comes with being 'honest', is as Winlow and Hall (2013: 12) to explain 'with neither moralistic condemnation nor naïve appreciation and optimism- the existence, beliefs, prospects and social position' of such socially excluded groups.

Chapter six is the first findings chapter relating to the first objective, that is an analysis of the young people's views of *Includem's* Transitional Support and importantly how ending contact was experienced. The concept of 'readiness' is explored and it was found that those who had the support of others and recognised the importance of interdependence did 'the best.' They also had a role to take up, for example they were going to college or becoming a parent and so moving away from *Includem* was a natural progression. On the other hand, those without adequate support struggled and did not ask for *Includem's* help again until they were encouraged to do so. The chapter develops the literature on appropriate endings by drawing on the findings to show the importance of communication but also bridging to other support. Lastly, questions are raised about what can be realistically expected of services when the opportunities are limited, making what they can offer restricted. It is suggested that services working with young people are interdependent on wider society and engaging and revitalising these connections is essential. I further propose that wider society needs to reach out and help to generate and make opportunities accessible.

Chapter seven sets out the life stories of all twelve interviewed and how the 'transition to adulthood' was viewed and is the main chapter exploring the principal aim. Each case study is presented in detail and the concept of adulthood, denoting stability, emerges as unattainable destination. The young people dealt with this in a number of ways. Either they scaled back on their goals, or their hopes became a form of cruel optimism. For those most successful, and in particular Scott and Hamish, they simply accepted who they were and embraced the uncertainty. I argue that ontological security may be achieved by accepting ontological insecurity. It is reflected that

dealing with this does not actually solve the problem and that addressing inequality and poverty is really what is needed. I introduce the idea of limitless liminality. Liminality means being 'in between' (Turner, 1964). I argue that from a very young age these people have had to look after themselves and moved to this stage earlier than their younger counterparts, but that becoming 'an adult', having some form of consistency in life, is not seen as achievable. I conclude that it is likely that they are to remain in this 'in between' stage, lost in limitless liminality and for the majority of those interviewed, they were acutely aware of their powerlessness and frustrated that this was their present and likely future.

Chapter eight builds upon chapter seven to give a much deeper analysis of the five young people who were attempting to desist from offending and thus focused on the findings related to the final objective. As these are all individualised pathways they are analysed in detail drawing on the relevant literature and research and in particular the work of Cooley (1956), Weaver (2015) and Bottoms (2013). This analysis highlights the impact of others, both known and unknown to the individual in redefining who they are, and shows that for desistance to be accepted it has to have a credible audience. It is argued that the self-isolation being carried out by the young people or situational compliance as a way of desisting is leading to an impoverished existence and possibly unlikely to be able to be sustained. This way of experiencing desistance could even be said to have made it a delegitimised process, that is the actual pain of 'going' legitimate undermines the reasons to continue doing it (Sparks and Bottoms, 1995). It is concluded that desistance is not an end in itself and the role and responsibilities of wider society need to be made clear so that being a citizen has meaning.

In the final chapter, the pains of desistance are recognised to also be pains of poverty. The loneliness and hopelessness reported by most of those interviewed show that the similarities between the groups are much greater than their differences. It may be that the exclusion felt and reported is indicative of a wider societal problem relating to young people and social withdrawal, possibly as a result of feeling social exclusion (Princes Trust, 2015). Although the specific differences have been discussed and the process of desistance in itself reflected upon, it is actually more useful I feel to bring this group together, to offer a new conceptualisation of 'adulthood' and destinations

beyond desistance, and in doing so bring to light the depth of challenges faced. Viewing these young people as being trapped in 'limitless liminality' clarifies their lack of power. The potential 'ways forward' are then discussed. There is a tendency to want to be able to provide the answers, but actually in reality it is probably more open and honest to say that this final chapter is really about prompting and beginning a conversation that then needs to include but spread far beyond criminology and even beyond the Government. Dealing with this problem does not mean that it is then answered. To truly change this situation it is offered that addressing poverty and inequality is needed, with an acceptance that neither is inevitable. Change requires hope. A change of mind-set from both the 'insiders' and 'the outsiders' is needed with both understanding that there is no 'them' and 'us', there is only us.

CHAPTER 2: POVERTY AND YOUNG ADULTS IN SCOTTISH POLICY

INTRODUCTION

This chapter sets out the macro-context of the political and historical background to a UK that is now increasingly more unequal. The policy response in Scotland to young adults is discussed taking each area in turn, and overall, the impact on poverty is shown to be limited. This chapter highlights that growing uncertainty has become the ‘new normal’ for young people (Winlow and Hall, 2013: 92). Furthermore, the evidence is that this situation is being met with growing tolerance. This is an important basis to developing a more informed assessment of ‘ways forward’ discussed in the final chapter.

MACRO-CONTEXT

Globalisation, Deindustrialisation and Neo-liberalism

In adopting a critical realist view (Bhaskar, 1998, 1989), there is an important pervading ‘backdrop’ or macro context to the discussions that must inform analysis, this next section sets out the historical background and lasting impact of the rise of neo-liberalism, deindustrialisation and globalisation on local communities and social networks.

The rise of neoliberalism

The post-war years until the rise of neoliberalism in the 1980s are regarded as a ‘golden age’ for the working classes in terms of their levels of stability (Bauman, 2000). ‘During this period the state were able to regulate business practice to a much greater extent, provided a comprehensive welfare system, taxed wealth, controlled capital flows, used fiscal stimulus to promote growth, maintained control over key national industries, significantly narrowed the gap between the rich and poor, and attempted to ensure the continuation of full employment for work-aged populations’

(Winlow and Hall, 2013: 5). In the 1970s however, this mode of governance changed and there are a number of reasons proffered for this. Firstly, globalisation and subsequently increasingly competitive markets, low wages and high inflation are acknowledged as being key factors in Keynesian economics appearing unable of coping, or having ‘reached its end points’ with contemporary pressures leading to the rise of the neo-liberal right (Winlow et al. 2015: 11). ‘In the UK, and in many other advanced countries, there was the emergence of ‘stagflation’ – high levels of inflation alongside high levels of unemployment’ (Kitson and Michie, 2014: 12). In the 1970s, Reagan in the United States and Thatcher in the UK lead the neo-liberal right, a counter movement to Keynesian policies, heralding rolling back the state, deregulation, privatisation and a commitment to free market and free trade. As well as neo-liberalism, Thatcherism contained strands of neo-conservatism (Farrall and Hay, 2014). For example, as well as ‘(re)imposing traditional values’ it put the state in an ‘active role...to police and enforce moral behaviours’ whilst at the same time reducing the state ‘to tackle the dependency culture’ and restoring ‘social hierarchy’ (ibid: 211). Jackson (2014: 72) summarises the first Thatcher Government as having ‘essentially ripped up the social contract that had supported post-war Keynesian policies.’

In a further assault on those in the lower stratum, this period marked the beginning of deindustrialization. This is often regarded as the result of globalization and competition from cheaper markets as well as a shift in the demand for labour away from less-skilled workers toward those with more skills (Rowthorn and Ramaswamy, 1997). Kitson and Michie (2014) present an historic analysis of deindustrialisation that brings to light other contributory factors, specifically underinvestment, short termism and a lack of coherent industrial policy as well as a shift in macroeconomic policies that created uncertainty in the market. In short, as is documented also by Winlow and Hall (2013: 144), there was a deliberate investment in the ‘knowledge economy’ based mostly in London and South East England, whilst elsewhere was comparatively forgotten. As Dorling (2014: 245) notes ‘if you were a young man brought up in relative affluence outside the urban cores of the North, Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland you might think that the 1980s had been a period of great economic success.’

Alongside the dismantling of these industries there was a sustained attack on the social security system, defined as ‘residualization’, increasing the level of poverty and inequality further, and this process continues at present (Hill and Walker, 2014: 78). According to Wacquant (2001: 404) these Governments were intent on ‘Erasing the economic state, dismantling the social state’ and strengthening the penal state’. Farrall and Hay (2010) make a strong argument that criminal justice policy remained little altered under Thatcher, but rather it was the changes they brought to housing, education and social welfare policies that had impact and created the rise in crime rates, thus, emphasising and illustrating the importance of policy interdependence. The side effects of these changes are summarised as ‘widening inequality, unemployment, ‘sofa-surfing’, the creation of ‘sink estates’ and of ‘excluded pupils’ which had ‘significant ramifications for both crime and the criminal justice system’ (Farrall and Hay, 2010: 562). For example, a direct link has been established between high rates of property crime and unemployment and inequality (Jennings et al. 2012). Moreover, the ‘Thatcherite agenda’ was ‘inadvertently self-fulfilling as neo-liberal policies in one domain (macro economics) produced social problems that required neo-conservative solutions in another (criminal justice)’ (Farrall and Jennings, 2014: 229). Thatcherism transformed the human geography of Britain and created, even encouraged deeper inequality (Dorey, 2015; Dorling, 2014; Winlow and Hall, 2013; Hall and Winlow, 2015; Walker, 2014; Walker, 2014b). Like the Mertonian American dream, the onus on ‘making it’ was put firmly on the individual, and for the poor who became even poorer, they were seen as the makers of their own further undoing. As concluded by Taylor-Gooby (2014: 106):

The chief legacy of Thatcherism is not so much policy reforms (which were largely unsuccessful) but the embedding of a moralistic ideology which views benefit claimers of working age as work-shy scroungers. Those who wish to move towards a more generous and humane welfare state must find ways to circumvent or confront this ideology...Low wages lie at the heart of the problem.

Walker (2014b: 301) points out that Thatcher was the first Prime Minister after the Second World War ‘to make a virtue of inequality and argue against measures to reduce it.’ She ‘questioned the existence of poverty’, the ‘deservedness of the poor’, ‘the first to openly cut benefits and to insist that the poor, along with everyone else, had to take their share of the cuts and the first to argue for means-tested rather than

universal benefits' (ibid). This rise of neo-liberalism and commitment to free market policies continued to be entrenched and even cemented when 'New Labour', what ought to have been the opposition, but had abandoned socialism by the time Blair came to power (Winlow et al. 2015). A commitment to the 'liberation of the business class' has carried on, and under Cameron, the 'conservation of neo-liberalism' was the main objective (Winlow et al. 2015: 71). Walker (2014b: 301) argues that the views of Thatcher on poverty and inequality are being pursued even more rigorously today and this is evidenced as both continue to rise.

In 2008, Britain and Western Society experienced the 'most severe financial crisis in living memory' (Winlow and Hall, 2013: 1). The reasons for the crash are complex, but put simply, were 'a direct result of the credit crunch...the central problem was Britain's banks, which had invested their reserves in assets that turned out to be unsafe, illiquid or even worthless' (Vaitilingam, 2009: 10). Crotty (2009) links the crisis back to deregulation that began in the late 1970s and is part and parcel of neoliberalism, and the globalisation of financial markets, combined with the rapid pace of financial innovation and the moral hazard caused by frequent government bailouts. Crotty (2009: 578) further concludes, in echoes of the same assessment as Farrall and Hay (2014) of the perpetually doomed nature of Thatcherism, that because of deregulation, and the subsequent creation of booms and crises, the global financial markets are likely to also 'remain fatally structurally flawed.' This juncture 'finally led to questions being asked of the legitimacy of excessive pay of senior executives' and the rich experienced the 'merest taste of the public opprobrium, which has always been directed at the poor' (Walker, 2014b: 302).

The crash was an opportunity to step back and see the 'immutable problems of the debt-duelled growth model and the staggering injustices that had led to the establishment of new, mega-rich corporate elites at the top of the class and the significant growth in 'socially excluded' populations at the bottom (Winlow et al. 2015: 1). However, these concerns were at best fleeting, as in response, the Government implemented what was referred to by Cameron, and already mentioned in Chapter 1, as an 'age of austerity'. In Scotland, this has meant £6 billion in cuts to public services, of which £1 billion was directly relating to children and young people (UNISON Scotland, 2014). From 2010 to 2015, English local authorities cut spending

by 27% and in Scotland this figure was 11%, with those greatest in the more deprived authorities in England (Hastings et al. 2015). This has hit the poorest hardest and those least able to cope with service withdrawal borne the brunt (ibid). Citizens Advice Scotland (CAS) state that ‘rises in living costs and worsening living standards, low pay and insecurity of employment, and a host of welfare reforms’ have all contributed to insecurity and a lack of resilience (Sims, 2016: 11). The report evidences the rise in foodbanks and a higher number than ever using the service for advice in crisis, highlighting that a greater proportion of people are now living what they define as at ‘the sharp end’ (ibid: 1). It is further pointed out that the Conservative Party’s 2015 election manifesto said that it would “find £12 billion from welfare savings, on top of the £21 billion of savings delivered in [the 2010] Parliament’, with around 70% of these ‘savings’ made through extensive changes to the social security system introduced in the Welfare Reform and Work Act which received Royal Assent in March 2016 (ibid: 15). In light of the pursuance of these policies, the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (2016) assessment of the situation in the UK is as follows:

The Committee is seriously concerned about the disproportionate, adverse impact that austerity measures introduced in 2010 are having on the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights by disadvantaged and marginalized individuals and groups. The Committee is concerned that the State party has not undertaken a comprehensive assessment of the cumulative impact of such measures on the realization of economic, social and cultural rights in a way that is recognized by civil society and national independent monitoring mechanisms

The lasting impact of neo-liberalism

On an international basis, the trend towards cities having economic and population decline has been recorded in 40% of Europe between 1960-2005 and what are referred to as the ‘rustbelt’ cities in the north east and mid west of America (Pike et al. 2016: 4). The highest levels of population and economic decline are linked to deindustrialization in the 1980s and found predominantly in the North of the UK only. Specifically, those cities with the highest decline are Dundee, Rochdale, Burnley, Bolton, Blackburn, Hull, Grimsby, Middlesbrough, Bradford, Blackpool, Stoke and

Wigan (ibid). No city in southern England was found to be in population or economic decline making the North South divide more real than ever before. In these areas of decline, there is a restriction of opportunities that in the past had not been experienced (MacDonald et al. 2011; Coles, 1997), and is as a result of processes that are out of control of those most affected (Burns, 2013; MacDonald, et al. 2011). Historical routes into work for working class young men, such as ship-building or mining not only offered a chance of achieving financial capital but also of fulfilling the expectations of traditional hegemonic working class masculinities (Connell, 2002). That is the social construction of what it means to be a man, that is working hard at hard work and being successful can be fulfilled. Through hard work they could establish and reaffirm their status as respectable men. The lack then of such work means that young working class men in these areas affected are no longer able to become 'somebody', no longer able to become men in the way that they used to. Since the recession, the age-specific demand for employment has changed significantly in favour of older workers (Bell and Blanchflower, 2011). Furthermore, 'of particular concern are the group of youngsters with the lowest levels of education and skills, especially when they belong to racial and ethnic minorities. These are the ones most impacted in a recession as jobs requiring relatively low levels of skills are taken by those with higher levels of skills' (ibid: 264). The obscurity of pathways and subsequent progression has led to a form of crisis, or arguably a form of Durkheimian anomie (Durkheim, 1938; Burns cited in Hetherington, 2014). This may seem extreme, but there has been a steady growth in mortality rates for men aged between 14-45 years old in cities such as Glasgow and Liverpool which has been linked to the feeling of purposelessness felt by individuals, the breakdown of their communities and the lack of connectedness felt (Burns, 2013; Whyllie et al. 2012; Catch 22, 2010). A study exploring male suicide showed that this is linked to unemployment, relationship breakdown, an inability to talk about their feelings, and perceiving themselves as failures because they are unable to be breadwinners (Wyllie et al. 2012). Women have lower rates of suicide and the authors deduce that this may be because they have retained the caring role within the family and thus their sense of purpose, and therefore been less affected by the impact of de-industrialisation. However, the research also calls for a complete gender analysis to examine the commonalities and divergences in pathways to suicidal thoughts and behaviour between men and women so that the differences in rates may be more fully explained.

The link between suicide and poverty at least on the face of it appears to be a more male experience, however, this is not to say that women living in poverty are untouched. In the UK and Britain the effects of de-industrialisation are not unique. Bourdieu's (1999) assessment of the inhabitants of Johnquil Street, an area in France that once had plentiful employment but now lies more or less dormant and forgotten, highlights the pain and loss that is felt and endured by those who remain or can't get out. 'Their reason for existence...disappeared along with their factories...it was above all their future they lost, the continuation and justification of their past' (Bourdieu, 1999: 6). The impact can be summed up as failed lives, failed dreams and failed futures, thus, affecting the past, present and future (Bourdieu, 1999).

Globalisation: Closer but divided

As a result of globalisation it could be said that we are all brought closer to temporally and spatially, and in many ways this should mean that we are forced to recognise that we are all interdependent. As stated by Bauman (2002: 17):

On this planet, we are all dependent on each other, and nothing that we do or refrain from doing is indifferent to the fate of everyone else. From the ethical point of view, this makes us all responsible for each other. Responsibility is 'there', put firmly in place by the global network of interdependency - whether we recognise its presence or not and whether we take it up or not.

Bauman (2002: 12) further declares that as a result of globalisation 'the world is full' and we feel this fullness on a daily basis. This assessment fits with the idea of the existence now of surplus populations, or a 'reserve army of consumers' (Winlow and Hall, 2013: 91). The lack of certainty of progression for young people is spreading across classes, with even those leaving university, described as 'as all dressed up with no where to go' (Allen and Ainley: 8). 'Insecurity and precariousness is the new normal' (Winlow and Hall, 2013: 92). Bynner et al. (1997) sample of 20 year olds in the UK in mid 1990s are categorised as 30% 'getting on', 30% 'getting by' and 40% 'getting nowhere'. Standing (2011) describes four different classes on the employment ladder, the elite at the top, followed by the salariat, the proficians or skilled, and then, at the bottom, 'the precariat' emphasising their precariousness. The

existence of those on the 'outer edges' is even more extreme and the situation even worse for those with a criminal background or 'spoiled identities' (Weaver, 2012; Goffman, 1963). These people, either with or without a history of offending, are expendable, a hungry excess to an already full world and on the cusp of being either wanted or wasted by those on the inside. As observed by Winlow and Hall (2013: 1) of modern day society:

huge growth in surplus population in global cities, when understood in the context of imminent crises in water, food, finance and the generation and distribution of money, and the permanent inability of capitalism to absorb these peoples into its networks of production, exchange and consumption, makes social exclusion one of the most pressing issues we face at this point in our history.

Although people have been brought closer together fears and risks faced are perceived less easy to calculate and safeguard against now on the whole, and we live in a more risk averse and less trusting society (Pratt, 2001; Beck, 1992). Winlow and Hall (2013: 83) expand upon this idea to argue that it is not fear that dominates in contemporary society, because fear is based on an a clear, objective and communicable cause, but rather anxiety based on 'an imprecise sense of danger'. A consistent finding in the literature is that globalisation has led to social relations breaking down and the rise of individualisation (Holdsworth and Morgan, 2005; Muncie, 2005; Bauman, 2000; Putnam, 2000). Face to face contact is deemed undervalued (Winlow and Hall, 2013; Cieslik and Pollock, 2002). Bauman (2000) defines this dismantling of social networks as people living in 'liquid' times, stressing the fluidity, weightlessness and fragility of connections between people. Kahli and Dutton (2010: 87) develop this idea to focus on the lack of durability of contemporary relationships, stating:

The velocity of encounters between people generates a great deal of uncertainty about who we are and they are, what we are becoming together and where all of us are located psychologically, politically and practically. There is a storm of living, and the shapes, rhythms and patterns of our lives are determined by our engagement with forces that range from the global and transnational to the local and particular. Within this context, encounters can be experienced as collisions, as people glance away rather than remain together over time.

This assessment is arguably too austere and rather a more accurate account is that relationships are simply now more complex. However, the pressure to ‘stand alone’ is important to recognise espoused by the responsabilisation thesis (Garland, 1996). This analysis emphasises neo-liberal politics transported through globalisation as leading to the ‘accepted’ notion that individuals and communities ought to be aware of and manage risks with limited state intervention. The reality is that this process of individualization and responsabilisation means that those who are most disadvantaged are the least likely to be successful in safeguarding themselves against risk (Shildrick, 2002). In taking up the notion of individualisation, Furlong and Cartmel (1997) present the parallel that life in the past could be viewed as everyone using public transport to get by, whereas now everyone drives a car. With this change of mode of transport the responsibility lies with the individual alone now to make the journey. They offer an insightful and illuminating assessment of what this means.

The experience of driving one's own car rather than travelling as a passenger on public transport leads to the impression that individual skills and decisions are crucial to the determination of outcomes ... [but] what many of the drivers fail to realise is that the type of car which they have been allocated at the start of the journey is the most significant predictor of the ultimate outcome (ibid: 6-7).

Those ‘failing’ are cast as being personally responsible rather than this being a public issue. As already discussed, young people, more than any other population, bear the brunt of rapidly changing social and economic environments and widening inequality. Shildrick (2002: 55) advises that in understanding the reality of young people’s lives we would therefore be ‘unwise’ to neglect the wider socio-economic contexts in which young people find themselves today. However, there is a growing tolerance for inequality. A groundbreaking analysis of thirty years of data on public attitudes show those born in the 80’s, ‘Thatcher’s grandchildren’, are more tolerant of inequality now than other groups (Gray et al. 2015). The political culture one is born into has a lasting effect on an individual’s political values (Gray et al. 2015). This is then yet another result of Thatcher’s legacy (Farrall and Hall, 2014), however, I argue that it is not inevitable that this remains the case or is irreversible. A qualitative study conducted by Hall et al. (2014) to assess attitudes to poverty after the crash gives some signs of hope for renewed empathy. This consisted of eight in-depth interviews with people whose income was below the relative poverty line in London, Liverpool

and Birmingham; four discussion groups in areas of high deprivation, split between Liverpool and Birmingham and a one day deliberative workshop with 50 people in London. Although overall the research showed that people's attitudes to poverty remain firm, there was also evidence of attitudes softening. In particular there was an acknowledgement by participants that getting work was not always a route out of poverty, and those who had experienced financial precarity and lack of job security reported being more empathetic towards others below the poverty line. Interestingly, there were a number of suggestions put forward as a result of the study that are worth bearing in mind in terms of 'ways forward.' It was suggested that the word 'poverty' should not be used, as this was associated with the developing world, and instead 'need' was felt to be a more appropriate and connecting concept. It was also felt that engaging people about the root causes of crime would be best through the use of life course narratives. Lastly, those who took part were open to ambitious solutions, to work in a multi-agency way and across sectors.

Globalisation and Criminal Justice Policy

As one of the objectives of this study is an exploration of young people's desistance, it is important to understand the macro-context to criminal justice policies in the UK and Scotland. Echoing the discussion of individualisation and responsabilisation, Muncie (2005: 36) states that globalisation has led to a homogenisation of criminal justice policy 'based less on principles of social inclusion and more on social inequality, deregulation, privatization, penal expansionism and welfare residualism' (ibid: 36). The influence of the United States on UK government policy is well documented (Simon, 2007; Jones and Newburn, 2007). Ironically, since Scottish devolution in 1999 as discussed in the previous chapter, the Justice System has 'come under an increasingly intensive and political gaze' (McIvor and McNeill, 2007: 82). In more recent times though there has been a move to regain the 'old' sentiments, with the Children Scotland Act (2014) heralding an extension of rights for children in care and the Whole Systems Approach (WSA) promoting diversion. Therefore, the move towards punitiveness is not conclusive and not without its opponents.

It is dangerous to see globalisation as simply wholly negative as there have been positive developments too, for example, such as the establishment of a Human Rights Act and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children. Moreover, not all countries have reacted to globalisation in the same way, with Finland, Sweden and Norway consciously reversing its previous high rate of imprisonment (Pratt 2008a, 2008b). One of the key reasons offered for Scandinavian exceptionalism, is that unlike Britain, there exists a ‘culture of equality’ within these countries (Pratt, 2008). The Gini coefficient measures the spread of income inequality within a country and shows that this is much greater in the UK than in Scandinavia (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, (OECD) 2014). Pratt (2008; 2008b) offers the plausible idea that a more equal society emphasises sameness and the need for punishment is mediated so that those who have offended are not ‘othered.’ Indeed, this is also compatible with the work of Young (1999) who argues that the creation of binaries, setting up of division and the mentality of ‘them’ versus ‘us’ leads to a dichotomy between the deserving and undeserving.

The Scandinavian example highlights that globalisation impacts upon countries in different ways and that change is not irreversible. There are some signs of hope in Scotland itself, as last year the plans for the woman’s prison in HMP Inverclyde were cancelled with the Government making a significant U-turn on the policy and admitting that such an idea had been ill conceived. Alongside implementation of the WSA, these are indications of potentially more progressive policy. However, it must also be noted that, at the same time the Government also introduced a bill that eventually lead to legislation to end Automatic Early Release of long term prisoners. Overall then, it could be argued that actually there is not yet a coherent move away from punitiveness. The complexity of the impact of globalization on society is summed up again neatly by Bauman (2002: 17), (with the author’s own emphasis), ‘A global world is a place where, or once, *the desideratum of moral responsibility and the interests of survival coincide and blend*. Globalization is, among other things (perhaps above all) *an ethical challenge*.’ This evokes the idea of an ethics of care as well as thinking of rights or responsibilities alone and will be developed further in the latter part of the thesis. The behemothian ethical challenge is about arriving at the morally right, feasible and credible ways forward.

In the next section, the focus will be extensively on young people in poverty, the evidence, policy responses and ‘impact.’ This backdrop highlights how great these issues are and how deeply entrenched. As will be shown, policies are often at best tinkering around the edges in response to a globally created issue and a relentless form of excessive neo-liberalism.

IMPOVERISHED YOUTH

In the wake of the financial crisis young people have suffered the most (McAra and McVie, 2015). Of the 9 million young people aged 14-24 living in the UK, approximately 2.7 million, or 30%, are living in poverty, this is higher than any other age group (New Policy Institute, 2015). Those under 30 years old are now at a higher risk than any other age group of experiencing poverty in Scotland – the only age group to have seen an increase over the last ten years (Case, 2015). Ironically, in financial terms this is costing the UK around £78 billion in public services of which £6 billion is dedicated to child poverty alone, and about £1 in every £5 spent on public services making up for the way that poverty damages people’s lives (Bramley et al. 2016). The evidence points towards the moral and financial gain towards having a sustained reduction in poverty (ibid). Using the definition of income poverty, more than 200,000 children, 600,000 adults of working age and 100,000 retired people live in poverty in Scotland (Scottish Government, 2015c), one in five children (Sosu and Ellis, 2014: 7). Poverty affects all aspects of life. As well as the psychological harm and distress on those affected, Bramley et al. (2016: 1) point out that it causes widespread damage to society and is the source of ‘collective shame, social tension and anxiety.’ The following analysis of poverty in Scotland is broken into the specific policy areas relating to young adults, of housing, education, employment, mental health, substance misuse, parenthood, those with learning difficulties, and care leavers before moving onto a discussion of youth justice policy. This is an opportunity to identify where progress has been made in terms of explicit policy for young adults and reviewing current evidence where the gaps continue to exist. At the time of writing the political situation in Scotland is uncertain. Although in 2014 by referendum Scotland voted to remain part of the UK, following the General Election and significantly the referendum on the European Union (EU), where Scotland voted

to remain, it is clear that it is politically different to the rest of the UK. At present, it is not known what will happen but change seems inevitable. The Smith Commission is looking at further devolution and these policies may also change but are correct at the time of writing in October 2016.

Young People and Housing

Figures on homelessness, even official data is 'patchy at best' with local authorities recording data in different ways and 'most single homeless people over 18' are missing from statistics because they are not 'a priority need', if they have not previously been in care or are parents (Clarke et al. 2015: 2). In response, Centrepoin, a charity in England commissioned Cambridge University to calculate an estimate of the true scale of youth homelessness in the UK by analyzing official data as well as that collated by 40 local authorities. It was revealed that in 2013 local authorities and homeless services accommodated 83,000 young people, and around 35,000 young people had been in homeless accommodation at any one time across the UK. This figure is three times more than the 26,852 young people recorded in homeless figures for the same period released by the Department for Communities and Local Government (Homeless Link, 2013 cited in Clarke et al. 2015: 15), bringing freshly into question the credibility of official statistics.

In Scotland, the official statistics for 2009/10 to 2013/14 show a 34% drop in this time for the number of housing applications, which now stands at 36,457 (Shelter, 2015). Young adults are identified as the most vulnerable group to become homeless and also unlikely to seek support, with those aged 20-24 the largest group to report sleeping rough and those aged 16-19 to 'couch surf' if homeless (Shelter, 2015; Harleigh-Bell, 2013). Importantly, the latter group, in attempting to deal with crisis by relying on friends and living day by day, remain 'invisible' to support services. Consequently, it could be said there is a dark figure of homelessness. Equally, having housing does not mean that someone is not affected by poverty. The New Policy Institute (NPI) (2015) found that young people living on their own had the highest rate of poverty of all the groups. Kenway et al. (2015: 73) analysis of poverty and social exclusion in Scotland concludes that there is a 'changing face of poverty' with

younger adults renting from private landlords and working more likely to be affected than ever before. Ironically then being in housing, viewed as a key factor in having stability, can actually be a source of poverty and instability.

Scotland has some of the most progressive housing legislation in Europe and there have been concerted efforts made in the past ten years to work towards no-one sleeping rough. This commitment is supported by the Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003 and the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. Housing Protocols for those leaving care have established this group as a priority to access suitable housing (Scottish Government, 2013). However, there is a shortage of housing in Scotland (Audit Scotland, 2013), and this has prompted the Government in Scotland to end the 'right to buy' schemes that had begun in the 1980s under Thatcher and are now seen to be one of the reasons for the lack of available social housing. Young people in work and living in private rented accommodation are now more likely to be living in poverty than in the past (Aldridge et al. 2015). Rents are higher than before and alongside a lack of cheap housing, rising unemployment and the expansion of private rented accommodation, these are some of the reasons identified for youth homelessness (Coles, 1997).

There are also policies that make young people a population that landlords may be more likely to avoid. Namely, the changes in Local Housing Allowance (LHA) since 2008 now mean that Housing Benefit is paid to claimants rather than landlords directly (Beatty et al. 2013). The Housing Scotland Act 2014 has also increased the flexibility landlords have to allocate houses and to tackle antisocial behaviour, and as young people are more likely to be perceived to be less reliable this is likely to have an adverse effect. The 2011 Christie Report establishes that cross-sector work is not happening and the measures implemented to prevent homelessness sporadic across Scotland. This highlights that although the legislation in Scotland may be viewed as one of the most progressive in Europe, in practice young adults are disproportionately disadvantaged in their attempts to take the first steps towards having their own home. Although it would be unfair to state that this population has been ignored in policies, they are the most at risk of becoming homeless because of the impact of the private sector and a lack of affordable housing. The depth of this issue is shown by the reality that even young people in work are struggling, with the notion of 'stability' a distant

concept. This area above all the others demonstrates that it takes more than good policy and legislation for change to take place, and that co-operation and commitment across the sectors is needed to address this issue and tackle poverty and inequalities.

Young People and Education

An analysis of ten years of longitudinal data through the Growing Up in Scotland Study (GUS) tracking 8,000 children from birth to adolescence shows the impact of poverty on early outcomes in terms of education (Scottish Government 2015d; Bradshaw, 2011). Specifically, in terms of vocabulary ability at age five, 20% of children in the highest income quintile had below average ability, compared to 54% in the lowest income quintile (ibid). For problem-solving ability, the equivalent proportions are 29% and 53% (Scottish Government, 2015d). Poverty is very strongly linked to low attainment in school, with the Department for Education for England and Wales showing that 35% of children in receipt of Free School Meals gained five A*-C grades including English and maths, compared with 62% of other children (cited in Connelly et al. 2014: 4). In Scotland, by age 12–14 (S2), pupils from better-off areas are more than twice as likely as those from the most deprived areas to do well in numeracy (Sosu and Ellis, 2014). Attainment at 16 has risen overall, but a significant and persistent gap remains between groups (ibid). This gap continues with children from deprived areas leaving school earlier and consistently less likely to enter into high education, employment, training or voluntary work (ibid).

In addition to the statistics on achievement, 885 surveyed in Scotland and 64 children who took part in focus group discussions drew attention to the other adverse impacts of poverty, such as not having an adequate school uniform, being unable to take part in school trips and not having basics such as housing and food (Elsley, 2014). The lasting impact of a poor education is undeniable with 43% of people who left without any formal qualifications in the UK experiencing poverty at least once between 2011 and 2014, twice the percentage of those with a degree or higher (Office for National Statistics, 2016).

In terms of a response to the educational attainment gap in Scotland, the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 and (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2009 provides the legal framework for the provision of additional support for learning. This places a statutory duty on schools to support children for whatever reason to help them benefit from learning and make successful transitions from school to post school life. Under the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2009 all looked after young people are considered to have additional support needs unless they are identified as not. The Scottish Government (2014) launched ‘Opportunities for All’ setting out the challenges faced by young adults. This concludes that participating in further learning and training beyond the age of 16 is the best way for a young person to improve their long-term employment prospects. It also encourages better planning for transitions for young people with additional support needs and those not engaging with education. It is too early to state what will arise from this report, however it is a step towards making progress highlighting the specific needs of young adults as learners.

The Curriculum for Excellence is intended to increase flexibility and choice to meet the needs of individual children and promotes a multi-agency approach (Scottish Government, 2008). The Scottish Government have also introduced an Education Maintenance Allowance to help those from low-income families to remain in school. Scotland’s University education is free for young people, but, as is discussed in more depth in the next chapter, this is actually unlikely to affect the most disadvantaged who rarely make it to University. To support young people to remain in school the most significant initiative has been the *The Inclusion Plus Programme*, launched in four schools in Dundee in August 2013. It has been set up to help disadvantaged and disaffected young people reduce exclusion, raise aspirations, improve family relationships and ultimately improve life chances. The project is currently being evaluated but early findings show that it is having a positive effect on those engaged and highlights that getting the best out of education requires support for those most vulnerable (Holmes, 2014). As yet there does not appear to be plans to roll this initiative out beyond Dundee.

Overall, policies in education directed towards young adult learners have been forthcoming. However, implementation of support for young people to remain in

education is not consistent and varies locally with a postcode lottery now in place in terms of provision. This, as with the other policies does not address the wider issue of poverty and inequalities.

Support for those with Learning or Additional Needs

Throughout the UK young people with disabilities or health needs in the transition to adulthood have been specifically recognised as requiring specialist support to ensure that moving from children to adult services is co-ordinated (Scottish Government, 2012). In 2011 a National Additional Needs (ASN) Transitions Development Officer was appointed to work alongside the Learning Directorate and the Lifelong Learning Directorate to help set up specific support for those with learning disabilities and support a smooth ‘transition’ from children to adult services.

Youth Employment

The financial crisis as already stated hit young people hardest. In the OECD area, the rate of youth unemployment (15-24 year olds) rose by 6% within two years to reach almost 19% by the end of 2009 (Scarpetta et al. 2010). In April 2016, 4.235 million under 25 year olds or 18.8% were unemployed in the EU28, of whom 2.932 million or 21.1% were in the euro area (Euro Stat, 2016). This is a decrease from 2015 when the figures were at 20.7% and 22.5% respectively. The lowest rates were observed in Germany (7%), Malta (8.9%) and the Czech Republic (9.5%), and the highest in Greece (51.4% in February 2016), Spain (45.0%), Croatia (38.9%) and Italy (36.9%). In two thirds of OECD countries school-leavers are not eligible to unemployment benefits unless they have worked a certain period of time (from four months in France to one year more generally) (Scarpetta et al. 2010), and thus even basic survival is uncertain. In essence, being in poverty makes it even more difficult to get out of poverty. In the UK, since 2008 the number of under-25s unemployed has almost doubled to 90,000, and it is the only age group for whom unemployment has grown (Aldridge et al. 2013). The most recent figures show that Scotland has a higher youth unemployment rate than the rest of the UK (15.8% versus 13.7%) (Scottish

Government, 2016). Eleven of the 28 EU countries have a better youth employment rate than Scotland. Germany is discussed in more detail in the next chapter as a useful comparator, as their particular policies to deal with youth unemployment are likely to have contributed to them having less than half the rate of unemployment as Scotland (7.1%).

A lot of the policy consensus reached in Scotland is based on previous policies, specifically *Workforce Plus* (Scottish Executive, 2006) and *More Choices, More Chances* (Scottish Executive, 2006). These identify key groups (such as young people) requiring help and promote a partnership approach between central government, local government, local authorities, the third sector and employers. Scotland already has a distinctive approach to the rest of the UK with the Scottish Employability Forum, the National Delivery Group, the Third Sector Employability Forum, 32 Local Employability Partnerships (LEPs), and the Community Planning Partnerships. About half of the LEPs have adopted the ‘employability pipeline’ (Scottish Government, 2015), the idea that some people will enter into employment at a different stage in the process and so support needs to be tailored accordingly.

The Minister for Youth Employment announced the ‘Action for Jobs’ programme in 2012 to reduce youth unemployment through a mixture of direct job creation, support for training and apprenticeships, early intervention and support for charities and social enterprises (Scottish Government, 2012b). The white paper before independence ‘Scotland’s Future’ offered a clear direction that is still likely to be pursued by the SNP government despite the ‘No’ vote (Scottish Government, 2013). This has a focus on early intervention with an emphasis on an early assessment of needs to prevent long-term unemployment. Reports on how these are enacted indicate that youth apprenticeships are failing with most going to those who are over 25 years old or already in work (BBC News, 2015). In the next chapter it is shown that by looking to other countries such as Sweden or Norway, it becomes apparent that the support for young adults to get into employment in Scotland is best described as variable. Possibly, it is only through these types of comparisons that a more thorough assessment of progress can be made.

Support for those dealing with Mental Health issues

It is difficult to obtain statistics about the extent of mental health illness, but it is estimated that in the UK 10% of children and young people (aged 5-16 years) have a clinically diagnosable mental problem (Mental Health Foundation, 2015). However, 70% who experience mental health problems have not had appropriate interventions at a sufficiently early age (ibid). ‘Mental illness is one of the top public health challenges in Europe as measured by prevalence, burden of disease and disability’ (Scottish Government, 2012d: 3). The link between being born into poverty and the increased likelihood of mental health issues is great (Friedli, 2009). ‘Four out of every ten people suffering from mental disorders such as schizophrenia, depression, intellectual disability, alcohol use disorders, epilepsy, and those committing suicide are living in low- and middle-income countries’ (Funk et al. 2012: 1). The Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children Survey (HSBC), a World Health Organisation (WHO) collaborative cross-national study attempts to bring together data on 44 countries, and achieved this for 39 in 2011/12 and 42 in 2012/13. Both studies found that young people who live in the most unequal countries are particularly vulnerable to poorer health outcomes (Currie et al. 2012; Inchley et al. 2016). This highlights that poor mental health is linked to relative deprivation, that is how people feel about their situation being as important as their actual situation (Friedli, 2009). As stated by Alemán-Díaz (2016: 18):

Relative differences in SEP account for the health and social consequences of income inequality because being in a lower position causes chronic stress that impacts on the body and increases vulnerability to disease. Children are aware, very early on, of socio-economic differences and inequitable opportunities. Although this awareness does not eliminate the long-term effects of such unequal distribution, it can disempower young people in the face of adversity... one of the worst outcomes of inequality is an absolute disadvantage in empowerment, affecting a young person’s psychosocial functioning, including elements of self-efficacy, self-esteem and educational aspirations. Health inequalities experienced by youth shape their future opportunities – academically, professionally, health-wise and their life expectancy. These aspects of a person’s life affect the choices that they perceive are plausible, not what could in fact be possible.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) calls for a greater understanding of inequalities so that mental health is viewed as a social justice issue rather than

continually being individually pathologised. In a powerful statement Friedli (2009: iv) observes:

It is already evident that the relentless pursuit of economic growth is not environmentally sustainable. What is now becoming clear is that current economic and fiscal strategies for growth may also be undermining family and community relationships: economic growth at the cost of social recession. This means that at the heart of questions concerning ‘mental health impact’ is the need to protect or recreate opportunities for communities to remain or become connected.

Young people aged between 16-25 are identified as having particular challenges and require age appropriate services, such as specialised Children and Adult Mental Health Services (CAMHS) (Fraser and Bilshen, 2007). The Mental Health Strategy 2012-15 sets out the Scottish Government's priorities and commitments to improve mental health services and to promote mental wellbeing and prevent mental illness (Tod et al. 2014). There is a range of commitments made to ‘children and adolescence’, and in particular ‘looked after’ children and those with a disability or disabilities. There is still work to do to improve the way in which Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMH) services, local authorities and the third sector work together to address the mental health needs of this population and address inequality (Tod et al. 2014). The rate of suicide of young men in deprived areas in Scotland remains one of the highest in Europe and as already discussed, the underlying causes for this are likely to be structural and beyond the individual. Overall, at present, policies on dealing with mental health are beginning to recognise young adults as a specific group and that poverty is a major factor.

There is also recognition that the transition from young people’s mental health services to adult services has gaps leading to people being very vulnerable and at risk of harm (Joint Commissioning Panel for Mental Health: 2015). The Children’s Commissioner in England carried out what was called a ‘lightening review’ of CAMHS services in England for children and young people. It was revealed that large numbers, some with apparently serious conditions, were being turned away upon referral and/or were having to wait long periods of time for treatment (Children’s Commissioner, 2016). On average, 28% of children and young people referred to CAMHS were not allocated a service. The review set out to draw policy maker’s

attention to this issue. The area of mental health is a specific priority outlined in the forthcoming strategy of the Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland (2016). It is an area that is deservedly receiving more attention, but as yet progress in terms of provision and access is unable to be reported. Equally, accepting that this is again about poverty highlights that a policy response that essentially pathologizes rather than attempts to address the structural and macro influences are unlikely to succeed.

Substance Misuse

In England, 19,126 young people (under 18 years) accessed specialist substance misuse services in 2013- 14, a decrease of 4.5% from the year before (Public Health England, 2015). Based on an analysis of completed reports, 71% were in receipt of this care for cannabis use and 20% for alcohol (ibid). Based on the annual school's survey the prevalence of illegal drug use in 2013 was at similar levels to 2011 and 2012, with 16% reporting having ever taken drugs, 11% had taken them in the last year and 6% in the last month (Fuller and Hawkins, 2013). Reported substance misuse in Scotland is on the decrease, with 18% of 15 year olds and 4% of 13 year olds reported ever taking drugs, compared to 9% of 15 year olds and 2% of 13 year olds who reported having taken drugs in the last month (National Health Services Scotland, 2013). Between 1998 and 2013, the number of 15 year olds who never used drugs increased from 61% in 1998 to 82% in 2013, and for 13 year olds from 87% in 1998 to 96% in 2013 (ibid).

Shaw et al. (2007: 3) state that there are 'strong links between poverty, deprivation, widening inequalities and problem drug use but the picture is complex. It may involve fragile family bonds, psychological discomfort, low job opportunities and few community resources'. However, Aston's (2015) analysis of the Edinburgh Study data reveals that although substance misuse in early teenage years may be linked to risky behaviours, those teenagers who then became older and continued to take drugs often did not have the same issues. It was actually those who had a higher socio-economic status that continued to take drugs and did not see this as problematic,

supporting what has been defined as the ‘normalisation thesis’ (Parker et al. 2002). In short, this is a complex picture and more information is needed.

The National Drugs Strategy for Scotland, ‘The Road to Recovery’ sets out a strategic direction for tackling problem drug use based on treatment services (Scottish Government, 2008b). Young people are mentioned as a group requiring particular attention, both in the need to educate them about the impact of substances and risks posed and also the vulnerability of those who live in poverty to take drugs. There is limited analysis of the impact of this strategy but it has been suggested in the past that there is a lack of joined up working between youth and adult substance misuse services (DrugScope, 2010). The policies in place appear to be robust but information on implementation is limited and again the wider issue of poverty and inequality remains more or less untouched.

Young Parenthood

The number of teenagers giving birth in England and Wales is at its lowest level in nearly 70 years (Office for National Statistics, 2015). In Scotland, there is also a decline as the rate of pregnancy for those under 20 having dropped from the most recent peak of 57.7 in 2007 to 34.1 per 1,000 women in 2014, a decrease of 40.9% (Information Services Division (ISD) 2016). There is a strong link between poverty and teenage pregnancy, with 75% of teenage parents from the most deprived areas of Scotland (Health and Sport Committee, 2013). A teenage female living in the most deprived areas in Scotland is five times more likely to experience a pregnancy as someone living in the least deprived (ISD, 2016). Having children also makes the costs of living higher and thus contributes to remaining in poverty, as evidenced in the NPI Study (2015) that found that more than half of young people with children were in poverty (54%), in comparison to 28% who were without children.

The National Parenting Strategy (Scottish Government, 2012c: 8) sets out a commitment to spend £18 million to ‘coordinate, improve and deliver high quality, universal parent and family support, with clear supported pathways and intensive support where needed.’ It gives assurance to provide both universal and specialised

services, and for the purposes of this analysis the challenges faced by teenage parents, lone parents and those who are in prison, and explicitly fathers who may have been excluded. The Family Nurse Partnership (FNP), a structured programme to support teenage mothers has now been extended across Scotland. The National Parenting Strategy sets out a commitment to support teenage parents in a more holistic way, for example to help young women remain in education. It is of course wrong for society to perceive all teenage parents in a negative light, but early parenthood can restrict opportunities and increase inequalities for young mothers (Bradshaw et al. 2014).

Evidence submitted to the inquiry based on research carried out in North Tayside found that young mothers reported becoming a parent because they wanted love, affection and status. Becoming a mother was a means of gaining recognition that they felt was otherwise unavailable to them as they faced low educational attainment and limited job prospects (Health and Sport Committee, 2013). These findings point to deep emotional needs and a lack of care as well as the obstacles faced by those living in poverty. Although the Strategy identifies young fathers as a priority, a review of services concluded that barriers remain and fathers are still not acknowledged in the same way as mothers (Gardiner, 2013). The report recommends sharing good practice and encouraging change. Young fathers in prison are also highlighted as being especially socially excluded, coming from a background of poverty and requiring special support taking account of all of their needs (Buston et al. 2012). A review of this area shows that there has been and continues to be progress made to support young women living in poverty in a much more strategic way, but there is still more to be done and in particular to help young fathers and again to address poverty and inequalities.

Support for Care Leavers

Stock et al. (2014: 27) state that:

There is clear evidence that financial hardship is a key factor in increasing the strain on couple relationships and that poverty is a cause as well as a consequence of relationship breakdown. A series of robust quantitative and longitudinal studies, in particular those of Conger and Elder (1990; 1992;

1994) on economic stress theory, have shown that financial difficulties have a negative indirect effect on couple relationships.

At 31 July 2014, there were 15,580 'looked after' children and 1,470 in residential accommodation (Scottish Government, 2015b). The requirement of being looked after is put in place for a range of reasons, including complex disabilities that require specialist care, neglect, abuse, and involvement in the youth justice system. In essence, these children have not had positive experiences at home and research suggests that a good home life and relationships between children and parents can be a significant protective factor against the adverse affects of poverty (Treanor, 2012).

The Children Scotland Act (2014), a landmark piece of legislation, has now extended aftercare to those up to 26 years old with the onus remaining on the young person to request assessment to ascertain access to subsequent entitlement. This change is based on increasing knowledge about the importance and value of supporting and extending transitions (Munro et al. 2012). There is no doubt that this is a positive move, but it is still too early to state what the impact will actually be. Importantly, past provision had been offered up until 19, however, many still left local authority care at 16 (Scottish Commissioner for Children and Young People (SCCYP), 2008). Research in England shows that the number of young people leaving care is increasing and diminished or static resources have to be stretched further (Biheim-Crookall, 2012). To finance the change in provision, the Scottish Government allocated an additional £5 million to local authorities for four years (Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland (CELCIS), 2014). It is too premature to establish if this will mean that young people will continue to stay on and request assessment, and indeed if the current financing will be sufficient.

As of April 2015, through the Act a 'care leaver' will be defined as any young person who ceases to be looked after on or after they reach the age of 16 years old, regardless of the care placement, including those looked after at home, in kinship care or foster care. Despite respecting the need for more support for care leavers there are also concerns about the pressure on services in relation to prevailing financial constraints and the additional stresses by legislative changes (McGhee et al. 2014). There is no information at this stage on what aftercare services will actually mean in practice. The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 has also introduced the idea of

‘continuing care’ - an entitlement to stay in a care placement up to the age of 22. ‘Continuing Care’ is a new duty on local authorities to provide care leavers whose final placement was ‘away from home’ with a continuation of the kinds of support they received prior to their ceasing to be looked after (including accommodation in a ‘looked after’ placement). The aim is to provide a more graduated transition out of care. Significantly though, this does not cover young people whose last placement was ‘looked after at home.’ Research suggests that those looked after ‘at home’ are no different to those in care with both populations having equally poor outcomes in life (Gadda and Fitzpatrick, 2012). This aspect of the Act appears to create a questionable twin track approach so that young people in care and those at home are given access to a differing level of support and rights; a strange and irrational approach and a significant gap created in the legislation and policy. Lastly, for the purposes of this research focusing on young adults, for those up to 18 years old a ‘Named Person’ will be allocated to help with all types of problems and even includes offering short-term support, such as when they are ill or dealing with bereavement. At present there is no clarity on how this will be implemented but indicates a commitment for rights to be better enforced.

The outcomes for children who are looked after are poor as is discussed in the next chapter that focuses on transition. There is a strong relationship and cycle between those who are impoverished and go into care, and those who are in poverty upon leaving. In terms of the legislation, the Children Scotland Act (2014) signifies a move towards a much more robust care system that potentially extends the transition to adulthood. However, as also discussed, how this will actually be implemented is still unclear, although differentiating between those who are cared for ‘at home’ and those ‘in care’ may not only be confusing to enforce but also morally questionable. Indeed, there are strong arguments that providing care is not about institutions but should be viewed as something that belongs to and is the responsibility of the wider community (Smith et al. 2013).

YOUTH JUSTICE

It is not within the scope of this thesis to provide a detailed analysis of the history of Scotland's Youth Justice System and Policy. Nonetheless, by looking back as well as looking forward, policies today can be better understood and it will be argued that the focus on diversion today may be an attempt to reclaim back some of the welfarist traditions that had been previously eroded. Moreover, as will also be shown, there are a number of competing directions in youth justice policy with young adults especially vulnerable of being overlooked. Scotland has one of the youngest ages of criminal responsibility in the world at age 8; an arrangement that sits at odds with its overriding welfarist approach (MacDonald and Telford, 2007). The main forum for youth justice is the Children's Hearing System created as a result of the landmark Kilbrandon Report in 1964 and subsequent Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968. This system is predicated on the principles that the welfare of the child is paramount and children in trouble present needs where care and protection is required rather than punishment. However, this approach can be dangerous, particularly as it can allow for long periods of intervention and accords high levels of discretion to 'experts' such that the 'best interests of the child' can become grounds for more punitive action (McAra and McVie, 2011; Goldson, 2007; Giller and Morris, 1981). Overall though, if applied appropriately, this mode of justice is chiefly about offering support rather than punishment, and rehabilitative rather than authoritarian.

McAra (2006) defines the period from 1968 to 1995 as the high point of welfarism with the time after marking a 'punitive turn' (Muncie, 2008). The local and global influences underpinning this are discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

Focusing on the effect in Scotland, the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 is evidence of this change as it diluted the Kilbrandon principles. It explicitly placed public protection above the child's best interests, where it was deemed that the child presented a serious enough risk. Ironically in the post-devolution period there was convergence towards English and Welsh policy heralded by the introduction of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs). Although it has now been concluded that these were not a serious threat the Children's Hearing System (Mellon, 2013), nevertheless, they brought more young people into the system. This was and is possibly the worst course of action, as once young people are in the system it is very difficult for them to

get out (McAra and McVie, 2010). In a further assault on welfarism the Youth Courts were re-established in 2003 representing what has been described as ‘a punitive excursion’ said to pose ‘serious concerns for due process, human rights and net widening’ (Piacentini and Walters 2008: 43). Overall, McAra (2006: 142) eloquently defines this era as undergoing a process of ‘detartanisation’, whereby Scotland moved away from its distinctive approach to adopt more punitive policies, evidence of what has been defined as ‘populist punitiveness’ (Bottoms, 1995).

At present, Scotland appears to be regaining the welfarist ground that had been lost during this time, with ASBOs now ended, youth courts funding withdrawn and the setting up of the ‘Whole Systems Approach’ (WSA) based on evidence from the Edinburgh Study. This initiative was designed initially to prevent those under 18 and now under 21 from coming into the youth justice system through early intervention and diversionary schemes. The process is to provide support to each young person using a multi-agency response all crucially outside the framework of criminal justice. An evaluation of early implementation established that local authorities had adopted WSA to different levels (MacQueen and McVie, 2013). The shift to those over 16 now being defined as ‘youth’ was shown to be controversial for financial management and made them more likely to slip through the net in terms of intervention. A more recent evaluation of three different local authorities shows that there is continued variation in implementation and so the ‘success’ of WSA is not determined (Murray et al. 2015). Interestingly, diversion for those over 16 is not actually the default position and the authors argue that if this were changed the system would function more effectively. It is suggested that the onus ought to be on the Procurator Fiscal to justify prosecution rather than vice versa (Murray et al. 2015). The evaluation further noted that diversionary options such as fiscal and police fines had dropped for 16 and 17 year olds, but it was not known if this was because of the drop in overall numbers. The number of young people offending in Scotland has significantly fallen over the past few years but it is not clear if this can be attributed to the impact of WSA (Murray et al. 2015; Matthews, 2014). Overall, it is not known if WSA has been a success but it is certainly a step in the right direction.

McAra and McVie (2014: 22) promote ‘maximum diversion, minimum intervention’ as a way forward for youth justice. There has been a resurgence of practices aimed at

‘diverting’ young people from prosecution throughout the UK suggesting a sea change from the interventionism and punitive turn that characterized New Labour’s approach (Kelly and Armitage, 2014). There are other rationales also driving different practices that continue in Scotland and the rest of the UK showing that youth justice lacks a clear direction. At present, for example, restorative justice continues to be an option, although less used, it is closely related to diversionary practices as it sits outside the formal system and attempts to avoid the labelling that often ensues as a result of this type of contact (Braithwaite, 1989).

In considering the way in which young adults are dealt with in Scotland, it is important to recognise that those over the age of 16 are no longer dealt with by the Children’s Hearings System. After this, unless attending the last few remaining youth courts, those over this age appear in an adult court to be judged within the adult system. If they do not take up the intervention offered by the WSA, or if this is not offered, they are treated as adults and face going to a Young Offenders Institution. In Scotland, males aged between 16-21 are sent to HMYOI Polmont and young women of the same age to a separate facility within HMP&YOI Cornton Vale. The subsequent change in approach is stark and those aged 16-21 being judged as adults seems harsh. If the baseline of what is defined as a child were moved to be in line with the Children Scotland Act 2014, that is up to 26 years old, then the way in which young people are currently processed through the adult system would have to be very different.

In 2011 the Scottish Government drew up guidelines on working with young people who have offended on the cusp of becoming 18 to highlight the importance of considering the transition into adulthood and for services to provide a clear and co-ordinated response. The report titled ‘Reintegration and Transitions’ is mainly focused on young people moving out of prison (Scottish Government, 2011). Encouragingly, it emphasises the need to provide support to address all areas and needs in the young person’s life, such as accommodation, family and health. This undoubtedly is a progressive move to recognise the specific needs of this group. Despite these small more specialised areas where transitions and young adults are made explicit, the overarching framework of policies for children in Scotland appears to neglect young adults. Both ‘Getting it Right for Every Child’ and the ‘Early Years

Collaborative (CYC)' are focused more on the younger age group and helping them to get a good start. As summarised neatly by McAra (2014: 10) 'there is a need for GIRFOC as much as GIRFEC - getting it right for older children!' The youth and adult justice system are described as 'blunt instruments' for young people who offend, instead it is suggested that they would be better dealt with by health services, schools, youth work and community education (McAra, 2014: 10). Moreover, the link between poverty and criminality discussed in chapter four, highlights that these policies are reactive rather than preventative and fail to address the structural factors and inequalities that are often underlying offending behaviour.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has evidenced the link between poverty and the adverse effect it has on all areas of life for young people with a special focus on the UK and Scotland. In the discussion of the different policies that have been created with young adults in mind or at least with reference to their specific needs, it is apparent that this is a fairly new area with some policies more robust or direct than others. Moreover, how these policies have been enacted is less clear, and for some it is simply too early to give any sort of meaningful assessment of their impact. Taking the area of housing, it is shown that despite robust policies, the issue remains challenging with success faltering with rising rents and a lack of housing having created significant barriers. Young adults have been disproportionately affected and are the most likely population to be affected by homelessness. This shows that policies are interdependent (Farrall and Hay, 2010), and true change requires all sectors to work together and to want to change or challenge widening inequalities. The education, mental health and drugs policies are broad but support and implementation remains patchy. Policy and practice development for young parents is an area where there has been progress for women but less for young men, showing that a substantial shift in cultural thinking is required.

The main area where there has been significant development has been in supporting care leavers, with the Children Scotland Act 2014 undoubtedly bolstering rights. The gaps that remain though in this field are the unequal standing for those who are

looked after ‘at home’, and it is still too early to know what aftercare will actually mean. Lastly, in the discussion of youth justice it is apparent that there is growing awareness of the need to do less. The WSA and the focus on diversion is a step back towards the more welfarist traditions that have existed in Scotland. It is important though to acknowledge that diversion is not actually the default position for those over 16 and implementation remains variable. If the definition of ‘child’ were to be adopted in the same way across all sectors based on the Children Scotland Act (2014), this approach would be extended those who are 26. Taking all of the assessment into account, in terms of youth justice it is also suggested that extending the Children’s Hearings System to include young adults would go some way to holding them to an arguably more fitting standard of culpability, where needs not deeds are emphasised.

Overall, this assessment shows that there has been significant improvement in acknowledging the needs of this specific population and so the statement that ‘young adults are generally ignored in policy’ (France, 2008), is not true in contemporary Scotland. The context then in which the young people’s stories are told and which this research is being carried out appears to be within a climate that indicates an appetite for change and openness to learn which is very encouraging. It is also the case though that essentially these policies are not able to address the overriding issue of inequality or poverty. Thus, it is not just ‘good policy’ that can address these problems but as already stated, a much wider commitment from all sectors of society.

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW PART I: TRANSITIONS TO ADULTHOOD

INTRODUCTION

This first part is an extensive review of the literature on transitions to adulthood. The social construction of what could be deemed the traditional stages leading to adulthood are outlined with the concept of ‘emerging adulthood’ detailed (Arnett, 2001). Through an analysis of evidence from the UK and where appropriate internationally, the idea of emerging adulthood is shown to be inapplicable to those who live in poverty, who instead have accelerated and ill equipped transitions. The literature also shows that achieving a ‘sense of belonging’, that is of being genuinely cared for and accepted is especially difficult for those who have grown up in the care system and raises questions about what having a meaningful life is really about (Smith, 2013). In this review, relationships emerge as being sought after and craved for. This chapter shows that structural constraints and poverty make getting a foothold in life difficult at any level and the idea of agency being ‘bounded’ has resonance (Evans et al. 2001, Bourdieu, 1999). It becomes apparent that for change to happen young people have to be able to break away from the confines of societal structures and attempt to set their own agenda (Mouzelis, 1995).

In order to elevate and thus illuminate an understanding of transitions of those in poverty, it is offered that the concept of liminality could be expanded. Citizenship as opposed to adulthood is promoted as a more accurate or progressive way of thinking about transitions and different models of citizenship are outlined. A ‘transition to adulthood’ existing for all is ultimately disputed because the stability denoted by adulthood is not attainable in the way that it once was. As this is no longer deemed a fully viable destination the very idea of transitions then also comes into question. Young people in poverty are particularly vulnerable and their positions precarious. This review of the literature establishes that gaining an ‘insider view’ is essential. In understanding the lived realities of contemporary youth, this can then hopefully prompt a conversation and subsequent action to help inform and develop potentially better ways forward.

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF THE TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD

In an analysis of transitions to adulthood the notion of globalization is undoubtedly 'difficult to operationalize', however, it cannot be ignored (Holdsworth and Morgan, 2005: 7). The backdrop of globalisation, de-industrialisation, instability and lack of linear progression discussed in the previous chapter has an impact with a call for new ways of understanding youth transitions, cultures and identities to be explored (Bynner et al. 1997). To understand better contemporary constructions of what would have been considered the 'traditional' stages of transitions to adulthood, that is the 'start', 'middle' and 'end' of childhood, adolescence and young adulthood, the literature and evidence on this is now discussed.

Childhood and Adolescence

Age is a social construction, with children viewed as the 'other' from the nineteenth century onwards and a reference point 'in which the tensions and contradictions of the age could be managed and anesthetised' (Brown: 2005: 11). Since this time, the conception of childhood is best described as contradictory, moving between the idea of it being an age of innocence to a time when the individual is a threat to moral society (Muncie, 2015). There is inconsistency towards how childhood is looked upon and even today a lack of agreement on when it ends, as evidenced by the definition of the age of criminal responsibility varying widely between countries. For example, in Scotland this is embarrassingly low at only eight years old, whereas in Belgium it is 18 (Howard League for Penal Reform, 2008).

The death of Jamie Bulger was a critical turning point in how children are viewed in Britain (Davis and Bourhill, 1997), with the 'othering', moral panic and demonization of young people generated by the media and politicians having lasting implications (Scraton; 2010; Brown, 2009; Cohen, 1972). However, it would be more precise to acknowledge that this adverse reaction has not been towards all young people, but rather those who are disadvantaged. In Scotland, the use of the word 'N.E.D.' is an acronym for 'non-educated delinquent' and sums up that this is about the unforgiving combination of youth, poverty and deviance. The irony being that the negative impact

of this monochrome and unfair representation hides that young people are the most likely population to be victims of crime (Scottish Government, 2014b; Office for National Statistics, 2013), and are more sinned against than sinning (Hartless et al. 1995). Moreover, the unjustified fear directed at young people is not just confined to between ‘them’ and ‘adults’, but has also spread so that it is now also between young people themselves (Weller, 2007).

This ‘othering’ is partly because of a lack of engagement about the realities of these young impoverished people’s lives and the growing inequality pushing commonality out (Smith, 2001). Indeed, this interpretation extends the importance of recognition (Barry, 2016), as these young people are either being misrecognised or unrecognised for who they actually are. Policy makers increasingly live ‘worlds apart’ from the young people they impact upon and advisors are driven by targets to get people into work rather than appropriate work (Percy-Smith, 1999). Unlike the Scandinavian model of common citizenship, there is little to no relationship between those who label and those who are labelled. This division creates ideal conditions for the creation of binaries and distortions far from the truth (Young, 1999), and young people have limited opportunities to challenge the perceptions forced upon them (Barry, 2006).

Those who offend are an especially ostracised group, seen not as vulnerable subjects of risk to their welfare but as dangerous or anti-social bearers of risks to the welfare of the community (McNeill, 2006). In sum, the idea of ‘childhood’ no longer holds the protection that it once did and there has been a blurring of this category into the more dangerous territory and label of ‘youth’. It is important though, again to try not to be too one-dimensional and identify the contradictions found, as policy makers oscillate between punitive policies such as anti-social behaviour orders and rehabilitative models such as the WSA. The direction being taken is unclear, moving from protecting to punishing, leading to inevitably dissatisfying and an overall haphazard way of ‘progressing.’

There is a lack of consensus about when adolescence begins and indeed ends in the literature. Barry (2005) offers that the ‘youth phase’ is between the ages of 15 and 25. Arnett 2006(a) however finds the idea of a ‘youth phase’ questionable, pointing out

that in the later years and particularly after the age of 18 there are more responsibilities and expectations and instead that this ought to be defined as 'emerging adulthood' discussed in more detail later. Bynner (2005) suggests the definition of 'post adolescence.' Although commentators are unable to agree on how this ought to be defined, there is a consensus that in contemporary society the 'intervening years' between childhood and adulthood is much more nuanced than simply 'adolescence.' The uncertainty about the way in which this transition is articulated and discussed is an accurate reflection of the reality that it is a perplexing and unclear time, both for those experiencing it and those analysing it. These intervening years, whatever they are defined as are presented in both positive and negative terms, as a confusing period where identity is in a state of flux or crisis (Erikson, 1968). It is a time of 'storm and stress' but also for most a time of hope and opportunity (Arnett and Hughes, 2012; Arnett, 2006).

YOUTH TRANSITIONS

The research establishes that this a time of significant change requiring support (Rea and Callister, 2009). Bjorklund and Bee (2009: 148) state that 'Young adulthood is the time that the greatest number of social role transitions takes place and also a time of extremely complex and demanding adjustments.' Arnett (2006; 2001; 2000) proposes that this is a distinctive stage that could be defined as 'emerging adulthood.' This is said to have five principal features, namely that it is an age of identity exploration, instability, feeling 'in-between', self-focused but also a time of possibilities (Arnett, 2006a). In each of these features individual choice is stressed. Brynner (2005: 380) criticises this assessment stating it is 'misleading to present a society as changing with all elements; in effect, 'marching in step'', and that the rates and forms of transition are strongly dependent both on institutional factors (how the transition from school to work is managed) and on structural factors such as social class, gender, ethnicity and locality. This analysis is supported by the varying ages of transitions within countries, for example, young people in Australia leave home as young as 18, whereas in Italy the average age is 27 (Holdsworth and Morgan, 2005).

Bynner (2005: 372) concludes that human and cultural capital dictate the timing of youth transitions with ‘those who have most to start with...extend their transition the longest.’ Although Arnett (2006) presents this extended time living at home as being unproblematic, a German study reflects the difficulties and strains that can arise with parents reporting being frustrated with their children who move from one apprenticeship to another (Santoro, 2011). Instead of this being a comfortable situation, the transitions were defined as ‘fragmented’, with young people wanting to move out of parents’ houses but being financially unable to do so. It could be argued that ‘emerging adulthood’ downplays the financial aspect of these extended transitions and that many young people may want to ‘move on’ but are actually trapped within, rather than choosing to remain in, this ‘in between’ stage.

There is a dearth of comparative studies on how young people from different backgrounds experience this transition, however, it is clear that in support of the work of Brynner (2005), class and structural inequalities often hold people back from achieving success (Dolton et al. 1999). MacDonald et al. (2011: 143) conclude that the pathways for working-class young people from deprived backgrounds ‘have become particularly blurred, unstable and circuitous.’ Jones (2002:4) summary of the situation based on an analysis of a small number of studies concludes that:

There is increasing polarisation among young people between those who experience extended transitions and those who make accelerated transitions, between the rich and the poor, between those with qualifications and those without. These polarisations show up in many aspects of young people’s transitions, and they reflect continuing outcomes of structural inequality rather than personal agency and choice.

The individualization that is emphasised then in the work of Arnett (2006) is, as Bynner (2005: 379) concludes, ‘constrained by forces that are fundamentally social, cultural and structural in nature.’ The more positive attributes associated with ‘emerging adulthood’ then only exist when young people are given the opportunity for a prolonged period of independent role exploration, and the wider structures can act as an ultimate barrier to experiencing this. The criticism directed towards Arnett of being overly simplistic is deepened if it is accepted that accounts of transitions ought to have greater diversity. This work needs to be ‘re-thought’ to include those

who have never really ‘fitted’ with the conventional understanding of transitions, such as lesbian, gay and transgender young people (Skelton, 2002). Coleman et al. (1997), in taking this diversity on board offers instead that this epoch is one of multiple transitions.

This period presents challenges that can appear insurmountable for those especially from disadvantaged backgrounds. The structural limitations on those economically deprived are clear from the literature, as already outlined in this and the previous chapter. Poverty has a detrimental impact on all aspects of life, and in a statement that demands attention, it is revealed that ‘a boy born in the poorest tenth [per cent] of areas can expect to live 14 years less than one born in the least deprived tenth. For girls, the difference is eight years’ (Aldridge et al. 2013: 1).

TRANSITIONS AND THE IMPACT OF POVERTY

Although by no means an exhaustive list, by analysing the detrimental impact of poverty in relation to locality, education, housing, family relationships and bereavement, the direct impact of structural constraints to those in the transition or transitions to adulthood is made more transparent and builds upon the previous chapter. The discussion will then move onto a focus on the research and literature on young people leaving care in an attempt to analyse whether the idea of emerging adulthood, as conceptualised by Arnett (2006), is applicable to those who are without the ‘safety net’ of parents. This is also useful to provide context for the analysis of the findings as many interviewed have had experience of being ‘looked after.’

Locality and Poverty

The word ‘locality’ as opposed to ‘community’ has been used because the latter is a contested concept (Mooney and Neil, 2009). To give some insight into the difficulty it presents in the literature, whereas it is commonly used to describe space (Tonnie, 1963), others discuss it as something imagined (Anderson, 1991, Gruzd et al. 2011). It has the power to evoke a positive scene similar to the ideal type ‘*gemeinschaft*’ of a

unified, traditional, almost pastoral ideal (Tonnies, 1963). However, through the process of individualisation, communities are said to be becoming fragmented (Putnam, 2000), and thus moving more towards the opposite end of Tonnies' spectrum, of 'gesellschaft.' These ideal types have striking similarity to the mechanical and organic societies described by Durkheim (1933). Overall, the use of the word 'community' raises substantial issues and therefore a less complicated and convoluted way of discussing the places in which the young people live is instead to refer to it simply as 'locality.'

The Chicago school's seminal studies developed Burgess's zonal theory of the city and focused on the 'zone in transition' outside the Central Business District (CBD). This space was defined as having a constantly changing population as those drawn to live there for work in the CBD only stayed until they could afford to move to a better standard of living (Park et al. 1925). This area had the highest crime rate. Although economic deprivation was highlighted, the theory emphasised the instability of the population arguing that this resulted in weak social bonds (Shaw and McKay, 1942). The individuals living there were viewed as having conventional goals and hopes, but that for standards to be set, a degree of stability was required. Kornhauser (1978: 63) summarises Shaw and McKay's theory of social disorganization as existing when 'the structure and culture of a community are incapable of implementing and expressing the values of its own residents.' On the other hand, some of the poorest areas in Britain could be described as zones in stagnation, where there is a relatively stable population but with a depressing certainty that their position is unlikely to change for the better (Corr, 2014; Corr, 2014b; Pickering et al. 2012; MacDonald et al. 2011; Hanley, 2007).

There is growing evidence highlighting the detrimental impact of deprivation on overall well-being and life chances and the link to offending (Alderidge et al. 2015; Henderson et al. 2007; MacDonald et al. 2005; Holdsworth and Morgan, 2005; Smith, 2002; Thrasher, 1936). Corr (2014) describes the 'social milieu' experienced by young people and reflects other studies reporting young people feeling that they having 'nothing to do', experiencing leisure poverty and this being directly linked to their reasons for offending (Barry, 2009; Barry, 2006 Pickering et al. 2012; Phoenix, 2009). The disappearance of parks and local youth centres are lamented and regarded

as a visible manifestation of a breakdown of communities and social capital (Putnam, 2000; Phoenix, 2009). However, rather than these localities of limited opportunities being vacated, they instead become places in which people become stuck. The lack of flows and exit signs in these areas creates a 'stickiness' of place restricting mobility (Allen and Hollingworth, 2013). Young people become 'trapped by space' (Green and White, 2007), where they are unwilling to or have a mental barrier about seeing or moving beyond their local area and thus restrict their opportunities almost consciously. The lack of mobility is shown to breed cultures where those who live there become defensive about their locality, as it is all they have to think or care about these become places where gang activity and fighting for space is how time is spent (Henderson et al. 2007). McAra and McVie (2015: 5) define violence as a 'resource' for young people from the most impoverished backgrounds, a 'touchstone against which identities are honed' and a means of empowerment and way of attaining and sustaining status amongst peers.

Defining 'gangs' is problematic (Decker and Weerman, 2005), however, Bannister and Fraser (2008: 98) suggest that it as 'any durable, street-oriented youth group whose involvement in illegal activity is part of their group identity'. 'Territorial gangs', identified in places such as the West of Scotland are regarded as a manifestation of the stickiness of places, with young people coming together from the same area to form tight boundaries of movement and 'control' (Fraser, 2013; Pickering et al. 2012; Bannister et al. 2010; Thrasher, 1936). The link between poverty and gang membership is well established (McAra and McVie, 2015; Fraser, 2010; Centre for Social Justice, 2009; Kintrea et al. 2008; Bannister and Fraser, 2008). Gangs are predominantly male and young women usually play a secondary role (Kintrea et al. 2008). Being in a gang fulfils the role and expectations of being 'a man' (Connell, 2002). Girls and young women who join gangs, an area still under-researched, do so for what is reported to be more complex reasons, revolving around the need to be with others who have suffered similar histories and backgrounds of abuse and to achieve a sense of belonging (Batchelor, 2005).

'Hegemonic masculinity', that is the social construction of masculinity to be a strong 'manly' man or alpha male, shapes or at the very least has an influence on the cultural expectations experienced by boys and young men across the classes. It has even been

used to explain why men commit more crime than woman in the analysis of white-collar crime (Messerschmidt, 1993). It could also go some way to explain the most extreme violence and subculture of 'hyper-masculinity' that develops in rare cases among some gangs (Hallsworth and Young, 2008). It is worth bearing in mind that one of the strongest criticisms of this idea is that it produces a 'heteronormative conception of gender that essentializes male-female difference and ignores difference and exclusion' (McConnell and Messerschmidt, 2005). In a call for a more nuanced understanding, McConnell and Messerschmidt (2005: 848) argue that future research 'now needs to give much closer attention to the practices of women and to the historical interplay of femininities and masculinities.'

In deepening the complexity of understanding it is important to note that there are few studies that have explored the differential impact of rural and urban areas in establishing adulthood and constructing identity formation (Henderson et al. 2007). The evidence shows that the limited facilities and lack of transport links in rural areas mean that young people living in these areas have a higher chance of feeling and being isolated (Henderson et al. 2007). Weller (2007) urges for rural revitalization so that direct support is offered to reach out to young people and address their specific form of leisure poverty. Therefore, an important consideration for this research was to attempt to in some way address some of these continuing gaps in knowledge in terms of the impact of gender and also of location on transitions.

Bourdieu (1999: 127) states that 'those who are deprived of capital are either physically or symbolically held at a distance from goods' intensifying the experience of finitude and 'chains one to a place.' Those living in poverty, as will be shown in this and past research, have conventional goals (Healy and O'Donnell, 2008), but are the most unlikely population to achieve these. The strain felt then could be said to be excessive and may even become about the difficulty faced in achieving the basics, such as paying rent or buying food. As well as poverty being easier to get into and harder to get out of, it would appear ironically that understanding and compassion for those experiencing it within society is increasingly unlikely, as evidenced by the rise of 'poverty porn', of documentaries about those receiving benefits. The 'anti-poor' narratives promoted in these work to harden attitudes against social welfare and those who are deprived (Mooney, 2011). Champagne (1999: 55) observes that 'far from

helping the residents of these suburbs'...they are 'presented as insalubrious and sinister, their residents as delinquents. Young people looking for work no longer dare say they live in these housing projects, which now have a bad reputation everywhere because they have made the headlines.' Far then from the situation being contextualised and understood, these accounts evidence an extreme form of 'othering' that is almost a celebration of superiority and the demise of empathy.

Health and Poverty

Poverty has a detrimental impact on health and life expectancy (Aldridge et al. 2015). The link between bereavement, emotional issues and offending is gaining recognition and in a sample of 167 persistent offenders in Scotland a higher rate of bereavement of close family than in the general population was revealed (Vaswani, 2008). Similar to research with women who have been abused, they dealt with this by taking substances as a form of self-medication (Covington, 1999). Although counselling had been offered to more than one third of the young men in Scotland, only a very small number took it up. However, counselling may not always be appropriate (Ribbens and McCarthy, 2005). Bereavement may even be empowering in some cases (MacDonald, 2006; Ribbens and McCarthy, 2005), as stated of Shirleen, a young woman discussed in the work of Ribbens and McCarthy (2005), who after her grandparents died said that she had used the experience to 'ponder life's brevity and significance, and to want to make her life purposeful' (Ribbens and McCarthy, 2005:3).

Although the death of someone close is not a 'turning point' either sought or could be appropriately promoted, it nonetheless provoked a change of direction. For those who experience successive disempowering experiences though and are particularly disadvantaged, life, as is further noted by Ribbens and McCarthy (2005: 64) can 'appear full of unpredictable and alarming uncertainties'. Their assessment then is that bereavement is experienced differently and inequality influences who will cope less well. The most important source of support for adolescents when they have suffered bereavement is friends (Winston's Wish, 2013). This is a crucial point showing that 'peers' can be positive.

Education and Family

The impact of inequality is undeniable in the field of education, with a persistent and growing under-representation of young people from lower-socio economic backgrounds progressing into Higher Education, even those even with the academic grades not pursuing university places (Sosu and Ellis, 2014). 40% of the lowest attaining pupils in Scotland live in the 10% most deprived communities (Scottish Executive: 2006). In 2009, 22% of school leavers from the most deprived areas moved into unemployment compared to only 6% in the least deprived (Pirrie and Hockings, 2012). The deleterious impact of a lack of educational services for young people unable to conform to the traditional demands and expectations of mainstream schooling has also been identified (Phoenix, 2009). The Edinburgh Youth Transitions study has established a link between school expulsion and offending and has urged for policy to be driven more towards educational inclusion (McAra and McVie, 2010). School exclusion is a 'social process', and like classical labelling theory (Becker, 1963), or indeed the process of primary and subsequently secondary deviance (Lemert, 1951), students perceived to be deviant can have this identity either affirmed or alternatively recast as positive through the interactions in which they engage. Schools can be 'motivational environments' (Cotterell, 2007: 147). However, as Smith (2011: 109) argues, most schools do not take account of the impact they play in the process of exclusion but rather blame the pupil themselves, dynamics regarded as 'part of a boarder strategy of 'responsibilisation'.

The situation is made more complex as some young people create their own mental barriers to progress, in what could be regarded as a reformulation of structural limitations or the habitus (Bourdieu, 1990). For example, a study of young black males in England, found that for some, certain aspirations were regarded as simply unrealistic and they reported avoiding putting themselves into a position where they risked 'failure'. Fear of rejection or failure acted as an invisible constraint to progress (Archer and Yamashita, 2003). This reinforces the need for a discussion of transitions to include considerations of race as well as sexuality. Overall, young people, who for whatever reason are structurally limited and lack self-confidence to move beyond their confines, appear then to be frozen or 'choose' (all be it in a restricted sense) to remain in a state of inaction (Blackman, 1997). This 'acceptance' of hopelessness

could be a way of dealing with the disillusionment faced rather than continuing to try to fight it. For impoverished young people then there are multiple restrictions, both real and self-imposed.

As outlined in Chapter two, there is increasing awareness in Scotland that school and education could be an important site for helping to identify and rectify problems for children and there has been some significant legislative and policy initiatives created to promote this. However, looking to other countries within this field and within the confines of this thesis, it is apparent that the support given in Scotland can look quite piecemeal in comparison. For example, in Canada, children who are no longer attending school are brought back on a 'second chance' principle (Looker and Theissen, 2008). In the Nordic countries, there is a more rigorous and inclusive system in place so that young people are supported to stay in education. A youth guarantee is also given so that every person up to 20 years old is entitled to an education at upper secondary level. Jones (2002) concludes that an emphasis on education as a way of tackling social exclusion needs to also include families and convince young people that their personal investment is worth it. A study with children aged 13 found that those who were socio-economically deprived had similar high aspirations to those living in affluent areas, but such aspirations were not enough and family support was crucial (Kintrea et al. 2011).

There is increasing awareness of the importance of involving families, however, how this is actually enacted is another matter. In December 2011, David Cameron launched a 'Troubled Families' programme to 'turn around' the lives of 120,000 families in England by 2015. In his speech he failed to mention poverty, ill health or poor housing, but rather instead argued that those targeted are part of a 'shameless culture' (Levitas, 2012). The programme aimed to get children back into school, reduce youth crime and anti-social behaviour and 'put adults on a path back to work and bring down the amount public services currently spend on them' (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012: 9). The lack of context that was given underpinning these issues is revealing and arguably part of a wider discourse and mythmaking, that there exists a culture of worklessness (MacDonald, 2015; Shildrick et al. 2012). The evidence from the Government about this programme originally suggested that it has been positive (Wintour, 2014). However, as Levitas (2014: 5)

'closer' analysis concludes, 'The data is being presented as heralding a great success when it is extremely difficult to assess whether it shows anything at all.' Levitas (2014) also draws attention to the dubious ethics with this programme being used in conjunction with 'payment by results', with local authorities given financial incentives for each problematic family 'found'. In August 2016 it was revealed that the evaluation concluded that there was no discernible impact and had been suppressed to save embarrassment by the Government (Cook, 2016). Haines et al. (2013) argue that 'remedies' such as these, do not succeed because they usurp the role of parents. Instead, the authors draw attention to the successful Swansea Bureau, a diversionary programme that puts parents in the central and 'natural' role of care giving and the first point of reference. Overall then, bringing families in to be a part of the solution rather than working with children alone appears to be a better way forward, and how this is enacted a vital consideration.

Lack of Stable Home

'Home' is difficult to define and Henderson et al. (2007) reason that it has three domains, the emotional, material and social. Having a home, a place of security, is increasingly more challenging for young people today. Despite the fall in figures, those under 25 years old accounted for 34% of the overall applications in 2013/14 (Scottish Government, 2014c). In England the situation is even more exasperated, with under 25s now accounting for more than half the people seeking help for homelessness and living in homeless accommodation (Homeless Link, 2014). Scotland, as already mentioned in the previous chapter, has some of the most progressive housing legislation in Europe, and this is a good example of how legislation alone is not enough in dealing with any problem.

The reasons for homelessness are complex, and the single largest cause in Scotland and Wales for single people under the age of 25 was relationship breakdown with their family, friends or partner (Harleigh-Bell, 2013). The significance of relationships and networks is also highlighted with care leavers shown to be a group most at risk of becoming homeless (Beatty et al. 2013). Tyler and Schmitz (2013) found in their study of 40 young people who had been homeless that many had a

nomadic life, few resources to draw upon and often came from backgrounds of substance misuse and violence. They had no real concept of what ‘home’ actually meant. In a damning but revealing insight Coles (1997: 117) states:

A more sensitive definition of homelessness encompasses factors concerned with a lack of decent, affordable, and secure accommodation. It would then include young people in poor, insecure, and overcrowded housing as well as those forced to stay with friends and relatives, whose homelessness tends to remain hidden. The adoption of this definition would have implications going far beyond one based simply on rooflessness.

As also discussed in the previous chapter, having a home in itself does not mean that one is stable and indeed can be a cause of poverty also with increasingly high rents making young people especially vulnerable.

Digital Disadvantage

Although not the focus of this thesis, it is important to recognise emerging research that young people living in poverty do not have the same access to information technology (Helsper, 2008). This can have a wider impact on other areas of their lives, and particularly employment, with jobs now mainly advertised using the Internet (Tunstall et al. 2012). This raises questions about the importance of access to digital information to lead a fulfilling life. This also raises questions about the applicability of Bauman’s (2000) theoretical stance, whereby it could be argued that being excluded from digital communication means relationships rely on traditional means of contact, and thus fluidity is not enacted in the same way, if at all.

TRANSITIONS WITHOUT A SAFETY NET – BEING ‘LOOKED AFTER’

As already discussed, the impact of family to support transitions can be crucial, however as concluded by Collins (2001: 272) ‘the family safety net for young people aging out of care may be non-existent, problematic, or, at best, capable of limited and sporadic support.’ This population therefore bear very little resemblance to their

young counterparts who are experiencing extended transitions to adulthood (Arnett, 2006). Instead, they become 'instant adults' often with disastrous consequences (Stein, 2005). Specifically, the statistics show that they are more likely to experience homelessness, mental health problems, early parenting, loneliness, poor health, isolation and social exclusion (Scottish Criminal Reporter's Administration, 2012; McClung and Gayle, 2010; Elsley et al. 2007; Scott and Hill, 2006). The Centre for Social Justice (2015) note that young people in care in England account for 1% of the population as a whole, but 24% of the adult prison population, 11% of homeless young people and 70% of sex workers.

Another consideration is that some young people who have grown up in care may have lost contact with parents and siblings and therefore endured a similar and arguably needless experience as those suffering from bereavement (Straiton, 2012; Vaswani, 2008). A freedom of information request from Action for Children in 2014 revealed that a third of children in the UK have been separated from their brothers and sisters when placed in foster care (Collinson, 2014). As yet, there is no published evidence of the full extent of the problem for all those who are 'looked after', but it would be fair to say that up until recently this issue has remained largely unseen and there is no legal right for siblings to remain in contact. Bringing together research from seventeen studies from several different countries including the USA, UK and Australia, Hegar (2005) concludes that siblings that remain together do better than those who are separated in terms of life chances. However, this is an issue that I feel does not require justification but rather is a moral obligation.

There is a growing call and acceptance that care leavers should play a role in the decision making processes and supported to build practical skills to live independently (Fauth et al. 2012). The Scottish Commission for Children and Young People (SCCYP) (2008) has also recommended in the past that there is a need for more semi-independent living units for this population for this reason. Overall, the literature and research overwhelmingly recommends a person-centred approach with support provided based on an individual assessment of need. Furthermore, that this support continues until the young person is comfortable and prepared to move on, and has networks in place to make the transition smooth (Duncalf et al. 2013). As already

discussed, The Children Scotland Act (2014) is a landmark piece of legislation and may herald a much different system and improved outcomes for care leavers.

BEYOND RESOURCES- THE IMPORTANCE OF BELONGING

One of the key areas of inquiry in this study will be exploring difficult questions about what it means to be an adult and whether the young people saw themselves in this way. Another aspect of this research, is the un-resolved and under-researched area particularly relevant to those leaving care, about how young people move from formal structured support which in many ways could be argued to be artificial, to networks where there is 'authentic belonging', the feeling of being loved and accepted (Van Breda et al. 2012). A longitudinal study of nine young men who left care found that 'authentic belonging' was what was wanted most, and the pursuit of this even meant that other markers of 'success', such as getting into employment were scuppered to achieve this, by for example establishing anti-social relationships (Van Breda et al. 2012).

'Social capital' is a useful way of theorising the importance of relationships and networks, and for those from a lower socio-economic status this is not easily generated (MacDonald et al. 2011; Barry, 2006; Bourdieu, 1986). However, the concept of 'authentic belonging' goes even further than 'social capital', whereby it is not just about connections that can be utilised or used as a resource, but rather, it is about a simple and easy acceptance among others which is unconditional. Based on the scant research that exists on what helps young people who have left care, support from friends and family, and to lesser extent ex-carers is identified as being important (National Society Prevention Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), 2012). Van Breda et al. (2012) describe how young people from disadvantaged backgrounds require a great deal of resilience and unshakable hope to believe that they can effect change in their environments and carve out a better future. They summarise the paths of those they followed as being 'a struggle, in which they grapple to escape the entropic pull of the past, much like quicksand that ever threatens to reclaim them' (Van Breda et al. 2012: 14). 50% of young people return to their family home after leaving care even when they had previously been abused there (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty

to Children (NSPCC), 2012). These findings reveal that it is the informal support networks, and especially those relationships that existed prior to the individual going into care in the first place, even when these were damaging, that remain significant (NSPCC, 2012; Dixon and Stein, 2002).

There is a growing research base showing that the care experience itself has an impact on whether or not young people feel that it is an option that they want to continue (Barry, 2009). The quality of relationships between the workers and the young person is also critical in whether or not the young person decides to remain in aftercare (Ward, 1997). A direct link has been established between young people feeling listened to and wanting to remain in care, and those who did not feel listened to and as a result wanted to stay or remain with their family, even when this was option was not advised (Who Cares Scotland, 2014). Overall, it is the actual care experience itself which impacts upon whether a young person feels that remaining is a viable option when the decision as to whether to leave or not is to be made.

At present, it would appear that the heavy investment made both financially and otherwise into formal structured networks has only minimal permanence, and that when the legal protections afforded to ‘children’ end, the potential vulnerability of young adults is not fully taken into consideration or enacted. Therefore, arguably there is a need for young people to be supported to remain connected or become connected to communities or associations beyond formal arrangements, and at the very least that the care experience is a good one. There are some important and encouraging developments underway indicating an acceptance of the need to think beyond what was once regarded as the ‘end point’ for young people leaving care, previously at 16 years old. In England, in January 2015 the Government committed another year of funding to help ten authorities support care leavers as part of the ‘New Belongings’ initiative. This has been set up alongside the Care Leavers Network bringing together service providers and local communities to work together with expert teams to improve support given to young people leaving care. It is hoped that following this stage, if shown to be successful, this will be replicated in other areas too. In Scotland, there is an even more radical organisation set up called ‘*Why Not?*’ as part of the service Care Visions. They refer to the idea of ‘moral adoption’, whereby someone can decide to take up the role of an adopter based on agreement

between the care leaver and the individual. At present there is limited information on this service, however, they are in the process of securing funding through *CELCIS* to fund an evaluation of their support. This movement points towards even greater awareness of the needs of care leavers and challenges the very notion of disengagement (Iversholt, undated). It also contests the notion that the nuclear family is the only or acceptable form of family, and as well as recognising the fluidity of relationships, interestingly encourages a much more nuanced understanding of obligations (Smith, 2009).

Whereas the research discussed previously stresses the idea that relationships are becoming more fragmented, this measure highlights that actually relationships are probably just as strong as before but different in the way in which they are formulated and held together. 'Families of choice' link to wider discussions about the role of friendship has parallels with Spencer and Pahl's (2006) idea of 'personal communities' and Savage et al.'s (2005) notion of 'elective belonging'. Savage et al. (2005) found that those who had moved to Manchester or 'blow ins' felt a sense of belonging to the place more or less as soon as they had moved, therefore showing that they did not have to have been born in a place in order to feel like they were a part of it. This research may be useful in shaping and developing thinking on how relationships can be formed or belonging created and highlight that bonds don't have to be 'natural' and potentially don't even have to be built over a very long time. Perhaps, the most enduring relationships simply have to be the most genuine.

The organisation 'Why Not?' raise the idea that even relationships established between a young person and worker can have the depth and meaning that allows it to then move past the time when the latter person is simply paid to be there. Also, to view the interaction, as someone fulfilling their obligations because they are paid is undoubtedly likely to do a disservice to both parties involved, dehumanising the reality of what actually goes on (Smith, 2009). This also raises a question about the morality of ending contact at all, and also the converse, how can you expect workers to do any more than their duty as paid employees? In reality, if the relationships are truly genuine then these dilemmas will be easily sorted, but it may also mean that a silent division develops between those who will be truly cared for and also those who will not. Is this better than the current situation, where there is simply a medium level

achieved or hoped for and really the idea of more is actually discouraged? Overall these are all difficult questions to resolve. In bringing these to light though it illuminates further the importance of ‘belonging’ as a central theme of connection, a positive form of community solidarity and collective identity.

AGENCY, STRUCTURE AND IDENTITY

In order to understand and explore the complex connection between agency, structure and identity, I have drawn on the work of Bourdieu (1990) and Evans et al. (2001). Bourdieu argues that there is an enduring interplay between what is defined as the ‘field’ and habitus. The field is a concept loosely described and therefore can be applied to all situations and encompass all factors. The habitus is the individual’s internalisation of reality and conceptualisation of their own identity based on past experience and born out in everyday action. The idea has importance as a way of attempting to bring structure and agency together, and it is argued that the habitus, being predicated on the past recreates and internalises structures. The habitus then as conceptualised allows for limited flexibility, as stated ‘Agents cut their coats according to their cloth’ (Bourdieu, 1990: 64). For those living in poverty the restrictions are especially limiting (Webster et al. 2004). Evans et al. (2001: 25) presents the idea of ‘bounded agency’ to reflect how agency is both temporally embedded and bounded, and influenced by the past, present and sense of future possibilities. Smith (2011: 29) states that ultimately, as shown by the habitus, the relationship between agency and structure is an unequal one resulting in young people and their decisions products of ‘constrained choice’. This fits with Bourdieu’s original and developed conception where the ‘art of inventing’ and change of the habitus is held to only happen within what is perceived to be possible or reasonable (Bourdieu, 1990).

Culture is a way in which young people can, in ‘imaginary ways’, have some control or at least solve some of the powerlessness felt (Hall and Jefferson, 1976: 13). Through music for example they can make themselves visible and show that they will not merely exist passively in a world that is not their own. They create their own identity, and therefore their own culture, refusing to be seen and treated as ‘poor

adults' (Garratt, 1997: 149). This culture within the wider culture shows that the relationship between structure and agency is not pre-determined and sometimes there are less conventional means adopted for control to be established. However, discussing youth culture as a form of sub-culture is problematic as it fails to reflect that it often applies to the majority of young people, rather than a negative representation or construction of poverty (Arnett and Hughes, 2012; Shildrick and MacDonald, 2006). Furthermore, playing on the Xbox, regarded as a form of culture, could also be alternatively described as a form of retreatism (Merton, 1957).

As well as considering culture as a way of enacting agency, Mouzelis (1995) argues more broadly that Bourdieu's conception of the habitus under-theorises voluntary actions and those that reject or selectively internalize social structures. As Bourdieu (1990: 64) states of the habitus, 'it adjusts itself to a probable future which it anticipates and helps to bring about because it reads it directly in the present of the presumed world, the only one it can ever know.' Farrall et al. (2010: 552) state that Bourdieu has an 'impoverished view of the subject.' Indeed, if desistance, which will be discussed in more detail later, is accepted as showing 'active' agency, it is an example of something that does not equate easily with the concept of the habitus. The idea of habitus leaves little room for those actions or decisions that actively rebuke structures, conscious efforts to break away or attempt to defy restrictions. Therefore, arguably the habitus is only really able to adequately describe conformity. It leaves little room for hope of change, or if read in a different way, it at least shows how remarkable such divergence is.

To draw on the work of Durkheim (1938), it could be said that contemporary society has moved from being a mechanical to 'organic society', whereby work is divided and relationships are more fluid. As a result, life chances are more structurally differentiated in terms of race, class and gender (Furlong and Cartmel, 1997), and identity creation therefore is a process of 'structured individualization' (Rudd and Evans (1998: 61). With the emphasis then on individualisation, identity creation could also be regarded as an extension of responsibilisation and something that is up to the person to do by him or herself. As stated by Cotterell (2007: 74) 'Youth are charged with creating their own biographies, where the experience of older generations can offer little direction.' However, identity creation, like the development of agency is

relational, and Cotterell (2007: 74) describes friends as significant guides and ‘fellow travellers’ in this journey. The creation and consolidation of identity, as discussed in more detail in the next chapter, is also about having opportunities for it to be acted out. For example, becoming a ‘good mother’ may be an alternative pro-social identity for women moving away from committing crime (Sharpe, 2015; Rungay, 1994). However, there is evidence to suggest that men do not have the same accessibility to take up the role of fathers reporting that they are sometimes excluded from their children’s lives (Jones, 2002).

CONCEPTUALISING YOUNG ADULTHOOD

‘Liminality’, the state of being ‘betwixt and between’, is valuable in conceptualising the way in which the young people in the ‘transition to adulthood’ could be perceived (Turner, 1964: 49). Van Gennep’s concept is based on an analysis of rites of passage which he summarised as having three stages, ‘separation’, which is a departure to what has gone before, ‘margin’, the stage of liminality and ambiguity, and finally ‘aggregation’, the point reached when the rite of passage is completed (Turner 1964). Barry (2006) describes all young people as being in a position of relative powerlessness and are defined as ‘liminal beings.’ The concept as well as being explanatory conveys ‘otherness’, and the sense of being on a threshold over which it is difficult to pass (Thomassen, 2009). This has particular resonance in contemporary society as already discussed, and indeed the idea of liminality could be usefully (and depressingly) extended as a state of being which is potentially never-ending or a state of limitless liminality. This analysis is similar to Standing’s (2011) proposal of the existence of the precariat, however, perhaps Standing, by naming this population as a group presents a fictional representation of them being ‘in it’ together. Whereas, describing this process as limitless liminality portrays a truer reflection of this being a process that is experienced individually and the uncertainty and pain caused specific to each person. The idea that young people in the transition to adulthood are struggling across classes is captured by Pole et al. (2005. 5) who pose the question ‘Transition to what?’ Their conclusion, like the idea of limitless liminality, is that in contemporary society many will become adults who exist in a ‘Limbo status’ where the transition is never completed, or they remain in a position of fixed liminality. This

analysis fits with the wider sociological view that modern society is characterised by uncertainty, whereby the precariousness of young people's futures is arguably inevitable (Bauman, 2000; Beck, 1992; Giddens, 1991).

There is potentially another angle to this, and that is that liminality and the prospect of it being a limitless state is dealt with pragmatically. For example, in today's society there is a rise in cosmetic surgery in the quest for what has been termed 'permayouth', which is to remain permanently youthful (Browne, 2002). Therefore, at least on the surface or at the epidermis level, there is an obsession with being and remaining young. Some young people report not wanting to become adults and regard it as a 'goal' or destination that they have no interest in achieving, viewing it cynically as a point when fun is no longer permitted (Arnett, 2006; Barry, 2005). Du Bois-Reymond (1998) concludes that some youth equate adulthood to 'dullness and routine' and are fearful that as adults they will 'lose their playful attitude and become serious, boring and responsible.' However, it could also be rationalised that potentially dismissing this goal or limiting expectations is a pragmatic way of dealing with facing limitless liminality.

The question of what adulthood means is complex. Arnett (2001) concludes that taking responsibility for actions and deciding on one's own beliefs are ranked highest in importance by young people denoting being an adult. In later research, self-sufficiency is also identified as significant (Arnett, 2006: 214). Henderson et al. (2007) draw attention to the idea of competence above all else. In these studies the emphasis is on the individual's ability to manage their own affairs. On the other hand, other commentators suggest that this conception of adulthood is not accurate and the care ethics literature offers a useful description of adulthood as a move from being dependent to being interdependent, whereby there is more 'giving back' (Held, 2006; Bowden, 1997; Friedman, 1993, Gilligan, 1982). This idea complements 'generativity', the concept of giving back identified also as part of the desistance process (McNeill and Maruna, 2008). In taking this view then adulthood is not conceived of as 'going it alone', but rather an opportunity to give and receive support too. The concept of citizenship and interdependence is introduced here and further explored throughout this thesis. It is offered that both citizenship and interdependence could usefully expand current conceptions of adulthood and desistance, emphasising

the relationship between the individual and society, rather than focusing on the individual alone.

CITIZENSHIP

Farrall and Caverley (2006) describe different models of citizenship, namely the liberal tradition that ‘emphasises the rights and obligations of individual citizens’ and the ‘town hall’ model, referring to those who engage in civil society, such as church or community groups (ibid: 133). The authors discuss the work of McKinnon (2000) who draws on Rawls (1972) to develop the idea that citizenship is about not promoting one’s own interests but the interests of all, accepting the law even when it is disagreed with but also advocating for civil disobedience as an important check for when the law is deemed to be unfair. Rawls (1972) developed the idea of the ‘original position’, that is the idea of a free and equal citizen making decisions behind a ‘veil of ignorance’ or without any preconceived notions or characteristics such as gender or race to impact on their decision making. This state of being means that decisions or principles of justice are made purely in respect of the other. Farrall and Caverley (2006: 135) arrive at a ‘criminologically informed notion of citizenship’ that contains the following elements:

- Citizens are honest in their dealings with one another.
- Citizens are honest in their dealings with the state.
- Citizens uphold the law.
- Citizens are tolerant of others’ right to be different.
- Citizens have a concern with the wider interests of ‘the community’.
- Citizens are engaged in an ‘ongoing dialogue’ with the state (in which it is presumed one takes account of the other’s opinions).

Gilligan (1982) would argue that such conceptions are based on an ethics of justice rather than care, or a male versus female analysis of what it means to be ethical. The focus here is on what the citizen must do rather than what they cannot or may not be able to. However, Friedman (1993) states that we should be able to combine justice and caring, that one doesn’t have to completely replace the other and that justice is about caring. I would argue and will develop the argument that an explicit reference to care and acceptance of interdependence could be a motivating factor towards active citizenship and could be added to this list. Overall, what transpires here in this brief

overview of models of citizenship is that there is no clear consensus and indeed this could also be seen to fit with the idea that in contemporary society, the meaning of 'citizen' may appear to be based on the individual, but actually in all cases, as is also illustrated here, citizenship is relational above all else. Bauman (2002: 19) reflects that 'an effective response to globalization can only be global. And the fate of such a global response depends on the emergence and entrenchment of a global political arena.' The idea of the global citizen is appealing. As Young (1999: 198) states:

We must construct a new contract of citizenship which emphasises diversity rather than absolute values, and which sees such diversity not as a catalogue of fixed features but as a plethora of cultures, ever changing, ever developing, transforming themselves and each other...encourages intense democratic debate and evaluation, which is not a citizenship of rights but one of reciprocity between all citizens and which fully recognizes the necessity of reciprocity between citizen and state in the enactment of social goals and institutional change.

In light of the recent political decision for Britain to break away from the European Union the concept of global citizenship seems less realisable than it had been before. However, it may be that the consequences of this separatist movement will eventually lead to a revision so that global citizenship is actively pursued rather than actively avoided. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to explore this further but indeed the need for hope is arguably more pressing than ever.

CONCLUSION

The transition to adulthood is difficult for young people from acutely disadvantaged backgrounds and the real and perceived restrictions faced means that many young people are often 'getting by' rather than 'getting on'. They are different to their other young counterparts who are having a period of extended transitions. Instead the research suggests that they are becoming instant adults, but only really in name alone. There is a spreading uncertainty across the classes, but especially for those impoverished, of being able to achieve the markers traditionally associated with adulthood. Markers such as getting into stable work, getting married and 'settling

down' are becoming more illusive reflecting the fluidity of modern society. Overall, the scant research on young people living in poverty reflects the powerlessness felt. In this chapter, to illuminate their position the concept of liminality has been extended to argue that this population are at risk of existing in an unending state of limitless liminality. In an attempt to present a more realistic and arguably motivating framework, the concept and models of citizenship were introduced here. This is explored in more detail in the next chapters, both as a pathway beyond desistance and as an alternative concept to adulthood. Through the literature it becomes clear that this study, which is an opportunity to hear from those who are on the 'outer edges of the precariat', is much needed. A reflection on the material highlights that the word 'transition' itself becomes contested as the destination of 'adulthood' may be no longer achievable. Essentially, hope that change is possible within society to end or at the very least minimise poverty and address inequalities.

CHAPTER 4: LITERATURE REVIEW PART II: ONSET, MAINTENANCE AND DESISTANCE FROM OFFENDING

INTRODUCTION

One of the objectives of this study has been to develop criminological knowledge to provide insider views and retrospective accounts to explore early desistance (King, 2013). This literature review explores the three stages of a criminal career, a brief overview of the literature on onset and maintenance is presented followed by a specific focus on desistance. These ‘stages’ are discussed here as distinct merely for simplification and it is accepted that they are often indistinguishable and there is no clear step from one to the next (if at all). Furthermore, this study is focused on youth crime and a discussion of other forms of crime and desistance, for example, such as from white collar crime is likely to provide a very different overview or understanding of onset, maintenance and desistance (Croall, 2011; 1992). As well as setting out, analysing and discussing the literature on desistance, bringing this together with the literature on transitions to adulthood means that the specific challenges faced by young people today are able to be better understood. For example, the inaccessibility of traditional turning points such as getting a stable job becomes illuminated and the difficulties faced in achieving a pro-social identity. It is concluded that desistance is not an end in itself, and like the concept of adulthood, I suggest that it may be beneficial to reconfigure this to be regarded as a step towards citizenship.

ONSET

The link between age and crime is regarded as a ‘brute fact’ in criminology (Hirschi and Gottfredson, 1983). Young people are over-represented in the criminal justice system (Youth Justice Board, 2014), with 77% of proven offences in England and Wales committed by young people aged between 15 and 17 years olds. In Scotland, 19,077 children were referred to the Reporter in 2012/13, which is 2.1% of all children in Scotland. Of this number, 2764 were referred on offence grounds with

boys making up 75% of this group (Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA) (2014). The idea then of 'age' alone being a brute fact somewhat muddies the reality that the problem is related more to gender. There are debates about whether the age-crime curve is created by prevalence, frequency or both (McVie, 2009; Farrington, 1986; McVie, 2005). These debates aside, the peak age of offending for both males and females is around 18 years old, with 'onset' at 15, and the earlier the onset the more serious the offending (McVie, 2009; Monahan and Piquero, 2009; McAra and McVie, 2010). Although not the focus of this thesis, it is important to understand the reasons for 'onset' established through developmental criminology and risk factor research (Farrington, 1986; 1994; 1992; Glueck and Glueck, 1950). The research and factors identified can be summarised into three areas, namely, those relating to the individual such as impulsivity, those relating to the family such as poor parenting and those relating to their environment such as deprivation. The greater number of risks the individual is exposed to, the more likely they are to become a persistent offender (Farrington, 2002). However, Laub and Sampson's (1993; 2003) re-analysis of the original Glueck's study postulates that offending is marked by continuity and change over time and maturation is linked to changing social bonds, with 'onset' by the individual seen in context of their relationships. Matza (1964) suggests that when social controls are loosened, and the influence of parents becomes less, young people are guided more by their friends and this temporary period of 'drift' continues until they develop their own agency and exercise control.

Committing crime has real benefits for some young people, such as building social, economic, cultural and symbolic capital (Barry, 2006; MacDonald and Marsh, 2001). Barry (2006) found that being 'one of the crowd' brought status, a form of symbolic capital as well as protection that was both valued and legitimated. Gangs can be built on friendships based not on offending per se, but on equality, intimacy and mutual understanding (Waiton et al. 2001). By meeting other young people in a similar situation, the individual moves from a position of disempowerment in the family they come from, where in some cases they are subjected to serious abuse, to a feeling of confidence and wellbeing within the peer group (Waiton 2001; Shaw, 1966). Associating with friends presents an opportunity to work towards autonomy (Batchelor, 2005; Moretti and Peled, 2004; Ungar, 2000). Crime may also be a way of simply alleviating boredom (Corr, 2014, Corr, 2014b), and having fun (Anderson,

1994; Cohen, 1955). Young people today are increasingly constructed around 'getting a life' where others are an essential ingredient (Staiton Rogers, 1997). Indeed, in the context of uncertainty maybe forging strong friendships is a way of attempting to gain at least something more concrete, thus undermining the emphasis on the fluidity of relationships (Bauman, 2000). In short, committing crime as part of a group is a by-product of attempting to establish relationships, a means of getting power, acceptance, have fun, achieve 'authentic belonging' and a sense of worth. This extends the idea of the original thesis set out by Merton (1938) or indeed Cloward and Ohlin (1960) which is related to financial pressures and overcoming blocked opportunities, instead this is about simply getting through the day and having the company of others.

Contemporary qualitative and quantitative longitudinal studies, and in particular the Edinburgh Youth Transitions Study (McAra and McVie, 2010) and Teesside Studies (MacDonald et al. 2007; MacDonald and Marsh, 2005; Webster et al, 2004, MacDonald et al. 2001) are having a significant impact shedding new light on understanding about the onset of offending. The Teesside studies involved three main studies, with 186 young people interviewed and 34 followed up (MacDonald et al. 2001; Webster et al. 2004; Macdonald and Marsh, 2005). The Edinburgh Youth Transitions Study, and hereafter referred to as the Edinburgh Study, is an ongoing longitudinal study of 4,300 young people who started secondary school in 1998. It draws on quantitative and qualitative data generated from a range of sources, such as police records and even teacher's reports. A sophisticated regression analysis has carried out so that clear patterns emerge. In both studies there is an explicit call to think beyond criminology, to raise questions of wider sociological importance, and inspire real change in society, policy and practice for those who are affected by the wider structural constraints revealed. These studies are also importantly not confined to studying 'offenders' alone, but look instead at young people living in poverty as a whole, highlighting the wider challenges faced such as such as unemployment, the importance of transitions, the wider social context and impact of agencies. De-industrialisation, high unemployment as well as economic marginality are all identified as key factors linked to offending and mainly outside of the control of those affected (MacDonald and Marsh, 2005; Webster et al. 200). On a more localised level the 'hardening up' of school disaffection, and as in the Edinburgh Study, exclusion

from school, are shown to be directly linked to future offending (MacDonald, 2006; McAra and McVie, 2010).

The idea of agency and developing agency in onset, maintenance and desistance is a crucial consideration. In the Teeside studies the inter-play between structure and agency is usefully explored through biographical interviews highlighting how this is restricted, confined and ultimately limited for those living in poverty (Webster et al. 2004). Evans et al (2001: 25) describe agency as being temporally embedded and bounded, and influenced by past, present and sense of future possibilities, encapsulated in their description of ‘bounded agency.’ However, as was also discussed in the previous chapter this is not fixed or static and changes over time (Barry, 2006; Maruna, 2001). The influence of others as well as wider social structures on agency is crucial (King, 2013; Bold, 2012; Barry, 2006; Maruna, 2001; Gilligan, 1982). In understanding onset, the Edinburgh study has contributed substantially to the knowledge base. It reaffirms the link between school exclusion and offending (MacDonald, 2006) and also a link between contact with agencies and offending (McAra and McVie, 2010; McAra and McVie, 2005). It reveals that those who are the most vulnerable, for example, if they had reported self-harm, are the group who have gone on to carry out the most violent offences (McAra and McVie, 2010).

The depth of analysis in this area particularly will hopefully guide policy to reconfigure how these ‘troublemakers’ are viewed and managed. The study has been instrumental in revealing the class prejudice carried out by the police and the recycling of the same individuals through the system, as McAra and McVie (2005: 5) state ‘the police act less as legal subjects and more as class subjects.’ Questions continue to be raised about police practice, with recent research evidencing the lack of transparency and legitimacy in the use of stop and search powers, and the indefensible targeting of young people (Murray, 2014). Overall, this is evidence pointing to young people living in poverty being targeted more than their younger counterparts. The Edinburgh Study also interestingly shows that actually almost all of the young people admitted to committing low-level criminality (McAra, 2014, McAra and McVie, 2010), thus also supporting Durkheim’s (1938) argument that crime is a normal social fact and that possibly ‘onset’ could be even redefined as ‘detection’.

MAINTENANCE

Barry (2006; 2011) gives an important and rare insight into what is termed by the author to be the ‘maintenance’ phase. ‘Maintenance’ over ‘persistence’ is chosen because it is argued that persistence denotes dogged determination that does not reflect the reality (Barry, 2006:9). The study brings to light the gender differences found between the two groups with twenty men and women interviewed. Specifically, the young men were reported as thinking less about what they were doing and more dependent on the status gained from offending. It could be suggested that this may be because they had limited pathways outside of offending to show that they are ‘real’ men (Connell, 202). On the other hand, the young women spoke about how their view of their substance misuse changed during this phase, it was less about the ‘buzz’ and instead was replaced with the mundane business of having to get money, as though it was a business (Barry, 2011). Barry concludes that the continuance of the maintenance phase is a reluctance to enter into the unknown, stating that ‘the status quo (of offending) may be more secure and preferable to desistance which may require a proactive change in lifestyle or peer group’ (Barry, 2006: 90). This observation has particular relevance when considered in light of discussions of young people in poverty and in a state of liminality.

The idea that crime and leading a life of crime offers security suggests that it could be a way *out* of liminality with structural constraints in some ways forcing or at least guiding these young people to commit crime. Interestingly, those interviewed had conventional aspirations and norms and this had an impact, particularly on the women who were aware of the damage they were doing to their reputation by committing crime, and thus felt shame as a result of breaking norms of ‘appropriate’ behaviour (Smart, 1992). This ‘shame’ is found in more recent research with young women as mothers, highlighting that the stigma felt especially by women who have offended remains as relevant today, and is enduring (Sharpe, 2015). The work of Barry (2006) is focused on substance misusers and therefore may this idea of crime becoming mundane may not apply to other types of offending. For example, for those who have grown up together and committed violent offences this may be because of loyalty to each other more than anything else (Weaver, 2015). The maintenance phase then may be more than confirmed drift and understood as something that the person consciously

feels that they are not yet able to get out of or leave. Indeed, offences such as trafficking highlight that continuing offending may not be a ‘choice’ at all (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2011). Bearing in mind the pervious chapter that describes young people as experiencing a high level of insecurity, it could be argued that young offenders consequently are even less likely to feel that they have control to stop offending, particularly as an alternative way of life is almost impossible to attain and may even be inconceivable.

DESISTANCE – A FRAGILE STATE IN AN UNCERTAIN WORLD

This review brings together literature and research on the process of desistance or stopping offending and locates it within the previous discussion and conclusions of what has been traditionally termed ‘transitions to adulthood’. This synthesis creates the potential for new insights into how young people may be better supported to initiate and sustain stopping offending. The limitations of desistance research are also discussed and potential future directions proposed. Desistance is a concept that is unavoidably unclear. It attempts to describe a process that is individualised and relational, uncertain, often ‘zigzag’ (Glaser, 1964), with setbacks and relapses and sometimes circuitous or never fully accomplished (Weaver and McNeill, 2015; Weaver, 2014; Healy, 2012; Healy, 2014; Bottoms and Shapland, 2011; Laub and Sampson, 2003). On the latter point, it is suggested that views of how crime and desistance are conceived ought to be revised to reflect evidence that some crime is ‘normative’ (Healy, 2012). As already discussed research shows that ongoing low level criminality is often condoned in impoverished areas as a way of ‘getting by’, and there has been a normalisation of some substance use across the classes (Corr, 2014; MacDonald et al. 2011; Healy, 2012; Aston, 2015; Parker et al. 2002). Leaving this important but potentially contentious point aside, criminologists have attempted to make sense of the desistance journey by thinking of it in different facets. Maruna and Farrall (2004) developed the concepts of primary and secondary desistance to mirror those of primary and secondary deviance (Lemert, 1951; Becker, 1963). Primary desistance subsequently refers to a period of non-offending, and secondary desistance to a change in self-identity where the person no longer thinks of himself or herself as an offender. The way in which we view ourselves and how we act is based

on how others view us, and in turn, how this is then reflected back to us (Weaver, 2013). The relational aspect of desistance is crucial. Indeed, the term tertiary desistance has been developed by McNeill (2016) to highlight another aspect necessary for long-term change, that is, building on the importance of how one is viewed, the emphasis is placed on the need for recognition that one has changed and that a sense of belonging in the community achieved.

These ideas are useful theoretically to illuminate the different levels of desistance, but on a practical level their application may be complicated. Nugent and Schinkel (2016) offer instead the terms ‘act-desistance’ for non-offending or primary desistance, ‘identity desistance’ for the internalisation of a non-offending identity or secondary desistance, and ‘relational desistance’ for recognition of change by others that could be linked to tertiary desistance. It is reasoned that these terms simplify defining the processes involved and also elucidate that in order for the desister to be deemed ‘successful’, act, identity and relational desistance all have to be achieved. It is argued that all three are interdependent and the highest level of ‘success’ would be when the individual has access to a wider audience and subsequently relational desistance to consolidate their identity, not only through those close to them but also in wider society. Perhaps the ‘ultimate’ desister is someone who is no longer connected to their past crime at all and is allowed to simply live rather than being defined by their past, and by what they are *not* doing.

Maturation

One of the key factors underpinning the process of desistance is maturation (Rocque, forthcoming; McNeill and Weaver, 2010; Glueck and Glueck, 1943). Emerging studies about the biological processes involved in developing adult brains confirm that male brains don’t stop growing until they reach the age of twenty-five and emotional or physical trauma has a detrimental impact on progression (Williams, 2012). It could be claimed that this work has the potential to medicalise poverty by focusing only on those deemed ‘problematic.’ However, the strength of this approach is that it aids understanding and stresses the developmental importance of good relationships, life experiences, opportunities and the harm caused by not having these.

Indeed, it could be contended that actually these life opportunities could and should be argued for from a human rights perspective. Although not the focus of this thesis, potentially this signifies the privileging of ‘high’ science with hard measures to support the plea for intervention rather than appealing to moral sentiments and reasoning alone. Building upon the original Gluecks’ study, the developing research base suggests that the ageing process does not ‘cause’ desistance, but rather, age-related social processes do (Farrall and Bowling, 1999). Gaining more responsibilities, changing the way that time is structured, linking to the idea of ‘turning points’ or markers promoting maturation is essentially all about connections to others (Sampson and Laub, 1993). Interestingly then both desistance and adulthood are similarly dependent on establishing certainty of roles and responsibilities within relationships and ideally society (Arnett, 2006).

The First Tentative Steps

As already discussed, poverty and the current economic climate have made opportunities and pathways towards an alternative ‘better’ life for young adults particularly unclear, uncertain and unlikely (Pole et al. 2005; Coles, 1997; Jones, 2002). However, it is crucial not to be fatalistic and instead understand better and learn from those who have been able to make such transitions; the first step then is to explore what initiates change. Findings from the Sheffield desistance study of male young adult recidivists found that the wish to change is inspired by a ‘trigger’ event such as meeting someone or getting a job (Bottoms and Shapland, 2011). Giordano et al. (2002) also found in their longitudinal study of over a hundred people that ‘hooks for change’ or catalysts for change, such as having a spouse or someone who cared for them were also key to prompt this process. The idea then is that something or someone provokes this change.

Sampson and Laub (1993) have a significant focus on ‘turning points’ for prompting and sustaining change, such as getting married, getting a job or going into the army. However, bearing in mind the previous chapter, the obtainability of ‘turning points’ comes under scrutiny (Standing, 2011). Moreover, it is very rare that an individual just gets married and rather it is normally preceded by a relationship. Lyngstad and

Skarðhamar (2013) found in their study of over 120,000 Norwegian men that the effect of marriage is negligible relative to the amount of desistance that takes place prior to this and so earlier research may have overstated the importance of this event. Runggay (2004) suggests that the journey towards desistance is initiated by the perception of the chance to claim a pro-social identity and this is discussed in more detail and further emphasises the reliance on others and dependence on opportunities. As well as relationships and events, there is a small but growing evidence base that taking part in an activity, and specifically the arts, for some people has the potential to awaken the formulation of a better self (McNeill et al. 2011; Nugent and Loucks, 2011). Arguably, this is because it transcends structural constraints and is about opening and freeing the individual's mind. The idea then of inspiration being born out of an event, relationships or through an activity is an important one, especially when thinking about the potential for interventions and services to play a role in this. This hope has special resonance when the malleability and thus possibilities of this population to achieve change is recognised.

Overall, these first steps towards desistance appear to be a time of hope possibly more than anything else (Weaver and McNeil, 2010; Burnett, 2000); Burnett's (1992) study of 130 adult property offenders found that around half of the sample thought there would be an even chance or above-evens chance of them reoffending within a year of release. In the two-year follow up those who were more optimistic about not offending actually were the most successful, and generally those predictions about future offending made prior to leaving prison were correct. In the ten-year follow up, Burnett and Maruna (2004) developed this idea of optimism to redefine it as 'hope,' that is not only the desire to do something but the means, or as summarised the 'will and the ways' (ibid: 395). Again, they found that those most hopeful about the future were then the most successful and better able to cope with problems encountered. Crucially though, hope in itself was not enough and shrunk as the number of problems faced rose. 'If faced with dire circumstances upon release, such as homelessness, bereavement, extreme poverty, then feelings of self-efficacy are likely to be vanquished or have little impact' (ibid: 399). In terms of the first steps though towards desistance, this research shows that hope and self-belief that change is possible are vital.

The impact of a relationship or relationships so that the individual understands or believes that they can and are worthy of change is also crucial (Shaw, 1966; Burnett, 2004). There is a growing body of knowledge about the positive impact a worker can make in being that person who inspires and supports change. Burnett (2004: 182) describes one to one work between the recipient and worker relying on the worker 'showing an interest, reflective listening, interpreting and summarising, modelling and encouraging.' The author reflects that:

these factors work by influencing heart and mind and thereby have a greater potential to result in deep-seated behavioural change than is likely to follow from instrumental behaviour...In other words, such processes can serve to mobilise or bolster the offender's self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation to desist from further crime....subjective meaning is moulded with human relationships (ibid).

Burnett (2004: 183) refers to both parties in supervision establishing a 'working alliance.' McNeil et al. (2005: 4) further summarise what they refer to as the 'core conditions of effective interventions' as the:

ability of practitioners to convey accurate empathy, respect, warmth and 'therapeutic genuineness'...mutual understanding and agreement about the nature and purpose of the treatment; and to develop an approach that is person-centred or collaborative.

In an attempt to understand the skills that workers bring and have an impact, Trotter (1996) offered training to 12 probation officers community in role clarification, problem solving, pro-social modelling and showing empathy. Pro-social modelling is defined as 'modelling pro-social values, reinforcing client's pro-social expressions and actions and negatively reinforcing or confronting pro-criminal actions and expressions of those clients' (Trotter, 2009: 142). It was found that those who had been trained were more likely to use these skills and as a result had significantly lower re-offence rates. Interestingly, pro-social modelling was most effective with young, high-risk, violent and drug-using offenders. I suggest that in light of the previous literature, it may be that because these younger men are the most immature and therefore malleable, that the effects of pro-social modelling on their behaviour is greater than the rest of the sample.

The Jersey Supervision Skills Study, through an analysis of 95 video-recorded interviews and follow up data on those under supervision or pre-sentence unpaacks further some of the ‘skills’ that seem to make a difference (Raynor et al. 2014). These are broken into those ‘relational’, for example, demonstrating attention, concern, understanding, and those ‘structuring’ or intending to influence thinking. Based on a two-year follow up of reconviction rates, those workers who were most skilled had the highest success. As with both this and the previous studies by Trotter (1996; 2009), the impact of this research on the interactions in itself comes in to play. Moreover, the willingness of those who volunteered to take part may indicate that they care more about their practice than those who did not and thus may also have had ‘better’ results anyway. In short, separating out skills from personality and motivations is probably almost impossible.

Robinson et al. (2014) captured the views of 116 individuals working in probation in England and Wales to understand their articulation of what was meant by ‘quality’ in their practice. Echoes of past studies are again revealed, with ‘Really engaging with the individual’ reported as the most important aspect of their work. ‘Quality’ relationships were defined as involving ‘building rapport; treating the offender respectfully; listening; being open and honest; following up on promised actions; taking time to get to know the person; being consistent; involving the offender in setting goals; establishing boundaries; and building trust’ (ibid: 129). In addition, there were a number of other factors pointed out, such as the ‘resources’ of time and connections, treating people as individuals and with flexibility, working towards realistic goals and finally skills and attributes. Interestingly, although skills and training were regarded as valuable, workers felt that what they brought as a result of their life experiences and personal qualities were more important.

Liebrich (1994) study of 48 random people, half men and half women, who had carried out a probation order in 1987 and not re-convicted, found that half felt they had got something out of supervision and half did not. For those who did, talking through their issues helped and having to report was felt to be a deterrent. The other half viewed their supervision as a non-event, and some even said that they had been too young and immature to take in advice and at the time felt that they knew better. Where it was said to make a difference, being treated as an individual and having

contact with someone that they got on with were significant. Success was about people connecting with people and being shown genuine care. In short, these studies really emphasise the humanising aspect of a good relationship, seeing the person as whole person rather than as a case or list of risks.

Farrall (2002) and Rex (1999) point out that relationships are a basis to getting access to practical support and help to overcome obstacles. Farrall's (2002) sample of 199 probationers, aged between 17-35 years old were tracked over four years. Getting into employment, housing, family relationships, having a partner and motivation to change were what really mattered. Although probation practice overall had little impact, there was also good evidence of how, when it did work, why it worked. Those probation officers and probationers who 'worked together' (ibid: 83), to keep up motivation and get the person access to what they needed, such as housing or employment, was crucial in aiding continued desistance. Rex (1999) qualitative study of 21 probation officers and 60 of their probationers, found that encouragement, pro-social modelling and not being overly directive and realistic about the challenges faced was effective in supporting people to desist from offending. Furthermore, around half of the probationers felt loyalty and accountability to their officer, again emphasising that a meaningful relationship had been formed.

Ugwudike (2013) study of 19 probation officers from Wales also reflects those findings by Robinson et al. (2014) that those working in this field want to connect with people in a meaningful way. During what is described as an 'era of enforcement' (ibid: 169), that is to achieve targets and thus have more of a focus on absenteeism, probation officers encouraged compliance by helping to address the structural obstacles, such as housing and employment as well as the practical, such as transport difficulties. They individualised their practice rather than applying strict enforcement strategies and were responsive to needs, and developed good working relationships.

In many ways then, as with the analysis of hope, it is not just the will but the ways that matter too. This signifies that making a genuine connection with young people can have a significant impact in turning their lives around. The above studies have been an analysis of compulsory engagement. *Moving On* is a throughcare support service that is offered to young men to take up voluntarily before release from

HMPYOI Polmont in Scotland. The longitudinal evaluation sheds some light on the challenges to engagement (Nugent, 2015). Over fifty young men were tracked over four years and in-depth qualitative interviews were carried out with nine young men over seven years who had or were engaging with the service (Nugent and Weaver, 2016). Interestingly, it was found that even when the young person and worker both felt that a strong relationship had been built prior to the young person leaving prison, many did not re-engage of their own accord when released. Instead, they had to be approached and encouraged, with a substantial amount of time taken by workers to go out to homes, make calls and send texts, ‘reaching out’ to help them to make contact. The young men interviewed revealed that not only were they weary and distrustful of services in general and this was a barrier when they were in the community to accessing help generally, but they also lacked confidence and self-worth to take the steps to avail of the opportunities given. Establishing a relationship with this population then appears to require determination and persistence on the worker’s part to make that breakthrough (Nugent, 2015). Essentially, the relationship is affirmed and tested throughout and the young person has to hear the message ‘I matter’ (Cotterell, 2007). All of these studies, whether on voluntary or compulsory engagement, show that success is through the worker imparting that they care, being genuine in their interactions and working collaboratively to find solutions or deal with problems. In helping young people to build hope and re-see themselves in a new light through others, desistance then is a point when the individual stands back from their present and questions the current direction (Mouzelis: 1995), reassessing what has gone before and conceptualising a ‘possible self’ looking to the future (Paternoster and Bushway, 2009). Drawing on this consideration, the process of desistance then is a rejection and rebuking of what has gone before, it is ‘the art of inventing’, that is travelling in spite of the past (Bourdieu, 1999). Conceptualised this way, desistance is shown to be a remarkable act and a leap of faith.

‘Knifing Off’

The transition to adulthood is recognised as a time when social networks usually expand (Arnett, 2001, 2006; Cotterell, 2007). However, to reinforce change the individual often must ‘knife off’ from peers (Maruna and Roy, 2007). This is often

accompanied by the individual also recognising and controlling for those factors that make them likely to offend, such as avoiding certain pubs or staying away from certain areas. This process, defined as diachronic self-control and latterly self-binding (Shapland and Bottoms, 2011: 274; Bottoms, 2013), is a clear reflection of the person understanding and becoming consequential in their thinking and exercising agency. This particular way of viewing desistance has been usefully adopted and expanded in the analysis of findings in Chapter 8. An excessive form of diachronic self-control has the potential to lead to the individual having few relationships and becoming isolated (Weaver, 2012, Schinkel, 2014). Consequently, I argue that ‘knifing off’ in this way could be regarded as a form of self-harm for those who have limited access to pro-social relationships to replace those lost. For many young men desisting, having support from a girlfriend has proved vital (Bottoms and Shapland, 2014; Laub and Sampson, 2003), but there has been little or no research on the impact that this may have on the girlfriend in question. The possibility then of dyadic desistance, that is desistance that may be only acted out and acknowledged by one other person, raises concerns about sustainability, the healthiness of this approach and also whether this is sufficient to achieve identity desistance.

The Role of Agency

Unlike onset that is characterised by ‘drift’, the first steps towards act desistance emerges as the result of deliberate decision making and the individual exercising agency reflecting a desire to establish an alternative pro-social life (King, 2014; Giordano et al. 2002; Farrall, 2002). Barry (2013) argues that the emphasis on the requirement of agency as a driving factor for change is misplaced especially considering the backgrounds of those who are attempting to do this. As stated (ibid: 61): ‘One would need to be particularly creative and selective to affect significant life changes in today’s political and economic environment, irrespective of whether or not one has a criminal record.’ For young people who lack the resources, contacts and ability to move beyond their area and life and report feeling trapped (Corr, 2014; Pickering et al. 2012), the prospect of desistance can seem especially elusive. The research stresses though that the age of these people in itself means that their agency is more likely to be malleable (King, 2013). This is viewed as a specific time ‘during

which there may be an opportunity to enable the development of positive identities before negative [self] images are internalised (McNeill, 2006: 133).’ The early or young desister is felt to be most likely to be most open to change (Giordano et al. 2002), and more easily able to recognise, reinforce and accept early positive alterations and generate a new story and identity enhancing the desistance process (King, 2013). This way of viewing desistance for young people opens up opportunities so that workers and services can play a significant role to promote desistance and encourage progress (Whyte and McNeill, 2007; McNeill et al. 2005; Burnett and McNeill, 2005).

Identity Crisis

Act or primary desistance is accompanied with a period of significant cognitive transformation, a liminal form of desistance where the actor operates within two social worlds, it is a time characterised by uncertainty and ambiguity (Healy, 2012). For young people already in a state of flux, they may then have moved abruptly from a period where their identity was clear and they had status through their offending (Barry, 2006), to a time where they are completely uncertain, unknown and without respect. They can experience what could be regarded as an identity crisis. Moreover, although they may be aware that they are trying to reject their ‘spoiled identity’ (Weaver, 2012; Healy, 2012; Goffman, 1963), the acceptance of this by those around them and wider society may not be forthcoming (Barry, 2013), threatening success. As evidenced by one persister in Healy’s (2012) study of Irish offenders, who ultimately missed their previous status and in failing to gain a foothold in an alternative identity resulted in them re-offending. This is a time then requiring perseverance and will power particularly as there are often very limited pull factors or reasons to continue (Barry, 2006). Overall, sustaining commitment to change is an extraordinary feat.

One of the few incentives for change noted in this stage is that there may be less surveillance from the police and the ‘hassle factor’ of being involved in criminal justice system diminishes for some (Barry, 2013; Healy, 2012). However, considering that attention on such ‘suspects’ may have been unwarranted in the past, it

undermines the importance of this particular benefit (McAra and McVie, 2005). Bradford et al. (2014) adopt the work of Cooley to argue that the police act as mirrors, and that when they treat those they encounter with dignity and respect and allow them a voice this legitimizes the structures of authority. On the other hand, the authors contend that when this is not the case the opposite effect happens and those treated with disrespect turn to others who can provide feelings of inclusion and self-worth, or result in a sense of anomie or drift and a loosening of normative constraints on behaviour.

Rumgay (2004) concludes that desistance can be initiated by having access to a new pro-social identity, and in the study of female desisters becoming a 'mother' provided exactly this. Therefore, for young men and women who struggle to consolidate an identity in contemporary society, becoming a parent can resolve this potentially never-ending identity lacuna. Moreover, this is an experience that is often all consuming and therefore in many ways unquestionable. However, the stigma of past offending, as has been shown in more recent research, may mean that access to identity desistance by becoming a mother remains fragile at best, with women also feeling judged as being maternally deficient (Sharpe, 2015). Moreover, becoming a parent at a young age is not always the most desirable or best path. Teenage motherhood is a major cause of poverty (France, 2008), and a key factor in women facing long-term unemployment (Kelly et al. 2012). McNeill and Weaver (2010) stress the importance of young women having access to other identities or destinations in the journey of desistance. A deeper analysis of the impact of parenthood shows that it appears to initiate a re-evaluation by the person of their life to question the future direction to take. It puts 'drift' on hold. This exposes how having 'someone' gives purpose and meaning to the now desister where there once was none (Farrall: 2002: 11). This is a critical point because again it uncovers the evidence that many who get involved in offending in the first place feel that they have had little or nothing to lose hitherto (Maruna, 2001; Shaw, 1966).

Making Good in a New World

The Liverpool Desistance Study (LDS) (Maruna, 2001) is one of the most important studies carried out in the study of desistance. It consisted of narrative interviews with 20 persisters and 30 desisters, to examine how change was initiated, maintained and sustained over time. The research highlights the importance of ‘making good’, and significantly describes the process of the individual recovering their core good self, the ‘real me’. This reflects the Rosseauian idea that essentially all people are good, suggesting that for those who have stopped ‘making good’ is of significance.

‘Generativity’, the idea of ‘giving back’ to loved ones or the community as part of the process of desistance is highlighted. The most successful desisters have access to new pro-social relationships, new hobbies, new goals and opportunities (Healy, 2012).

These opportunities create new spatial dynamics, socialising in different places from where they used to and developing different rhythms and routines in everyday life (Farrall et al. 2014). ‘Making good’ then is often to a new audience, thus establishing their revised identity amongst new people. For some, securing identity desistance involves leaving their past and often those connected to that era behind them, forming relationships beyond the previous damaging microenvironment where they once felt trapped.

Ethnicity and Gender

To speak of ‘desisters’ in broad terms is to fail to recognise that they are not a homogenous group. Although an under-developed area there are some cultural and gender differences identified. Calverley’s (2013) study brings to light how different ethnic groups prioritise or have access to different social resources and relationships in the process of desistance. Specifically, the research shows that the Indian and Bangladeshi community rely on family, and for the latter religious connections also support their journey. For Black and dual heritage interviewees the process was more isolated and isolating, with past peers continuing offending and family dispersed so that the process required removal from social life in order to be maintained. A change of peer group, a sense of direction and ‘settling down’ are all factors associated with

desistance for both genders (Jamieson et al. 1999). In terms of gender differences revealed, men are said to be more concerned than women with pragmatic factors such as employment prospects and offending becoming less profitable and more risky (Barry, 2006). Women on the other hand desist as a result of immediate responsibilities rather than creating the conditions for the future, and in particular stop offending to look after their children (Barry, 2006). However, it is questionable whether the men interviewed, considering the cultural emphasis within hegemonic masculinity on 'being hard' actually felt comfortable to talk about their families, considering that this may be a the only 'chink in their armour'. Other research suggests that men desist from offending for similar relational reasons to women, but that this influence 'kicks in' at a later stage in life (Farrall and Bowling, 1999). Potentially then it could be inferred that this is more about the link between age and maturity rather than gender (Williams, 2012).

Externalising the Internalised Transformation

The process of change and identity desistance is internalised by the individual through the acceptance and acknowledgement of change by others (Weaver, 2012). Those who have desisted successfully achieve identity desistance and acceptance, not only by those around them but by wider society too (McNeill, 2016; Nugent and Schinkel, 2016; Schinkel, 2014). The idea of relational reflexivity, if accepted, shows that the audience, those who witness and testify to the change are just as important as the actor, the person who is doing the change. Expanding and building upon these ideas of desistance the degrees of success that is achieved is actually co-produced between the individual stopping offending and wider society. Weaver (2015) draws attention to the importance of close relationships in supporting the individual to accept a new revised version of themselves. I would further argue that those who the individual may have no contact with or opportunity to show that they are redeemed also have an impact. For example, the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 has had a significant impact on the individual desister in restricting their opportunities to get into employment, and the actor is very unlikely to meet or have met any parties privy to the creation of the statute. At the time of writing, disclosure of offences for short-term offenders is being reviewed and there is progress being made in this area. Relational

desistance in its ideal sense is regarded as the individual being accepted as changed and therefore the image that they are 'accepted back'. However, it would be more precise to say that in today's society, those who do not observe or have little to no contact with the person, by for example forcing disclosure of offences prior to taking up work have a role. Also, as already noted, policy makers are often far away from those who their policies affect. The distance between the desister and the outside 'audience' that matters then resembles a mirror image that is concave and will inevitably produce a distorted image. At present, it is proposed that in society, the 'looking glass self' reflected back to the individual extends beyond the immediate relationships (Cooley, 1956). The distance between the offender and those who have influence on their lives would need to be reduced, so that they are able to get closer to the actor and bear witness to the change or they are better informed about the change. Drawing on the ideas put forward by Pratt (2008) in the previous chapter, emphasising sameness rather than difference, and thus creating empathy and equality is crucial. Potentially, this is one of the ways in which desistance can be actively supported (Maruna, 2011).

THE LIMITATIONS OF DESISTANCE

Desistance research has played a crucial role in developing our understanding of how people move beyond offending and the processes both internally and externally at play. However, there are some limitations. Firstly, and crucially, desistance puts offending and the label of offender at the centre of its analysis, and to understand the person as a composite being moving towards a better life, a focus on a lack of criminal activity is not sufficient (Whyte, 2009). Desistance research has the potential to be used wrongly to individualise the reasons for criminality leaving the wider social justice issues unanswered. Furthermore, as a driver of policy it arguably 'lends itself too readily to practice becoming merely crises management, and at worst complacency' (Nugent and Barnes, 2013: 23). Ideally, it is argued that a preventative or early intervention rather than reactive approach needs to be promoted and become the main driver of policy and practice in working with young people. This is not to say that desistance does not have its place, but that there also needs to be an honest account that it happens at a stage when the individual has already gone down the road

of crime. The destination or destinations beyond desistance is one of the key lines of enquiry within this thesis.

The research on persistent offenders shows is that those who begin offending and those who persist feel that they have nothing to lose and that they do not matter (Sampson and Laub, 1993; Shaw, 1966). Crime could be viewed as a show of anger towards society (Agnew, 2001). However, in the accounts of the research presented (Burnett, 2002; Healy, 2012; Schinkel, 2014), it would be more apt to say that committing crime and sustaining criminality is born out of hopelessness based on a fairly realistic assessment of their lives. The ‘condemnation script’ that Maruna (2001) refers to describes the voices of those he interviewed who persisted in offending and who felt themselves condemned to a life of criminality and did not believe or see that they could do anything else. Building on the analysis of the maintenance phase, it could be said that the ‘confirmed drift’ witnessed at this stage and which continues for those who persist is about feeling trapped in criminality with no clear exit. Overall then, as will be considered, there is a case for desistance research to do more.

THE CASE FOR RENEWED HOPE

The desistance literature significantly highlights that stopping offending and change is possible and that in order for the person to make those first steps they need to have hope and self-belief that they can. At present this literature is being used admirably to stress the impact that having connections to support can have in helping the person to stop offending (McNeill et al. 2005). However, desistance scholars could and should continue to do more. I propose that this knowledge is usefully portrayed alongside the ongoing message that prevention still remains the key. In reality, if having hope is crucial and this requires indicators or at least some form of success to be sustained, this points to the need for opportunities to be created to help those who are living in poverty to reach their potential. Desistance scholars are and should continue to illuminate the realities of the challenges faced in achieving a destination beyond desistance. As stated by Healy (2014: 888) ‘without credible opportunities to realise aspirations, the imagined identity remains a chimera.’ Realistically, ‘hope,

expectation and confidence fade quickly on an empty stomach' (McNeill and Weaver 2010:4). Lastly, as is discussed in more detail, desistance could in itself become a barrier to thinking beyond criminality and I argue in this thesis that thinking about the individual only in relation to their offending, traps them in their past and restricts their future. The theories and knowledge need to be retained, but criminologists in understanding and accepting the power of a negative label could help people to 'move on' by also in turn progressing from using this terminology.

THE BIGGER PICTURE

Farrall (et al. 2011) present an integrated theory of desistance in which the macro, meso and micro influences on the process of desistance are articulated. This analysis is based on observations made as part of an on-going longitudinal study of 199 men and women that began in 1997. The strength of this type of approach is its potential to advance understanding of desistance rather than relying on more insulated, singular theories (Rocque, forthcoming). Farrall et al. (2011) also note that any theoretical model of desistance also needs to be sufficiently flexible and take account of individual agency and innovation. The theory proposed is sophisticated with macro influences divided into those that are broadly unchanging to those that can happen quickly or are 'shocks to the system.' For example, in terms of that which is largely unchanging, society's conception of what it means to be a good father is offered, whereas, shocks to the system could be the example set out by MacDonald et al. (2005) of the influx of cheap heroin in Teeside. The meso level influences are less clear in the analysis, however they appear to include situational contexts and social policies that create opportunities for legitimate alternative identities. Lastly, the micro processes are those relating to the individual, such as their subjective view of reality or willingness to change. This type of analysis is an attempt to create a much deeper understanding of the different levels of power and influence on an individual's process of desistance. The underlying message is that the individual can only do so much and to achieve success support is needed at both the meso and macro level. I offer the idea that this could be either the person breaking through into the meso level through support, thus building social capital, or alternatively those from the meso or macro level giving a helping hand up. This would mean that those at a higher level

make an active choice to support those below, and in doing so address some of the inequality experienced. Both processes rely on what could be defined as ‘meso brokers.’ Moreover, and what is crucial, is that this ought to be accompanied at the macro level to affect all levels and tackle inequality and promote social justice.

At present, as has been discussed in both this and the previous chapter, those who live in poverty are the least likely to be successful in all aspects of life. It could also be argued that it is only when they are damaging society, when they truly fall, and in these cases are causing crime (Barry, 2013), that they are being rescued to undergo a process of de-labelling but not always re-integration. In reality, those who live in poverty are on the outskirts of society, taking citizenship seriously would mean acknowledging that when they fall, we all fall. Society and citizenship can’t be realised fully until there is an acknowledgement that individuals need to be given access to the same rights and at least similar life chances. The emphasis on agency is important, but this is bound with structure, and so to have hope and therefore be able to take action, the constraints of structure have to be challenged. It is suggested that desistance could be usefully reconfigured instead to be about pathways to citizenship, although as will be shown, this is not without its problems too.

BEYOND DESISTANCE

Sampson and Laub (1993) emphasise that crime happens when the individual no longer feels a bond to society, so retaining this bond is important in considerations of prevention and recreating this essential in the process of desistance. Tertiary desistance is the acceptance of the desister by wider society (McNeill, 2016). This is useful in emphasising the obligations on society as well as the desister so that desistance is illuminated as ‘a two-way process’ (Barry, 2013). It should not be the case that it is the offender who makes a conscious effort to change alone, but instead this needs to be accompanied with society making a conscious effort then also to welcome them (Barry, 2013; Maruna, 2011). Tertiary desistance though appears to have a number of barriers, namely, as already discussed in the previous chapter, that the reality of ‘community’ is that they are often fragile, and also presently, the acceptance of ‘society’ that offenders can change does not appear to be forthcoming.

Maruna (2011) suggests that a way in which reintegration could be made clear is making the process of 'de-labelling' a ritual. Using examples such as weddings, it is highlighted that these events help to become markers in life, or in the process of reintegration could signal change. This idea, put forward as an opportunity to create discussion of how reintegration may be imaginatively invoked, rests in reality on the need for such rituals to be genuine. In today's society, rituals have their place, but I would argue that what comes thereafter is increasingly more important. For example, considering the uncertainty of the job market, graduations are unlikely to be regarded as a definer of 'success' in the way maybe that they once had.

The concept of tertiary desistance, linked to reintegration, faces further challenges when it is accepted that the communities in which these young people come from and which they will return to are often harmful. These areas of poverty, as has been highlighted in this and the previous chapter, and is re-emphasised in the study, offer few opportunities and many obstacles to success. These young people are already on the outer flanks of the precariat (Standing, 2011), they weren't integrated in the first place and live socially excluded lives, and they are likely to return to this same position post punishment. In essence, 'reintegration', the idea of restoring, is not good enough. Unlike the process of 'making good', where there is a core good self found, I argue that based on an analysis of the literature in both this and the previous chapter, there is much merit in instead striving for these areas to be made new. 'Restoring', or more accurately returning the person back to this toxic space, which is a prison without bars is actually an injustice. The process then of reintegration ideally needs to be accompanied with a commitment to support these 'communities', to drive forward social justice. This is about a commitment not only to address offending but the real underlying reasons that lead to offending in the first place.

What transpires is that young people today living in poverty are the most likely group to offend but also to desist from offending in early adulthood (McVie, 2009). The inspiration for desistance may be lacking, the opportunities for turning points reduced and more difficult to attain and the structural constraints and inequality faced are greater. Overall, the more it is understood, the more desistance appears to be a remarkable achievement with an uncertain reward. The message then that desistance may not pay, as in the alternative pathway may not offer social, symbolic, cultural or

financial capital, has great ramifications not only for the justice system, but also questions the durability of the social contract. If violating the rules is a way of 'getting on' for those on the outer edges of society and actually giving up and complying leads to a state of liminality, the rationale for desistance is simply not there. This analysis has the potential to become a hopeless acceptance that pathways will remain muddy. However, in the previous chapter the concept of citizenship was briefly mentioned and it is argued that this may offer a way forward.

FROM DENIZEN TO CITIZEN – BEYOND DESISTANCE AND RECONCEPTUALISING ADULTHOOD

Standing (2011) illuminates the position of young people, arguing that they are not citizens but 'denizens', a description from Roman times to describe people who are allowed to live in society but do not have full legal rights. Children and young people are viewed as passive citizens, but this is supposed to be a temporary state (Weller, 2007). Overall then, like adulthood and tertiary desistance, citizenship is actually a process of acceptance and inclusion by wider society. A potentially useful way of thinking about pathways, building on the models outlined of citizenship in the previous chapter, is to emphasise social inclusion and social status (Carter and Pycroft, 2010; Coles, 1997).

Henderson et al. (2007) state that being a citizen is about achieving a sense of belonging to society, however, this may be an ideal state rather than a goal. Drawing on basic social contract theory, citizenship is being a part of something bigger and gaining the benefits of co-operation, ideally striking a balance between having rights but also taking on and fulfilling responsibilities (Locke, 1993). Stenner and Taylor (2008: 418) neatly summarise a modern interpretation of citizenship as 'inclusion' requiring an ability to participate publicly on the part of the citizen in 'purposive action under the sway of rationality...directed towards securing social outcomes.' This highlights the need to be purposive, to have worth and an ability to have a say or play a part that is meaningful.

One of the key ways in which citizenship is traditionally enacted and participation analysed is through voting (Farrall, 2014). Generally, young people are the least likely population to vote and it is argued that this is because they feel disconnected to current politics (Burch et al. 2013). Hackett (1997: 81) asks 'is this apathy or is it a rational response to the negative impact of party and constitutional politics on the lives of young people?' It has been established in the previous chapter that young people today face a great amount of uncertainty and may not be able to establish a clear role in society. This idea then of existing in limitless liminality and lacking purpose or power has ramifications. Preston, writing in the Guardian (1995 cited in Rogers et al. 1997: 33) observes:

young people today are pretty sceptical of, and pretty bored by conventional politics (because it barely acknowledges their existence in terms they recognise)...They have scant connection with organised religion, or indeed with any multi-disciplinary organisation. But they aren't remotely selfish – on the contrary, they throw themselves into causes where something may be accomplished. They care, but not to order. They are individuals, not party hacks. There is no easy word to describe them. But let us try: Future Pragmatists. That is because they look to the future with hope and curiosity.

Preston highlights that young people no longer hold traditional unwavering allegiances to parties. Although the idea that this pragmatism is entirely hopeful is not evidenced, thinking of it this way gives power back to the young people and so uncertainty isn't something that just happens to someone but rather something that is dealt with. Rather than casting them as 'super dupes', a term used to describe those who merely react to wider social forces and situations (Farrall and Bowling, 1999: 261), it casts them as decision makers, all be it in an often restricted sense. Where however these decisions have an impact is another question.

Hall and Winlow (2013: 17) argue that the current political and economic 'conjuncture' is unable to 'encourage individuals to see their interests in relation to others of a similar socioeconomic position' and that we now occupy 'an era of post-political biopolitics.' Politicians are not viewed as representative of the interests of ordinary people and instead a cynical pragmatism has set in (Winlow and Hall, 2013). Winlow et al. (2015: 74) regard choice in politics now as non-existent. They reflect that:

The anger of so many ordinary citizens these days remains impotent unless it is equipped with the political symbolism that can enable individuals to begin to understand their own anger, where it comes from, and what they might do about it. Politics needs coherent ideologies that allow individuals to objectify the ultimate source of their anger...creative accounts of what human societies can become. Without these things, politics becomes merely a system of social management that seeks only to administer what already exists.

In Scotland, the Referendum on Independence showed that young people vote when they feel it matters to them. 109,593 16 and 17 year olds, 80% of that population registered to vote (Electoral Commission, 2014). Moreover, 97% of those 16-17 year olds who reported having voted said that they would vote again in future elections and referendums. Overall, then, engagement happens when the individual feels that their voice counts. This reinforces the previous insight to galvanise the idea that being a citizen is about feeling that you have a role to play.

McAra and McVie (2011: 102) argue for 'active communities' where problems posed by troubled or troublesome children are viewed as falling under common ownership to be addressed. This analysis extends the social contract to be about doing more than simply fulfilling one's duties but also reaching out and extending power to help those who currently do not. The word 'active' also implies that being reactive is not enough. The onus then on granting real citizenship should not fall on the powerless but ought to be about the powerful giving a helping hand, the concept of meso brokers then could take on a deeper meaning.

The perception of citizenship could be further extended so that the starting premise of any society is that we are all viewed as being interdependent (Gilligan, 1982), and citizenship cast in this way emphasises caring between citizens (Bowden, 1997). Turner (1993) suggests that rights could even be grounded in an acceptance and acknowledgement of human frailty. In bringing these points to the fore then citizenship is expanded to be about more than rights and responsibilities (Smith, 2009), towards the need for moral sympathy where equality cannot be compromised. Even in taking human frailty into account, interdependence emphasises that we all still have the capacity to contribute. Therefore, seeing the potential in each individual and offering solutions so that this can be maximised is encouraged if not required. For example, a developing area of research in desistance is that desisters can support one

another, offering 'mutual aid' to make the journey together (Weaver, 2015; 2013). In the same way as MacDonald et al. (2011) urges researchers to not simply look downwards, this concept of citizenship is about those at all levels, micro, meso and macro, playing their part and acknowledging that each has a role to play too.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has presented the literature and research on the different stages of the criminal career, namely onset or detection, maintenance or 'confirmed drift' and desistance. Onset and persistence in offending is linked to the person feeling that they have nothing to lose and do not matter, either to their family or wider society. By bringing this chapter together with the previous, it is clear that young people today living in poverty face many barriers and limited opportunities. Their pathways out of offending are increasingly unclear and worryingly the benefits gained from offending can offer some level of certainty. Overall, it is concluded that desistance, even primary or act desistance is a remarkable act. As a way of providing a way forward, it is suggested that desistance is not an end in itself, and instead like the concept of adulthood, it may be beneficial to reconfigure this as a step towards citizenship. In drawing upon the concept then of tertiary desistance the obligations on society as well as the desister are emphasised. However, the idea of citizenship is extended to emphasise interdependence so that all individuals are accepted as having potential and opportunities created for this to be maximised, thus demanding more equality. The research on desistance establishes that hope is crucial. To conclude, in agreement with McNeill and Barry (2009) it is asserted that criminologists ought to act as 'critical friends', and to make clear that criminal justice is not an adequate or ethical forum to address social justice issues.

CHAPTER 5: METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

According to Silverman (2013: 15) ‘data collection, analysis and writing are virtually inseparable in qualitative research.’ For the purposes of transparency alone this study has been dissected and each aspect discussed as though distinctive, however, in reality it has been much more fluid with stages often overlapping and sometimes indivisible. For example, an ethical stance that prioritised an ethics of care was the backdrop throughout the research and permeated each stage. This chapter outlines the study’s objectives, ontological, epistemological and ethical standpoint, methodologies used for accessing and retaining the sample, data collection, analysis and the challenges and limitations identified particularly relating to narrative enquiry and longitudinal qualitative research.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

Chapter one outlined the research questions that were formulated as a result of the review of literature and research presented in subsequent chapters. The primary aim of the study has been explore transitions into adulthood in the context of poverty, to illuminate and contextualise the ‘lived realities’ of disadvantaged young people (Walklate and Evans: 1999). A qualitative longitudinal approach was adopted to get relatively ‘close up’ to the young people to gain ‘extensive’ understanding of them and their existence (MacDonald, 2011: 196). The hope being that by making sense of these young people’s lives and identifying the support and barriers that have helped or hindered them in turn may lead to better policy and practice for their benefit and also for future young people in similar situations. This research involved those who have experienced or continue to experience social exclusion and as a result was set out and planned to minimise harm and maximise any potential benefits (Letherby, 2003). The interviews often meant that participants talked about and possibly relived difficult or traumatic experiences. This interaction was viewed not simply as recording information but rather hearing, understanding and being given privileged access into

the individual's private world. I approached the research with the dominant idea of fulfilling the obligations prescribed by using 'ethics of care', which is about being sensitive, empathetic and handling the interview process with as much respect as possible. For some participants the experience was therapeutic as it was an opportunity to talk to an empathetic listener. As remarked by Bourdieu (1999: 615):

the most disadvantaged seem to grasp this situation as an exceptional opportunity to them to testify, to make themselves heard, to carry their experience over from the private to the public sphere...to give vent, at times with an extraordinary expressive intensity, to experiences and thoughts long kept unsaid or repressed.

However, it is important to be honest that this may not have been the case for all, and indeed in the first interview with Paul it was clear that he was very nervous and it would be inaccurate to say that he found it therapeutic.

Swartz (2011) advises that researching vulnerable youth should involve 'intentional ethics of reciprocation' or trying to 'give back', and reflexivity was promoted at both an individual and organisational level so that this could potentially continue to develop beyond the study. For many interviewees this was a chance to understand better the challenges they have faced, may face and to be proud of progress made. Indeed, a small number of conversations after interviews conveyed that this had happened for both the professionals and young people interviewed. The research provided an opportunity to capture how those who had offended in the past begin to desist or to think about desisting from offending and also crucially move towards a 'better' life. I felt that it was important that those with an offending background did not feel that they were viewed in a one dimensional way as an 'offender' or 'ex-offender.' It was vital to be as holistic as possible to get to know the whole person and possibly the multiple identities they may have created or co-produced, and therefore to move the conversation beyond the focus of crime and what is traditionally the domain of criminology.

One of the main concerns in writing up the findings was answering the questions but also providing an honest or as accurate and in-depth construction of the case studies of those interviewed. In my opinion, this is one way in which I am able to 'do justice' to their stories. As described by Bourdieu (1999: 622) the task has been to 'touch and

move the reader, to reach the emotions, without giving in to sensationalism', knowing that 'they can produce the shifts in thinking and seeing that are often the precondition for comprehension' (ibid: 623).

ONTOLOGICAL AND EPISTEMOLOGICAL APPROACH

A social constructionist epistemological standpoint was adopted so that in the interviews the ideas of the young people, key supporters and workers investigated and how meaning was ascribed examined (Becker, 1963). This postulates that the world is socially constructed through human interaction and language that is culturally specific so meaning is ascribed differently in different settings or cultural spheres. The 'truth' therefore is not 'out there' but rather it is created, passing through many indecipherable layers that are both subjective and objective before being internalised and externalised. The value of taking this stance is that it revealed how the young people and those closest to them viewed and described their past, present and future. This meant that the dynamics involved in 'relational reflexivity' could be better understood in developing agency, perhaps in some cases even supporting the imagining of a 'new' self (Weaver and McNeill, 2015, Healy, 2014), raising the prospect that the research process in itself could help to aid the desistance process.

Houston (2001) argues that social constructionism can mean that all stories are treated as equally valid, as they are often without a wider context and findings therefore can remain on the 'surface' rather than having 'depth.' This is reflected by MacDonald et al.'s (2005: 880) observation that the young people they interviewed had 'strikingly little awareness of their subordinate place in wider class structures.' Therefore, to compliment the findings, rather than triangulate, critical realism was also adopted. Critical realism separates out ontology from epistemology, and argues that our way of knowing is not always linked to our sense of being (Bhaskar, 1998). In many ways it is compatible with social constructionism as it is concerned with the processes interrogating how knowledge is created. The standpoints differ though, as critical realism, unlike social constructionism argues that the truth is 'out there.' However, like social constructionism it views ascertaining this as an almost impossible task.

Critical realism views three domains of reality. Bhaskar (1998) argues that the focus on the empirical, the first domain, has created an epistemological fallacy reducing all three domains to this one. What we can see and hear has been prioritised to the exclusion of everything else, and this idea is very similar to that put forward by social constructionism, where understanding how or why such views, ideas or events are formed is viewed as crucial. The second domain is defined as 'the actual', where events happen whether we experience them or not, and finally 'the real' emphasises the idea of mechanisms, or structures producing or underpinning events. This last domain is the main focus of critical realism and is compatible with social constructionism, because how people define their world is influenced by all that is around and within them.

Rather than relying on the testimony of participants alone as with social constructionists, critical realism places the onus on the researcher, not only to report the insider view as accurately as possible but also to understand and reveal the outside structures which may have had influence and bearing (Swartz, 2011). The importance of breaking ontology into these three domains is that it reinforces that the individual's ability to understand their world is generally based on their relatively limited senses. In the same way as social constructionism, it is accepted then that the empirical world experienced is not 'truth', and knowledge is constructed. As stated by Danermark et al. (2002: 39) of critical realism:

knowledge is always filtered through language and concepts that are relative and changeable in time and space...characteristic of reality is the condition that there is an ontological gap between what we experience and understand, what really happens, and more important the deep dimension where the mechanisms are which produce the events.

Critical realism, like social constructionism separates out ontology from epistemology, but unlike social constructionism it believes that the truth is 'out there' rather than being constructed, and importantly the domain of reality exists but it is not accessible. Although the theories then differ in agreeing whether the truth exists or not, both are similar in their acceptance that this will not be harnessed and our way of knowing is not always linked to our sense of being (Bhaskar, 1998). Social constructionism argues that the creation of reality is imperfect and critical realism explicitly views the world as messy with events described as happening in 'open

systems' (ibid). This emphasis on unpredictability is useful for this study that also reflects the lack of determinism about trajectories into and out of criminality (Bhasker, 1998).

There are many benefits to applying both social constructionism and critical realism. Social constructionism attempts to unpick the individual's understanding and critical realism offers a chance to contextualise it. The 'task of social research is not simply to collect observations on the social world, but to explain these within theoretical frameworks that examine the underlying mechanisms which structure people's actions and prevent their choices from reaching fruition' (May, 1993: 7). As a model for analysis critical realism is demanding and I feel that one of the main limitations was my ability to identify and evidence that which cannot be seen, even to those affected, however, as an objective it fits with the role of the social scientist. According to Danermark et al. (2002: 204) the task of social science is 'to provide insight into the mechanisms and tendencies that make things happen in society', and that research participants are not misrepresented through shallow, manacled gazes, a criticism that has been directed in the past towards criminology by criminologists (Garland, 1992). The inspiration for this type of analysis is drawn specifically from Farrall et al. (2011) and the Teeside studies, as I feel that trying to provide and understand context lends itself to become the most instructive way of attempting to find ways forward.

Winlow and Hall (2013: 174) even argue for what they refer to as 'ultra-realism', that is to 'represent the real world with enough accuracy to appeal to underlying core sentiments of good and evil shared by all human beings...explaining the world as it is, warts and all.' They state that social research has become 'trapped in a vigilantly policed tautological loop' and 'the complexity of social life is rarely investigated with any honesty, fine detail or theoretical sophistication (ibid: 9)' They call for a focus on those who are marginalized because 'powerful agenda-setters-setters can too easily distort these truths and explain them away with their overpowering ideological clout' (Hall and Winlow, 2015: 70). They contend that the 'truths that are uncomfortable to dominant or subdominant social groups can be ignored or invalidated and marginalized by empirical work' (ibid). In their quest to expose the realities of life, I think they go too far in arguing that this is being consciously suppressed. Equally, in

my opinion, critical realism, if taken for what it truly means is methodologically robust and able to achieve what they propose with ultra-realism.

Both critical realism and social constructionism regard the creation of knowledge as constituted through human interests, and being aware of the influence of my focus, ethical standpoint and individual characteristics has been vital (McNiff and Whitehead: 2002). I feel that it is impossible to unpack and know the impact or perceived impact of all the individual characteristics that the participants and I (as their audience and co-producer) have brought to the study. However, gender, class and defining my role within an organisation is discussed later in the chapter to give some indication of how I have impacted upon the findings. Although I have not been the focus of enquiry and thus remained 'secondary', reflections of this kind are valuable as they locate the researcher within the research and facilitate transparency (Stanley and Wise, 1993; Letherby, 2003). In trying to make sense of the material generated I was reflective throughout on how knowledge and meaning has been constructed (May, 2011; Finlay, 2003; Gough, 2003). I kept a fieldwork diary and noted my feelings, thoughts and ideas as they emerged, changed and developed. This process also aided tracking shifting standpoints during the research process for both the researcher and the research participants. I checked interpretations with participants at the beginning of each interview by giving them a verbal brief summary about the last meeting and they were asked to comment or if there were any gaps identified for these to be filled in. Through this, my analysis of their construction of reality was checked and an internal validity attempted.

Three different populations were interviewed, specifically, twelve young people who have received intensive support from *Includem*, their workers and 'key' supporters (such as peers and family members) over a fieldwork period of around eighteen months. In the findings chapters the interviews with the young people are the main focus with the other groups only referred to when they enhanced or helped to develop these testimonies. Future publications are however planned for those relating to the other groups in their own right.

QUALITATIVE LONGITUDINAL RESEARCH

Neale and Flowerdew (2003: 189) state that qualitative longitudinal research (QLR) is a fairly new development that has yet to be fully articulated as a coherent methodology. It is distinctive from other paradigms because of its contribution to a deeper understanding of 'time and texture' (Neale and Flowerdew, 2003: 189). It is particularly useful for this study as 'it is only through time that we can gain a better appreciation of how the personal and the social, agency and structure, the micro and macro are interconnected and how they come to be transformed' (ibid: 190). It is adopted to record and understand change and to capture the complexity of 'subtly shifting facets of human existence' (Farrall et al. 2016: 288), and provide 'much-needed information about the reality of the daily experience' of disadvantaged young people in the transition to adulthood (Collins, 2001: 286). The idea being that this level of detail is required to help policy makers make better decisions to support this population and this study goes some way to filling this gap. A longitudinal design permitted a nuanced and deeper understanding of changes in the circumstances and outlooks of people on each side of transitional events, and thus a linking of contexts, mechanisms and outcomes at the individual level (Siennick and Osgood, 2008; Cashman and Paxman, 2007; Stein, 2005; Saldana, 2003). It also allowed attention not only to formal and professional roles but also to informal and personal dimensions that have promoted or inhibited desistance, and more broadly that helped or hindered young people in moving on to a better life.

There is much to be learned through adopting this methodology which, in comparison to cross-sectional research, is described as 'filming the whole picture' rather than trying to 'take snapshots along the way' (Walklate, 2007: 335). This analysis is valuable because it highlights and draws attention to how robust and in-depth longitudinal research is. However, qualitative longitudinal research is not about the researcher recording a whole scene that has been played out but instead each interview captures a moment in time, a still. Gaps exist which require deeper exploration in order to be filled. Although this study is prospective, it also involved interviewees 'looking back' to fill in the gaps between meetings. Therefore, I argue that a more accurate description of QLR is that it is like 'time lapse photography', with both the recording and notes made used as the medium. The description is useful

and accurate for a number of reasons as will be discussed, particularly in terms of the purpose intended and outcomes produced.

Qualitative Longitudinal Research as Time-lapse Photography

A time lapse is when an ordinary digital camera takes photographs at intervals over a long period of time which is then edited into a moving sequence, compressing time and sometimes exposing events that go unnoticed in real time (BBC, undated). It is a 'way of slowing the world for the photographer but speeding it up for everybody else' (Chylinski, 2012: 10). It is often used to capture transitions such as a flower blooming and is very fitting for this study. In practical terms photographs are taken at set intervals so that snapshots are not random and have coherence (Persohn, 2014). In this study, contact was made with interviewees at intervals spaced evenly apart so in this sense there is order to the story constructed so that transitions can be compared and conclusions more easily drawn about progress made. A particular advantage of this technique in photography is that processes that may have appeared subtle or overlooked become more pronounced, so that which may not have been noticed is otherwise revealed. For example, at the follow up stage with Brian, three months after the initial interview his girlfriend was pregnant. At the six months follow up he told me that she had miscarried the baby and they were trying hard to deal with it. In the final interview his girlfriend was pregnant again and he did not talk about the miscarriage at all as though it had not happened, even though there had been opportunities in the interview to do so. I respected his right to privacy and did not probe the issue as I felt it was probably simply too painful to discuss. Arguably then, had it not been for the other two follow up interviews, this transition and major life event may not have been recorded. Also, on a more basic level, even the appearances of the young people, because of the gap in time became more pronounced. For example, with Kevin as is discussed in the later chapters, he went from being a fit upbeat trim person dedicated to boxing, to someone who was overweight, under-confident and quite down.

As well as the benefits of using time lapse, an important consideration is that shots of certain events or people which may have been focused on because they were at one

point considered important, can become less relevant to the overall composition. For example, from the outset there had been discussions about the potential value of interviewing workers at the transitional support team both at the beginning and end of the study. Interviews with each worker took place at the beginning, however re-interviews did not take place at the end because the focus had shifted to an examination of the lives of the young people. Like time-lapse photography, there is nothing predictable about QLR as subjects can move, slip out of focus, or as was the case in this study completely remove themselves from the picture. Mark was not able to be interviewed after the first three months and had moved out of my camera view, resulting in his transition not able to be fully captured.

Using time lapse means that data is collected over a long period of time but replayed often within a few minutes. Over the two years of fieldwork, I interviewed the young people around four times, which has produced rich, detailed and extensive data. Piecing this together sequentially as well as unpicking it thematically and rebuilding it produces what is then a reduced diluted version of the content. Like the ‘final’ product on the completion of a time lapse, all of the many days, months and in this case years of work can seem as though it has been reduced to a flash in comparison.

Drawing other Parallels

Even a rudimentary introduction to time lapse photography emphasises that the most important equipment pieces of equipment are a stable tripod, wide angle lens, and good battery and memory power (Chylinski, 2012; Allen, undated). The tripod is a good metaphor for a researcher, particularly in a study such as this that has involved interviewing and trying to remain in contact with individuals who do not have secure lives. For example, both Mark and Dan moved home a few times within six months, and at points Amy was unable to be found due to her substance misuse. Although the participants may not be stable, in order for any chance of success the researcher must remain a steady focal point throughout. Specifically, in practical terms it is imperative the researcher’s contact details remain fixed and that the task of maintaining communication is taken seriously (Farrall et al. 2016). The clarity and faithfulness of the aims and objectives should be clear and finally it is important that the study has

coherence in order to make sense of the rich and messy data. Moreover, like the tripod, the researcher is not the focus of enquiry and the lens is directed towards those being interviewed, however without stability the image or story is not possible as it will be out of focus, blurred and lacking in quality making the evidence of limited, if any use.

A wide-angle lens is advised for time-lapse photography as it means that more of the scene can be included in the photograph and change and the reasons for change detected more easily. QLR, especially with a critical realist outlook sets out to capture the ‘bigger picture’ in the same way, so that change can be contextualised and that linking can be made between micro and macro phenomena. The need for good ‘memory power’ is particularly apt. At each stage of the interviews it was crucial that the young people did not feel as though they were repeating themselves and their stories were able to unfold with as little interruption as possible. To enhance this process I listened and re-listened to the last recordings of interviews and made notes before re-contacting and meeting each young person again. This may seem like a time-consuming exercise but it made for a more ethical experience for the participant as their voices had been heard (Farrall, 2006). In reality, I had come to the point where I carried their stories and even voices in my head with each stage of the research the narratives extended. Indeed, one of the pleasures of even beginning the process of writing up the analysis had been the offloading of these pathways onto paper, mapping the individualised and often tough terrain taken.

ACCESSING THE SAMPLE

The research was conducted in partnership with *Includem*, which had distinct advantages to accessing potential participants, as well as a degree of confidence that all were being supported, and indeed could regain support if the need arose at any point. Getting ‘access’ to the young people was made easier, but heavily reliant on the input and support of *Includem* workers who acted as gatekeepers. Their ‘buy in’ to the study proved crucial (Cree et al. 2002). As illustrated by Emma who ‘missed’ four scheduled meetings for the first interview where it was noted that this was the same point at which her key worker had been on holiday. *Includem* operate on the idea that

each young person has three workers and the idea of a ‘key’ person is said to be less important. However, when I finally met the young woman I asked her about the reasons for missing the other appointments and she was open that she had preferred that her ‘main’ worker introduced me to her. Overall then, the workers acting as gatekeepers and brokers to the young people was invaluable.

It was a priority in the beginning to meet, discuss and begin to build trust and involve the workers in the study design. This meeting took place after the University Ethics Committee granted approval (Emmel et al. 2007). The feedback and insights from the workers and management were appreciated both in terms of addressing the initial practicalities and also their opinions on the drafts of the materials produced (Hamel et al, 1993). For example, they advised that the word ‘service user’ was changed to ‘young person’, invoking a more friendly and inclusive tone. One of the drawbacks of using gatekeepers who are known to potential participants is that participants may feel more pressurised to take part (Miles, 2008 cited in Abrams, 2010). Consequently, the young people were informed throughout the study that the research was separate from *Includem* to ensure impartiality and in the earlier stages making this clear proved to be a challenge. Most thought that I worked for *Includem* when we first met, however, it would be fair to say that by the second interview this was no longer the case.

In order to get access to ‘key supporters’, each young person was asked to identify someone important in their lives and if they were willing to then approach them to find out if they would like to take part or not. If the person agreed, I then called them at an appointed time to discuss the purpose and practicalities of the research involved. Only three interviewees were able to name someone and this was then followed up. When the ‘key supporters’ were contacted they said that they would prefer to meet and speak with me with the young person invited. In two cases this was because the foster carers felt that the young person had a right to hear what was being said, and in the other, the girlfriend was nervous about the interview and requested that her boyfriend accompany her. The main limitation to this aspect of the study was the young person’s ability to identify someone who was close to them and highlighted their lack of social networks.

At the first meeting with each 'key supporter' written consent was obtained and the consent form verbally conveyed so that the specifics and limits to confidentiality and anonymity discussed. All the workers and manager in the transitional support team were asked individually if they would be willing to be interviewed. Written consent was obtained after the expectations and overview of the study had been explained verbally and a pamphlet also given out. As Transitional Support are a small team, the potential for anonymity and confidentiality to be compromised was discussed frankly and all interviewees agreed that they understood that this should be borne in mind. All workers conveyed openness and vocalised that they regarded the study as a chance to be reflexive about their practice. With the young people, the likelihood of them being able to be identified was and will continue to be taken seriously and has already resulted in some details being changed in the reporting of the findings.

SAMPLING

In the initial discussions with *Includem* workers purposive sampling was agreed upon. As summarised by Abrams (2010: 538) 'purposive sampling refers to strategies in which the researcher exercises his or her judgment about who will provide the best perspective on the phenomenon of interest, and then intentionally invites those specific perspectives into the study.' In order to operationalise this method all of the workers and management were consulted with and asked to forward the names of those they spoke with who had been willing to take part and were to exit from the service within the next month. Specifically, two young people were not interviewed, one because of his escalation of sexual offending, and another because of the risk of suicide and fragile mental state. Based on this information, it would be accurate to say that purposive sampling in this instance was less about the decision of the researcher, but rather a collective and joint decision between the researcher and the gatekeepers based on what was practical, feasible and ethical. The time scales of this research were a concern, being longitudinal and spanning over a year, a sample was really required to be secured by at the very latest by the mid point in the PhD, that is eighteen months into beginning. At the time of doing the research, other than the two people discussed who were not approached, all those who were to exit from

Transitional Support had been recruited, with the time frame extended, to those exiting within a few months.

Overall, the numbers engaging transitional support and near the end of their engagement were small, and as time passed it became clear that getting the sample that had been originally been hoped for would not be possible. For example, it had been expected that interviews with both genders in equal numbers would take place, however, all the women engaging, and indeed who had engaged with the service and were to exit from the service throughout the whole period of the study were recruited and interviewed. The number of young men who had received support, as shown by the numbers in this study, with all approached and participating, was higher.

Although one of the main objectives of the study has been an exploration of early desistance, from the outset those without a history of offending were also included, both to act as a comparison group, and also because this gave a wider sample to understand transitions to adulthood. Again, ideally this would have been in equal number, so six young people with a history of offending and six who were not. Due to the lack of referrals at this time, this was also not possible. The inclusion of non-offenders has been useful in highlighting the level of vulnerability and all too often underreported commonalities between young people living in poverty, whether they are offending or not (McAra, 2014). In hindsight, due to the amount of data generated, it would have been preferable to have fewer participants and of even balance, that is the same amount of male to female ratio, and of non-offending and offending backgrounds.

ETHICS

Miller and Bell state that (2002: 53) ‘satisfactorily completing an ethics form at the beginning of a study and/or obtaining ethics approval does not mean that ethical issues can be forgotten, rather ethical considerations should form an ongoing part of the research’ (cited in Cousin: 2009 29). The research was approved by the University of Edinburgh Ethics Committee (APPENDIX II), and I was vetted and a criminal background check completed through the ‘Protecting Vulnerable Groups Scheme.’

The process of getting ethical approval was an opportunity to outline the many considerations involved and clarify the policies and procedures that could be relied upon when researching this population. There was a distinct advantage collaborating with *Includem*, for example, all the interviews took place in line with *Includem*'s Risk Assessment, Management and Reduction Policy which is informed and shaped by the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001 and the SSSC Codes of Practice for Social Service Workers.² In practical terms, this meant that detailed notes were accessed outlining any foreseen dangers or risks prior to conducting interviews.

The young people were viewed as children and their rights not only adhered to but also actively promoted (Scottish Government, 2010). Scotland is a strong advocate for Children's rights as evidenced by the Children's Charter, Framework for Standards and 'Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)' national policy. In the legislation and policy there is a special emphasis on the welfare of the child as being paramount, the importance of the child being listened to, and the need for co-ordinated support to promote well being (Scottish Government, 2010). The active promotion of this aspect of the study centred on the idea that if the young person was found to be in trouble they were then encouraged to regain contact with *Includem* in the first instance if this was not in place.

Informed Consent, Confidentiality and Disclosure

The importance of all the participant's willingness and voluntariness was paramount, not only as a moral concern, but also to help reduce attrition rates for future follow-up, which for longitudinal studies are vital (Yeterian et al. 2012; Bjorkland and Bee, 2009; Wilson et al. 2006; Elliot, 2005). Young people exiting the service were introduced to the aim, objectives and overview of the research initially by their key workers verbally and informed that they did not have to take part and could opt out at any stage. These points were reiterated throughout the fieldwork and the information given verbally was also provided in a pamphlet (Appendix III). The appropriate key

²This can be found at:
http://www.sssc.uk.com/component/option,com_docman/Itemid,486/gid,1020/task,doc_details/

worker introduced the young person who agreed to be approached by the researcher so that the experience was as comfortable as possible. The researcher then discussed the study with them alone so that they were fully aware of the commitment involved. In all twelve cases this initial contact was in a room within the *Includem* offices and all twelve accepted. The first meeting with each participant was crucial for a number of reasons, namely to begin to build rapport and a connection, to discuss the research, the main aim, objectives and practicalities involved.

Punch (2014) discusses the importance of informed consent being genuine, that is that the person wants to take part. I agree that this is imperative and took steps to ensure this. The consent form, which was extensive, had an ‘opt in’ for each aspect of the project giving the participants much greater control at each stage. This was discussed at length verbally as well as obtaining written consent. The rights and obligations relating to the research were reiterated throughout the fieldwork and given verbally as well as provided in writing (Rooney, 2015). Consent was not viewed as a one-off task but sought continuously (Neale and Bishiop, 2012).

Recording qualitative interviews ‘is now generally thought to be good practice’ (Elliot: 2005: 33). In this study it meant not only that a full record was then available for analysis but also that full attention could be given to the interviewee. Kim was the only person who did not consent to being recorded and so afterwards detailed notes were made after the interview to capture the responses as fully as possible.

Throughout, attempts were made to put interviewees at ease, and even minor details were considered, such as asking where they would prefer for the interviews to take place, and even where they wanted to sit. It was interesting to note that by the third interview, six wanted it to be in their homes or in their local area. After the second interview with one young man, which took place in the organisation’s offices, he said that he did not want it to take place there again as it was a painful reminder of his ex-girlfriend who had also received support in the past. This highlights an under-reported aspect of longitudinal research, that over time and with growing trust and confidence participants can become more open and honest, not only about the problems they face but also even about how they feel about the research process.

I wanted to create an open and comfortable atmosphere where the participant felt confident to set boundaries, and were encouraged to suggest breaks or state if they did not want to answer any questions. A break was scheduled every forty minutes, and at the outset I had thought that the interviews would take around this time. Incidentally, on average, across the whole study interviews were around 43 minutes each. However, some lasted more than an hour and a half, without including breaks. The table provides a break down of the length of time for each interview and the average length of the interviews for each person. All of the interviews at each stage were attempted face to face except the third interview that was by phone. The table also states when interviews were not achieved at all or when they took place by phone instead of face to face. To be clear, the second interview took place around one or two months after the first, the third phone call interviews were attempted at the six months stage and all of the fourth interviews were attempted at least a year after initial contact. In total, 43 interviews were achieved with eleven young people remaining in the study throughout. In total 1868 minutes of interviews took place or 31 hours over the course of the study.

Name(s)	1st Interview (Length in minutes)	2nd Interview (Length in minutes)	3rd Interview (Phone, length in minutes)	4th Interview (Length in minutes)	Total and average length in minutes for each person's interviews
Mark	48	42	Did not take place	Did not take place	90 (45)
Paul	41	35	15	45	136 (34)
Elaine and Ron	99	93	40	60	292 (73)
Calvin	63	76	25	53	217 (54)
Emma	31	48	Did not take place	10 (phone)	89 (30)
Kevin	101	88	25	44	258 (65)
Dan	43	64	20	38	165 (41)
Scott	35	47	25	60	167 (42)
Kim	35	40	40	70	185 (46)
Amy	47	Did not take place	Did not take place	93	140 (70)
Brian	94	90	20	15 (phone)	219 (55)
Total for each stage (Minutes)	637 (53)	623 (57)	210 (23)	488 (44)	1868

One of the questions from the outset was whether or not to pay the young people, particularly considering their difficult financial situations (Shaw et al. 2011). The crucial aspect of motivation was one of the initial reasons for not including an

incentive, the rationality being that those who would take part without an incentive were doing so purely because they wanted to, they were genuine in their involvement or felt it could help other young people. Instead of offering an incentive, at the end of the study all those who took part were given gift vouchers and taken out for something to eat as a mark of appreciation. Equally, for those who I visited in their homes, I brought food, tea and coffee, something I would do if I were visiting a friend, however, in these cases I brought more food than usual and it was apparent that the gesture was appreciated to a much deeper level, probably particularly due to the deprivation experienced. Gaining informed consent and truly honouring and respecting it involved and will continue to involve thinking about the way in which findings are disseminated. There is a risk especially with using case studies that participants could be identified and as with other studies some details have been altered to try to safeguard against this (Henderson et al. 2007). For publication to a wider or more accessible audience this may even mean altering the presentation of findings further.

Beyond Consent and Confidentiality

The need for informed consent and to be clear about the limitations of confidentiality and anonymity were crucial. However, as already mentioned being ‘ethical’ in this study was enacted by adopting ‘ethics of care’ and as well as encouraging or facilitating participants to get help if they needed it, being honest about my role from the beginning (Gilligan, 1982). In practical terms this meant that, for example, before the interviews it was reiterated that the interview would be kept confidential unless there was a risk of harm identified to them or to anyone else. If any participant had disclosed abuse or a risk had emerged, it was up to me as the researcher to help the participant to act appropriately and in line with *Includem*’s Child Protection Policy to connect the young person to appropriate support. There was an acute awareness of potential power disparities felt between the participant and the researcher which can exist at every stage of the process, including after fieldwork has ended (Glasgow Centre for the Child and Society, undated). I feel that one of the advantages of QLR is that over time the power disparities become flattened, whereby both the researcher and participants become more comfortable with each other and come to a common

understanding about expectations and roles. All of the young people have had a tough backgrounds and one of the main ethical concerns has been to try to minimise potential harm and attempt to make this experience as comfortable (and ideally as interesting) as possible.

A less discussed aspect of qualitative longitudinal research is the idea that where possible the interview process should avoid being repetitive (Farrall, 2006). Although there were elements of the study which were revisited such as the social network mapping this was always tailored to each young person built on the first interview so that it was clear that I had taken our ‘last’ meeting on board and meant that they did not have to reiterate their story. Although this was a time intensive input I felt that it was valuable for all parties involved. From the outset, I wanted this study to try to assess the impact of hope and self-esteem on the young people in progressing their journeys. In earlier conversations with my supervisors the use of Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale had been mentioned. I have used and abandoned this scale in the past when conducting longitudinal studies with young men leaving prison. I feel that not only is this a long and sometimes confusing instrument as it uses double negatives, but more importantly there is potentially a damaging impact. The scale asks the individual to indicate how far they agree or disagree with quite insensitive statements such as ‘All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure’ or ‘At times I think I am no good at all.’ I decided that ethically and to be more methodologically consistent in using narrative methods this information would be gathered through dialogue. As stated by Reinharz (1992: 38) ‘the idea is to try to create interviews that are “interviewee-based” rather than instrument-oriented.’

Retaining the Sample –Tracking Techniques and Ethical Considerations

One of the main drawbacks and challenges in using a longitudinal design is the potential for attrition at each stage or sweep of the process (Farrall et al. 2016; Henderson and Thomson, 2014; Bjorklund and Bee, 2009; Henderson et al. 2007). A specific consideration then is the ethical use of ‘tracking techniques’ to retain the sample (Wilson et al. 2006). For this study, based on past research experience and also my own empathetic assessment, I decided that ‘minimal but thoughtful’ contact

would be most appropriate and ethical (Morrison, 2006). Therefore, each young person received birthday messages, Christmas cards and also an email, text or Facebook message giving them at least a few weeks notice if I was planning on telephone calling them to arrange a future interview. Many interviewed at the first stage crucially did not have a stable address. As well as cards, messages and phone contact to the individuals directly, all of the young people were asked to give two names, numbers and addresses of significant others. It was revealing and depressing that this was not possible at all for some. Moreover, although most had mobile phones they said that they changed their number regularly, either because they would lose it or to avail of a cheaper tariff. In two cases, the young people even shared phones with another person. In short, neither their addresses nor phone numbers could be relied upon. It became clear then that developing other methods of staying in touch would be beneficial.

One of the most important tracking techniques used was *Facebook*. In accordance with the University's Computing Regulations (University of Edinburgh, 2013) the study's page was set up and each young person who had agreed to this type of communication was asked to become a 'friend.' It was made clear at the consent stage that their Facebook page would be treated as confidential and contact would only be made through private messages. The significant value of using *Facebook*, as noted in other research is that it helps to retain an 'unstable' sample (Mychasiuk and Benzies, 2012). Ironically, for some of those interviewed their most secure means of contact was through this form of social media. Half of the second and final interviews were arranged through *Facebook*, and this would have been much more difficult and potentially impossible because they had changed their phone numbers and in some cases addresses during this time.

From the outset, I decided that *Facebook* would only be used as a means of subtly keeping in touch and also a source of information for adding basic sites as points of reference such as *Young Scot*. For those who did not have a stable address messages on special occasions, which would otherwise have been sent by card, were instead sent through Facebook. I felt that a respectful distance was beneficial and feedback from the young people suggested that this type of approach worked best. The forum was also monitored on a daily basis so that any inappropriate content could be

removed quickly, although this did not happen throughout the study. This medium has the potential to be ‘abused’, whereby I could have easily accessed the young people’s private pages and followed their Facebook conversations with friends as well as accessing photos. In the consent form, I assured each young person that I would not do this and only wanted to use this as a way of keeping in contact by private messages and that this was respected throughout. To maintain this level of ethical integrity, even when young people were not responding to my private messages was not always easy, but it was imperative, as otherwise I would not only have let the young people down but myself also. In future, it may be advisable to ask the young people to set up a separate Facebook account for the purposes of a study so that access to their own personal account is not possible.

At the end of the interviews with young people and key supporters they were given a list of organisations of support and contact details (Appendix III), so that if there were any issues that they wanted help with they had adequate information to get the help needed or wanted. I purposely focused and reported agencies that have a free helpline, as drawing on past experience, for those most disadvantaged, even the price of a phone call can prevent access.

Data Management

Data management for this study has been informed by the Economic and Social Research Council Research Data Policy (ESRC, 2010) and the Code of Practice used by the Glasgow Centre for the Child and Society (undated). The recording and storage of the data has been in accordance with the principles and guidelines set out by the Data Protection Act 1998. To retain confidentiality each participant was given a code, datasets password protected and the data made anonymous. A data management system was also put in place using Microsoft Excel so that each case was given a personal ID number, which means that if data was being carried on an encrypted USB stick persons would not have been able to be identified. In this thesis and any future publications all the names used are pseudonyms to protect identities. Furthermore, the data will be archived in a secure form and made anonymous as outlined by the ESRC (2010).

QUALITATIVE AND NARRATIVE INTERVIEWS

Social interactions could be usefully viewed as a drama whereby the props, actors, audience and how they are perceived are emphasised, and attention drawn to the consideration of all aspects of interviews, that is before, during and after the process (Goffman, 1959; Myers and Newman, 2007). Qualitative semi-structured interviews were used in the beginning with the young people and throughout with the rest of the sample. The flexible approach offered by semi-structured interviews meant that although the main questions were the same for each participant, the data generated became quite different through prompts and discussing areas which may not have been pre-empted (Cousin, 2009). This is created by what Bourdieu (1999: 609) describes as a 'relationship of active and methodical listening', so that points raised that may prove valuable are investigated further. By the second interview with the young people, the schedule was used much more loosely and the questions tailored based on the last meeting so that the story could develop and continue. From the second meeting onwards, the methodology used is best described as narrative interviews. In the two interviews with key supporters, they insisted that the interview was completed in front of the young person so that they were able to hear what was being said. As noted by one of the foster parents, 'we have nothing to hide. It would be inaccurate to say that this exchange was a 'focus group', because the impact of group dynamics did not take place and instead it was simply that there was another audience member and I remained an interviewer rather than a moderator (Farnsworth and Boon, 2010). However, the impact of having other people in attendance was taken into consideration when doing the analysis. The interviews could still be described best as qualitative and, for the case of the young person, narrative.

Narrative interviews are 'interpretive devices, through which people represent themselves, both to themselves and to others' and are often used synonymously alongside the word 'story' (Lawler, 2002: 242). Narratives have an inherently temporal thread in that current events are understood as rising out of past happenings and pointing to future outcomes (Bell, 2002). Pure narrative research is conducted by asking the person to speak at length about a particular time in their life (Chase, 2005). Although this style of interviewing was not exercised, the interviews became narratives as the young people's stories and individual pathways have been

constructed and where possible reaffirmed. In addition, case notes, body language, appearance and visual data on social networks were also used (Bold, 2012; Lawler, 2002). These stories were also supplemented through the interviews with both workers and supporters so that layers of meaning were added and analysed. The move towards using narrative enquiry is said to be as an outcome of the 'preoccupation' with understanding identity in post-modern times (Riessman and Speedy, 2007), the instability of which is shown as it is viewed as being assembled, disassembled, accepted and contested (Holstein & Gubrium, 2000). Walklate and Mythen (2008: 211) emphasise the lack of support and anchoring in today's society, with the process (or lack of) underpinning the creation of identities described as 'do it yourself.' The concept of 'identity' is further fractured and divided by Henderson et al. (2007) who define the young people they interviewed as 'inventing' multiple identities.

The Interview Process

Hyden (2008: 123) describes the 'ideal interviewer' as 'more a listener than a questioner'. I was surprised when I re-heard the interviews for transcription at how often I gave discreet encouragement or was openly empathetic. Therefore, there are different types of listening, and in my opinion a good interviewer attempts to address power imbalances by being an active listener who is openly compassionate where this is appropriate. Rubin and Rubin (2012) describe this technique as responsive, whereby the interviewees are treated as partners rather than subjects of the process. Martin (1998: 9) defines narrative interviews as one of the most ethical forms of listening, describing it as operating on a 'third level', stating that 'to speak is one thing, to be heard is another, to be confirmed as being heard is yet another.' Kvale, on the otherhand, (1996: 126) draws attention to the asymmetry of power within an interview and brings to light that the 'conversation' is 'not the reciprocal interaction of two equal partners.' I agree with this assessment, because in my opinion there is much more being given by the interviewee than the interviewer.

I aspired to work towards a situation where the participants understood the value in taking part, and incorporated a number of methods to minimise the power imbalance (Bailey, 2012; Shaw et al. 2011; Hyden, 2008; Kvale, 1996, Glasgow Centre for the

Child and Society, undated). For example, I chose to wear casual but respectable clothes as I wanted to appear friendly yet still professional (Walklate and Evans, 1999). I also decided that at the very beginning of the interview I would introduce myself and give some personal information, such as my background, although it is vital to not exaggerate the impact that this may have had. Humour also proved useful to help put people at ease (Gilgun et al. 2012; Eley et al. 2003). The way in which questions were ordered and asked was also carefully considered. I took into account how difficult the interview situation can be and where possible I would prepare the interviewee for especially challenging questions.

Kvale (1996) describes research using a ‘traveller metaphor’, a journey whereby knowledge is constructed and negotiated between both parties and co-produced. Salmon and Riessman (2008: 80) draw attention to the limitations of co-construction, stating that ‘the audience, whether physically present or not, exerts a crucial influence on what can and cannot be said, how things should be expressed, what can be taken for granted, what needs explaining, and so on.’ Legard et al. (2003: 139) reaffirm Kvale’s (1996) original metaphor and casts the interviewer as having the potential to lead the subject to new insights, resulting in a possible ‘transformative element to the journey’. It would be fair to say that being interviewed and given an opportunity to think about and recall your life story is rare for most people, and this process may have meant that some ‘new’ ideas about oneself were created (Elliot, 2005). This point was particularly important in relation to the discussion of desistance and development of agency (Healy, 2014). Indeed, the transformative element of the interview experience although not aimed for, was apparent for some, with Hamish and Emma even commenting afterwards that they were now much clearer about what they wanted for their future and how to get there. On the other hand, a small number of the young people had told their story many times and the transformative element may have been less pronounced. It would be more accurate to say that I probably gained more insights from the young people than they did from taking part. Indeed, this entire thesis has been co-produced by them and through their stories.

The interview is the individual’s version of events (Lemley and Mitchell, 2012). A good researcher attempts to unpack the story, to get as accurate or detailed a picture as possible, not as an inquisitor, but rather an archaeologist helping to unearth how

and why the individual came to their point of view. Hearing the views and stories of all those who took part puts the researcher in a privileged position, and negotiating access has involved building mutual rapport and trust (Silverman, 2013). I believe that ideally participants should come to view the researcher as someone who cares and is worth talking to, and the whole process of building credibility and researcher 'competency' is something which is hard to pinpoint but crucial (Mertens, 2013). For example, Berger (2001: 507) advises that 'when researchers are open about their personal stories, participants feel more comfortable about sharing information, and the hierarchical gap between researcher and respondent is 'closed'' (cited in Swartz: 2011: 57). In the interviews, this was achieved by being compassionate and also where there were commonalities, which in truth were rare, where it was felt appropriate, these were revealed. Interviews are conversations with a purpose (Kvale, 1996). I hoped that each interview would feel like an extension of the last and tried to create continuity by recapping on the previous interactions.

One of the skills required of a researcher is feeling confident to steer the interaction. For example, there were a number of key areas I wanted to achieve within the first interview. Specifically, I wanted to get to know them, their future goals and views of being an 'adult.' Not wanting the interviews to be more than one hour long or to feel rushed I decided to split them into two separate interviews. I also hoped that this would have the added benefit of providing an early insight into who was likely to be willing to be re-interviewed at a later stage. However, now looking back on this, of the four people who proved difficult to re-establish contact with, only one was problematic at the final stages, showing that there is nothing predictable about QLR. To understand and provide an account of the context in which these young people are growing up, all three populations were asked to give their views of their local area and 'community'. Observational notes were made throughout the fieldwork of the places where the young people lived. The historical and economic background of two separate areas, one in Fife and one in Glasgow was also compiled using the Scottish Index for Multiple Deprivation to provide a more robust analysis (MacDonald et al. 2005; Walklate and Evans, 1999).

Interactive Elements Attempted, Abandoned and Used

It had been hoped that more interactive methods could be integrated into the study. Drawing on the successful ‘Sight and Sound’ Project each young person was asked to photograph or draw their most favourite or least favourite place so that their idea of belonging could be explored, and to give a sense of ownership of the project (Milne and Wilson, 2013). However, no one wanted to do this, or in the case of photographing did not feel safe to do so. Vähäsantanen and Saarinen (2013) describe the power that moves between the participant and researcher as a ‘dance’, and I was quite glad that in this instance the young people made it clear that they were confident that if they didn’t want to do or complete an aspect of the research then they didn’t have to. This example also shows that one of the most important limitations to the project, and one which I am happy to safeguard, is that the data generated is based on what the young people felt comfortable to impart.

Two elements of the interviews which were more interactive and successful were the use of social network mapping and also to a lesser extent, generating data using the ‘Well being web.’ Social network mapping involves the participant mapping those they are closest to, and those they are not (Seaman and Ikegwuonu, 2010). This exercise helped to establish influences on narrative and identity construction and also gave an insight into the stability of such relationships as it was asked at each stage. The ‘Well Being Web’ is based on Indicators identified by the Scottish Government as being vital to young people’s development (Scottish Government, 2012). The tool has been designed more for younger children and was adopted slightly for the purposes of this study. For example, in relation to health, sexual and mental health was discussed explicitly as well as physical health. Although in the beginning of the research the participants engaged well with it, by the end the structured nature interfered with the dialogue and so this information was gathered instead through conversation. Possibly in the early stages, using this tool, one that they had already been used before with the *Includem* worker, helped to ease them into the interview process, but that by the end it felt like an unnatural way to discuss meaningful problems.

Safety

In the initial stages all the interviews took place in the *Includem* offices, however, not everyone felt comfortable to do it again at this location, particularly when they had already left the service. Conducting the interviews in the young person's home presented a different type of risk. Subsequently, all interviews took place in line with *Includem*'s Risk Assessment, Management and Reduction Policy which is informed and shaped by the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001 and the Scottish Social Services Council Codes of Practice for Social Service Workers (SSSC, 2014). Throughout the research process, risk assessments were shared, discussed, monitored and records updated. As well as considering safety for the young people, *Includem* were also very helpful in ensuring that I was linked up with their Lone Workers System called 'Guardian 24.' This system means that before doing an interview with a young person or key supporter in the community on my own, I was able to input details of the interview and also the time I predicted the interview would be completed. My smartphone was used as a tracking device, so that if in the event that I pressed the alarm button, this information would then be sent first to my 'significant' contact and then if deemed appropriate passed directly onto the police.³ In the unlikely event that the Guardian System was not functioning, in order to minimise risks the established practice used by the Edinburgh Youth Transitions Study for lone researchers undertaking fieldwork was used. This protocol mimics the Guardian 24 system and each movement is logged with an appointed person.

In the final interviews using public transport to get to the young people's homes would have proved costly, time consuming and in a small number of cases actually not practical or relatively unsafe. I was keen that the final interviews would not encroach on *Includem* workers, particularly when the young person was no longer using the service. By the final stage I had access to a car, which saved time and money but also was much safer, because if any danger had been presented I was able to access my own transport quickly. Doing the interviews on my own and entering into people's homes is not a new experience for me, however, it is never taken lightly. The interviews were conducted in some of the most deprived and 'dangerous' areas in

³Information taken from <http://www.guardian24.co.uk/>

both Glasgow and Fife. One of the 'benefits' of doing this was that the fear that the young people spoke about could be contextualised and gave an added dimension to the study. As I noted in my field notes on one occasion:

Waiting outside the lift I was a bit nervous. I nodded at the person getting out and as I stepped inside I found myself hoping that no one else would get in. It's during the day and I was afraid. I stepped outside the lift and could hear an angry dog barking. I went to the door, double-checked I had the right number and buzzed. I was so relieved when Kim answered the door.

This type of experience lead me to reflect that if I felt this way during the day, inevitably I would be probably even more worried at night. Hearing about the young person's world and getting a glimpse beyond the window is another thing. Essentially though, as a researcher I was only a tourist to their life.

Transcription

I decided that I would transcribe the interviews myself, and there were undoubtedly benefits to doing this. Although it is a time consuming process, with each hour of recorded interview taking around five hours to transcribe, it undoubtedly enhanced the early stages of analysis. Transcription in itself could be said to be a translation or interpretation of the interview (Riessman, 2008; Bourdieu, 1999). According to Bourdieu (1999: 2) transcription 'transforms the oral discussions decisively.... the pronunciation and intonation, everything transcription eradicates, from body language, gestures, demeanour, mimicry and looks, to silences, innuendos, and slips of the tongue.' In an attempt to provide as authentic an account as possible of the event, the written language was kept as close as possible to the spoken word, and also any pauses, expressions or remembered gestures were included and examined as part of the analysis. The interview transcripts were also supplemented with notes written up at the end of each day of fieldwork on observations made. For example, notes were made on descriptions of participants, such as what they wore, if they made any comments before or after the interviews, the surroundings and any other information I deemed important. Therefore, although there is no doubt that transcription is an interpretation of the interview, the account created has attempted to be as robust as

possible. The limitation of course though is that even with the richest descriptions the events themselves are never truly fully captured.

ANALYSIS

This study has produced rich data that required sensitivity in the analysis and re-analysis using both grounded theory and an in-depth case study approach. As described by Thomson and Holland (2003: 236) ‘a longitudinal approach to qualitative analysis demands that we look analytically in two directions: cross-sectionally in order to identify discourses through which identities are constructed, and longitudinally at the development of a particular narrative over time.’ Essentially, the analysis has involved piecing the individual stories together so that they are coherent and clear, and then dissecting them piece by piece, line by line and word by word to understand the key themes and pay attention to the intricacies of each case. Subsequently, and with this level of analysis in mind, the cases are then rebuilt and re-examined with renewed awareness to rediscover the stories. Josselson (2011: 240) describes the analysis process accurately stating:

A narrative reading of the text goes beyond identification of themes and attempts to analyse their intersection in light of some conceptual ideas that illuminate processes more generally. The aim is to illuminate human experience as it is presented in textual form in order to reveal layered meanings that people assign to aspects of their lives...using as its data base the contextualized stories that people tell to mark and understand their actions, to construct an identity, and to distinguish themselves from others. Our hope in narrative research is that the painstaking work of combing through a narrative for its various levels of meaning will bring forth some new understanding that will benefit our wider scholarly fields.

In QLR the point where analysis is appropriate is not easily deduced. After the first interviews, when transcription and coding had been completed, as well as time constraints to begin the next set of interviews it was also clear that writing up the analysis to draw conclusions may have proved futile. As stated by Thomson and Holland (2003: 237) ‘there is no closure of analysis and the next round of data can challenge interpretations.’ Therefore, instead ‘key points’ or themes were written up loosely to inform the next stage of interviews and a ‘full’ analysis only undertaken

after the final interviews had been transcribed and coded. The impact the researcher has on the data generated in interviews is well established (Mertens, 2013; Lawler, 2002; Bourdieu, 1999; Kvale, 1996). The active role of the researcher in the stage of analysis is also gaining recognition, as it is the individual's ability to identify patterns and themes, and ultimately create theoretical frameworks which shape the findings (Braun and Clark, 2006; Strauss and Corbin, 1998).

Disassembling the Data – A Grounded Theory Approach

A form of grounded theory formulated by Strauss and Corbin (1998) has been used to guide the analysis. Their development of the original work by Glaser and Strauss (1967) argues that reading relevant literature and other research before analysis can enhance subtle nuances in the data, and therefore is able to support adaptive theory (Layder, 2008). As summarised by Dey (1993: 65):

There is a difference between an open mind and an empty head. To analyse data we need to use accumulated knowledge. The issue is not whether to use existing knowledge, but how. The problem is to find a focus without committing ourselves prematurely to a particular perspective and so foreclosing options for our analysis.

It is about being open to trying to understand phenomena and making sense of this in a new and critical way. The stages of analysis outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1998) are micro-analysis (detailed coding), open coding which is the development of concepts, axial coding or the linking of concepts, and finally selective coding to develop theoretical frameworks. This description of the process though arguably fails to convey the extent to which this is a creative process.

Strauss and Corbin (1998) wanted to move away from overly structured analysis and instead highlight flexibility. In their guidance, the first stage begins with microanalysis, however, I argue that actually there are stages that precede this, namely for example, the interview itself. Responsive interviewing is about hearing, processing and interrogating the data as it is forming (Rubin and Rubin, 2012). In the interview, often the researcher is consciously probing or moving the conversation in a certain direction to unpack or understand more about a particular theme that has

become apparent. Kleinman and Copp (1993) argue that analysis is carried out from the very beginning. I suggest that it is more accurate to state that the process of analysis begins at a time that is hard to pinpoint and could theoretically be unending.

Drawing on past experience and particularly with a view to constructing case studies, I felt that there were benefits to trying to understand the material in its entirety before beginning detailed coding. Otherwise, there is a danger that the wider context and meaning can be lost when transcripts are fragmented. The earliest stages subsequently have been guided more by the literature on thematic analysis. This advises that the first stage should be focused on familiarising yourself with the data through an active reading of transcripts to begin to identify common patterns or themes (Guest et al. 2012; Bold, 2012; Barbour, 2008; Braun and Clarke, 2006). Practically, after the first and second reading of the transcripts I made a note of and began to develop sensitising concepts from the outset. On the third reading, I then began micro coding using QSR NVivo with these sensitising concepts held in mind, but not fixed to them either.

I have used QSR NVivo in the past for other qualitative projects. I find it useful when managing a lot of qualitative data because it facilitates the different stages of analysis and is a useful way of manually categorising and making sense of the material.

Drawing on Strauss and Corbin (1998), for the microanalysis, detailed coding in QSR NVivo is undertaken by going through the data, finding commonalities, such as for example bringing all of the responses to the question about free time together, and in doing so creating what is referred to as 'child' nodes. These can then be used to open code, that is bringing other child nodes together, so for example comparing the answer to free time at each stage and thus formulating how this has been constructed over the course of the study. This helps to generate themes or create what is often referred to then as 'parent' nodes. In this case, for example, linking the data on free time to the discussion of shrinking networks or isolation. By then creating these links between the codes, or what is also referred to as axial coding, a theoretical framework can begin to develop. For example, by linking the analysis of 'free time' in this study to the wider literature. This process sounds easy and simple, however, the creation of theory does not often mean following linear steps and instead requires a lot of creative thinking, interpreting and refining of ideas.

QSR NVivo is not without problems, and sometimes because of the way in which coding is carried out, breaking it apart bit by bit, there is potential to get lost in the detail. Therefore, 'stepping back' from the data and seeing it in its entirety is important throughout this process, so that the wider concepts or themes can be understood and revealed. QSR NVivo means that coding can be broken down even into single words, although normally line-by-line or a paragraph by paragraph, often with multiple codes generated. In the early stages I had created over fifty codes and these were then coded within the wider themes or sensitising concepts decided upon. For example, in understanding the processes of closing a case, 'child' nodes were created, such as the detailed procedures and steps outlined. However, this category also led to open coded themes such as the emotional impact and axial coding relating to the negotiation of relationships or boundaries. This analysis then led on to become part of a theory on what the meaning of independence is, that is interdependence. In short, the coding of how to 'close a case' related to different levels of investigation and complexity.

Part of the analysis also included reviewing pauses, spaces and body language recorded, drawing attention to what is unsaid or unsayable (Rogers, 2007). For example, when I asked Scott 'What do you think has the most influence in your life?', this was followed by a 'long pause' before he replied, 'Well my mum's passing has a big influence on my life.' Undoubtedly this is a moving answer because he is opening up about the pain caused through bereavement. Moreover, re-reading this sentence, he speaks of it as happening both in the past but having bearing on the present. The 'long pause' between the question and answer adds even more weight and in my opinion reflects both the thoughtfulness and effort required to answer. Sometimes what is not said is also important, for example, as is reflected in Chapter seven, Mark's avoidance of speaking about his father may be because it was too difficult.

The analysis also presented a rare opportunity to be reflexive about my impact on the research process (Stanley and Wise, 1993; Letherby, 2003). Codes were created for instances where I felt I had been a 'good' and 'bad' interviewer.' For example, when I felt I had been 'good' was when it was clear that I had created a welcoming atmosphere and the young person felt at ease to answer more challenging or difficult

questions. There were a few instances when I was ‘bad’ and are important to reflect upon. These instances were really about me not wanting to make the person feel uncomfortable. In particular, I have to learn to accept that it is never a bad thing if you are not sure what someone has said to ask if they would be willing to repeat themselves.

Reassembling the Stories – A Case Study Approach

A case study approach has been used to chart individual pathways for a more detailed exploration and discussion of the transitions experienced and to understand narrative and identity construction (Yin, 2009; Lawler, 2002). This way of constructing the individual’s story has provided an in-depth account of their life, the pitfalls and support that have helped and hindered their progress and the context in which these took place. These case studies and the depth that this approach allows for in terms of analysis has been essential to theory building (Gadd and Jefferson, 2007), and as will be discussed in understanding the importance and searching for belonging.

MY ROLE AS A RESEARCHER

Souhami (2007) draws attention to the importance of background and gender as areas of consideration for the researcher to be aware of in terms of how they are viewed by participants. Taking the first point, in terms of background, this research was a partnership between the organisation *Includem* and the *Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research (SCCJR)*, of which the *University of Edinburgh* is a part. In the fieldwork stage it took substantial effort to impart to the young people that I did not work for *Includem*, and although the research included some aspects about the organisation this was not the central focus. Interestingly, for a short period it became apparent that my role within *Includem* needed to be clarified to both workers and management too. For example, one of the most extreme examples was that in the first six months I was invited to speak at their annual conference and the title broached for me to lecture on was ‘Why transitional support works.’ Although the first interviews with the young people had shown that the service was valued, there was in my

opinion no evidence yet to substantiate such bold claims about whether or not it could be said to have 'worked' and made this point clear. This example shows that adopting research that is participative in nature and similar to action research, means that there is a danger that you become viewed as an 'insider' and as a result consciously or unconsciously may be used as a 'tool' by the organisation (Rappaport, 1970). I changed the insert to become a discussion on young people and crime and therefore a more general insight into criminological statistics and theory. Since these early stages, the organisation have been very supportive and are keen to understand how they can help to communicate the findings in a way which will help to develop the service and Scottish policy.

In terms of personal background, I grew up in rural Northern Ireland and therefore my accent in Scotland is often hard to place within a class structure, which may have had an advantage for the research as it would not alienate or create a negative or positive connotation for those involved. Incidentally, I am from a working class family with a farming background. From a young age I was very aware of financial pressures and at least on this level could relate somewhat to the young people to understand the barriers that are both real and also sometimes created which can inhibit them from getting opportunities to a better life. However, overall there undoubtedly was a distance between me as a researcher and those I interviewed, simply because I do not have any personal experience of not feeling loved or cared for or of being neglected. As a result, I have found it challenging to write about this aspect of the study in a suitably academic and appropriate way without losing and indeed giving weight to the emotional impact that it deserves. However, equally, as time has progressed, I am increasingly more aware that actually one does not have to be sacrificed for the other. An honest account is an emotional account.

Drawing on my legal background, I have an acute awareness of rights and how research has the potential to promote equal access to this. Over the past decade of researching people coming out of prison and seeing social exclusion, my empathy towards young people who are struggling means that I don't come from a neutral stance. As described, I have adopted a feminist approach and attempted as far as possible to close the gap in power between the interviewer and interviewee, and adopt an 'ethics of care' approach, although as already if someone was found to be in

trouble, I encouraged them to get help rather than taking this step without them involved.

Atkinson and Hammersely (1995: 92) state that 'the researcher cannot escape the implications of gender' and that 'no position of genderless neutrality can be achieved.' In this study, gender was an aspect of the research I was aware of, however, it was not a central concern. Past research suggests that sometimes men find it easier to disclose emotions to women (Liebling, 1999). Scott said that he had not spoke to anyone about his feelings to the depth that they had in the interviews, however, he did not say if this was because I am a woman or because of my general demeanour. His disclosure may have been because he understood that the information would be treated as confidential, as Cotterill (1992) notes that respondents are likely to reveal private and personal things because they regard the research relationships as safe. Indeed, counter to the past research findings, Brian also revealed halfway through the second interview that generally he preferred to talk to and work with men. In sum, it is impossible to draw any conclusions on the impact I may have had, positive or otherwise on the basis of my being a woman.

Research and Emotions

The importance of emotions in research is a growing field of literature (Blix and Wettergren, 2015; Ribbens, McCarty and Jessop 2005; Liebling, 1999; Ramsay, 1993). Blix and Wettergren (2015) discuss the 'emotional labour' involved in research to access and maintaining access to participants and also the feelings which can arise from 'researching down', such as guilt, shame, sympathy, pity, and 'compassion stress.' Letherby (2003) draws explicit attention to the need to manage emotions and participant's expectations and to be mindful of the impact, intended or otherwise which may be felt. Throughout the study, I have prioritised empathy above all else. Truthfully, I feel that I have always adopted this approach. I would further argue that this is part of who I am and exercised in my normal day-to-day interactions with people. Therefore, in many ways the normality of my interactions with the young people interviewed has hopefully made the experience a positive one. Letherby warns

about the need to be aware of the potential impact on participants of doing research, intended or otherwise (2003: 6):

When we enter a field we make footprints on the land and are likely to disturb the environment. When we leave the gate open this may have serious implications for farmers and their animals. All of this is also relevant to what we find out about the field and its inhabitants. Thus, when doing research (fieldwork) we need to be sensitive to respondents and to the relevance of our own presence on their lives and in the research process.

The sustained contact through QLR can mean that closing the gate is necessary, however, it is also the case that for some, leaving the gate open is also crucial too. The extent to which the impact may be progressive is a decision that can only be made jointly by both the researcher and participant together. A distinctive strength is that with time and growing trust participants may report issues or events that they may otherwise have not. For example, in a study with over fifty young men leaving prison who were ‘tracked’ for between two to four years, by the final interviews three eventually began to speak of the abuse they had suffered by their father (Nugent, 2015). All three were then supported to get help and it is questionable whether without this type of follow-up if this information would have ever have been revealed, and indeed, if the help then would ever have been given.

In terms of the emotional impact the interviews, many of the interviews initially made me feel quite sad and then later angry at the way in which the young person interviewed had and has been ‘forgotten’ or mistreated. Throughout the process, I found it useful to speak to my supervisors and also to my husband without naming names or revealing identities, to make sense of the chaos experienced by those I have been in contact with. There is potential for the emotional labour invested in research to lead to exhaustion or adverse effects if not managed appropriately, and part of ensuring this is about managing boundaries (Butler, 2013). For example, I insisted from the start that I would have a phone which was specifically to be used for the study rather than using my own personal number. Throughout, this type of work has re-emphasised as it thankfully always has done, how ‘lucky’ I am in my personal life to have so many people who care for me and I, in turn, care for them. This

background has also brought into sharp focus the ‘gaps’ in these young people’s lives where this has not been the case.

Emotions are central to research and can be viewed as an aid to analysis rather than a hindrance (Maanen et al. 1993). Suppressing emotion may even result in important information being missed, and there is a call for practitioners to make sense of not only the meaning of emotions in others, but also equally, the meaning for emotions in themselves, in order to make and interpret observations more fully (Morrison, 2006). There is no doubt that research can and often is an emotionally charged activity with each interaction different and unique. As pointed out by Kleinman and Copp (1993) accepting the existence of emotions is also accepting that we sometimes have no control over them. Kirk et al. (1991) researched disadvantaged young people and found that the emotional impact of the research can go beyond the researcher and the researched. They discuss frankly the profound effect that the interviews had on those who transcribed them, and described how although they had been ‘accustomed’ to ‘hard luck stories of all kinds’, they ‘were clearly moved and often enraged by the experiences or conditions encountered’ (ibid: 65). Ideally emotions can be a driving factor in motivating and campaigning for change. Brown and Gilligan (1992 cited in Martin, 1998: 3) refer to ‘the underground’ of knowledge or the ‘swallowed truths’, that is ‘the truths that we know but have been told that we should not know or if we do know should not say we know.’ The principal aim of this study was to get close to the young people interviewed and reveal whom they are and what they are facing, to peel back the myths of an ‘underclass’ (MacDonald, 2011), to leave these ‘truths’ unswallowed. Hopefully, this then will help prompt action where it is needed.

LIMITATIONS

The sample interviewed is small and the findings are not statistically generalisable. Moreover, despite hopes of achieving a gender balance this was not possible. For future work it is advised that research with women in this position takes place to understand better the role that gender plays in the transition to adulthood and desistance from crime (Kelly et al. 2012). A particular challenge in this study has been enacting a critical realist approach and evidencing more subtle barriers faced by

young people, such as for example, the young person's feeling of a lack of self-worth. Adopting QLR and the use of narratives has been particularly useful in addressing this. There are however important limitations to recognise about qualitative and narrative interviews. The main concern is whether or not the participant can 'tell it like it is' (Holloway and Jefferson, 2000). The material generated is only ever as robust as the participant's memory, ability or willingness to articulate thoughts, feelings and perspectives, and awareness allows (Polkinghorne, 1988). Clandinin and Connelly (1990: 7) caution that the researcher must recognise the distinction between 'the events as lived and the events as told.' Narrative truth involves a constructed account of experience, not a factual record of what really happened. The focus is on how events are understood and organised (Josselson: 2011). As summarised by Cousin (2009: 11) 'we can only represent reality, we can never mirror it and the act of representation is always going to be adrift from the event'.

As well as attempting to build a coherent and detailed story for each individual, a deeper level of enquiry has been attempted to understand agency that has yet to be clearly defined (Healy, 2014). Bottoms et al. (2004: 374) describe some of the many pitfalls in this endeavour as it requires that the 'research methodology takes full account of the actor's own self-understanding of actions' and acknowledges restraints, such as a lack of self and contextual awareness. Psychosocial criminology has been developed to understand socially constructed understandings and the individual's relationships to them and include or capture the multiple layers that impact upon meaning. This approach prioritises qualitative research and particularly biographical interviews because it is argued that through this method the individual's account is able to be better contextualised. For example, in Gadd and Jefferson's (2007) analysis of fear of crime the authors uncover how this can be used as a vehicle for other feelings difficult to face up to, such as loneliness. A biographical approach was not used in this study, however for future work this is worth considering and elements have been adopted, such as the endeavour to provide context. Even with adopting a psychosocial approach the meanings and narratives themselves may shift and change over time and are negotiated and reconstructed. As stated by Baddeley and Singer (2007: 198) 'The presence of other people as coauthors is constant throughout life' and for the purposes of this research they note that 'adolescents coauthor their stories with their friends; young adults coauthor their stories with their partners' (Baddeley

and Singer, 2007: 198). One of the benefits of this study is that illuminates or adds to the knowledge about the processes, 'key moments' or individuals that provoked change.

As well as the instability of accounts generated by the participant an awareness of my own potential impact has been crucial. The methodological assumption that the words said mean the same to each individual is not tenable (Gadd and Jefferson, 2007). Critically, Peshkin (1988: 20) draws attention to the influence of the researcher's subjectivity describing it as a 'garment that cannot be removed', and for researchers to be careful about imposing meaning on a participants' lived experience. As discussed earlier in detail, the impact of the researcher at every stage of the study is undeniable (Kvale, 1996). Hardin (2003: 540) states that 'the interview is a social performance for both interviewee and interviewer, who are simultaneously the authors, characters and audiences of the stories being constructed.' Although the interview with the foster parents and the young person could not be considered a focus group, the presence of others may have also meant that they had a subtle impact to co-construct the material generated (Cousins, 2009).

The limitations of the interpretative process are also important to consider. Joselsson (2011) outlines the hermeneutics of faith, the aim to restore meaning to a text, and also the hermeneutic of suspicion, which is to decode meanings that are disguised. It is concluded that narrative analysis includes the participant's narrative and also the researchers interpretation. In terms of being aware of subjectivity in constructing case studies, another consideration was to be 'true' to the findings and not bend the narratives to suit findings. In order to overcome the limitations set out regarding the participant's ability to 'tell it like it is' and my own ability to have as little impact as possible on the construction of narratives, longitudinal research has the benefit of the researcher being able to revisit participants so they can reaffirm their 'story' or account of events. Equally, as this was a prospective study, the time lag between events was reduced. To fill any gaps the young people's testimonies interviews were supplemented with the interviews with workers and key supporters. The interviews with these other populations have highlighted the value of these accounts in their own right. It is advised that future research is conducted specifically into the influence of others on the impact of desistance and narrative construction.

One of the most important limitations of QLR is retaining the sample. By the final interviews nine of the original twelve took part in a full narrative interview, Brian and Emma spoke briefly on the phone and Mark was not contactable. This is a small sample and the interviews could be described as ‘intense’ and ‘in-depth.’ There has been considerable effort taken to keep contact with the young people, and like those who work with the ‘hardest to reach’ this has been about having a dogged determination and frankly managing the entire process sensitively (Nugent, 2015). However, even with this effort, the chaos that some of the young people lived in meant that there was no certainty that following up could happen.

The final limitation is that within the confines of the thesis the data has had to be filtered and reduced. Holdsworth and Morgan (2005: 35) state that ‘when interviewing young people it can often be difficult to build up the kind of rapport in an interview setting that will encourage respondents to ‘open up’ and talk at length and depth about their lives.’ They add that ‘this is socially determined’ because ‘young people’s views are treated as marginal.’ In this study however, young people opened up quickly and instead the issue has been in deciding what data to focus on, and themes to report on because of the amount of data generated. As described by Riessman and Speedy (2007: 435) ‘data reduction is a task that confronts all qualitative investigators...and some selection is absolutely necessary.’ They add that ‘the challenge for narrative research is to work with the detail and particularity that is a hallmark of narrative, rather than mimicking positivist science in modes of data reduction.’ In deciding upon the themes and case studies as far as possible the ‘story’ told has been as representative and true as possible. However, arguably in filtering the data something has still been ‘lost’ no matter how comprehensive the case study and the level of detail provided. For example, in the interviews with Paul’s foster parents they spoke at length about how Paul struggled to see his brother who was also in care and the impact this had on him and them as a foster family, and yet this has been reduced to a few lines in the case study. I hope however that in condensing these stories, I have written and presented them with the appropriate complexity and gravitas that they deserve. Equally, I believe that this thesis is only the beginning of a greater conversation and there is no doubt that being able to focus on these distinct areas in more detail is needed.

DOING 'JUSTICE' TO THE PARTICIPANT'S STORIES

Gaining informed consent and truly honouring and respecting it also involves and will continue to involve thinking about the way in which findings are disseminated (MacKenzie et al. 2015). There is a risk especially with using longitudinal research and the richness of detail that could be given that those taking part are identified. Becker (1964) helpfully notes that decisions regarding a case where the identity is likely to be revealed, should be made on the basis of balancing potential harms to participants with potential benefits of making knowledge public. In this study, as already mentioned, workers conveyed their openness and awareness of the potential risk, and for the young people, they understood that this could happen, but it really lies with me to try to ensure that it does not. For publication to a wider audience this may mean altering the presentation of findings further.

Ideally, I had hoped that the findings once written up would be disseminated to participants so that they could then have had a more 'active role' in the research process to reaffirm narrative construction (Smith, 2011). However, now that the fieldwork has been completed, to do 'justice' to the case studies and to reveal the extent of the problems faced and endured by this population, I feel it would be best if they did not read it at this time, as there is potential to cause offence or hurt. Basing my decision on the need to weigh up the benefits which may be accrued by giving the full honest or full account of the extent of the problems, adopting an advocacy role means that at least at this stage this seems the best way forward (MacKenzie et al. 2015). Equally, any future publications that may follow will be written with the view that they are likely to be able to accessed by the young people and will require an even greater distortion of details.

Time well Spent? Finding an Ethical Balance

QLR is time consuming for both the researcher and participants. Researching vulnerable young people whose life circumstances are very difficult raises ethical questions. Martin (1998: 3) urges that the research should not be in vain, stating that 'asking them to divert any energy from surviving into doing anything that does not

have the potential to be useful to them' is unethical. Therefore, from the outset the hope has been that the information gained will be used to help the young people interviewed as well as future young people in similar situations.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has dealt with a number of key areas for the study, namely the primary aim and research objectives, the ontological and epistemological foundations, methodology, difference stages of the research process, ethical considerations and the limitations identified. The principal aim of this study was and has been to capture the 'lived realities' of young people experiencing poverty in their 'transition to adulthood' and for those relevant, an objective to understand how desistance is embarked upon and the journey travelled and destination achieved. A social constructionist standpoint has been taken to understand how the young people ascribe meaning and the influences that have a bearing on the creation of their own narratives. To complement their stories, rather than triangulate, critical realism has also been adopted and in doing so the onus is on me to provide the wider context, with a view to hopefully then promoting a more robust analysis o help inform or guide conversation towards better policy and practice. The research has involved carrying out semi-structured and latterly narrative interviews with three different populations. The longitudinal aspect of the research was presented as being like time-lapse photography so that moments or insights which may have been lost are brought into focus and the ethical concerns specific to this methodology particularly in terms of 'tracking techniques' discussed in depth. The analysis has involved the stories being disassembled and then pieced together to create robust case studies. By viewing the interviewees and interviewer both as 'actors' and the 'audience', the roles and impact that one has on the other has been made more obvious, with knowledge ultimately defined as being 'co-constructed.'

The research process in terms of before, during and after fieldwork was outlined with a special focus on an ethical outlook that prioritised an attempt to address power disparities and encourage an ethics of care. Reflexivity and managing emotions were highlighted as crucial to facilitating transparency in understanding. In many ways, I

feel that above all else, being an ethical researcher and having an 'ethical attitude' has been what has mattered most about my role in this work (Bold, 2012: 51). Through this study I would ideally like to help benefit future young people, by at the very least helping services such as *Includem* understand what they do well and what they could improve, and for policy makers bring into sharper focus the gaps or areas that require revision. McAra and McVie (2011: 101) state that 'youngsters are powerless to alter the majority of factors which propel them further and further into the system at the age of fifteen', and that the master status of troubled and troublesome results in amplified levels of intervention. Hopefully, this research can go some way to reversing the labelling process for which at present they appear to be a victim (McDonald, 2011; Becker, 1963).

CHAPTER 6: FINDINGS PART I: VIEWS OF THE SERVICE AND ENDING CONTACT

INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on answering the first research question, which originally was ‘How do young people disengage successfully, or not, from reliance upon *Includem*’s support?’ At this stage, the word ‘disengagement’ seems inadequate as a description of what actually happens when a service is no longer in these young people’s lives; a cold term for what is often a process that is well considered and emotional for both the worker and the young person. Moreover, an analysis of the cases as will be discussed showed that it is not just about the communication of ending the case that matters but more importantly what connections and plans have been put in place for after. Therefore, ‘ending’ the case rather than disengagement ideally should be more about being a bridge onto something new and denote progress. A robust analysis of each young person or the details of their case studies has not been given at this point because the next chapter explores how the ‘transition to adulthood’ was experienced. I felt that keeping their stories in tact was necessary as understanding transitions is about unpicking the past, analysing the present as well as capturing the hopes for future. This chapter discusses each young person in terms of their interaction with and, in most cases, ending their time with *Includem*. The points raised here specifically regarding identity are explored in much more detail in the subsequent chapters. Throughout the research, I reported back the findings to the service, and how this feedback was used to develop and refine some of the practices or prompt a review, as is the case with action research (Townsend, 2013), as outlined. As stated in the beginning of the thesis, it is hoped that this open conversation with *Includem* (and services like *Includem*) can continue and develop.

OVERVIEW OF GROUP

Twelve young people were first interviewed between September and December 2013. Seven had worked with the Core Service prior to then moving onto transitional

support and seven were from Glasgow and five from Fife. Interviews as already detailed in the previous chapter, were attempted again two months, six months and twelve months after this initial contact. The six months follow-up was a phone interview but all the other interviews were conducted face to face, initially at the *Includem* offices and thereafter at an agreed 'safe' place, which was generally in the young person's 'home.' In total forty-three full interviews were achieved and only one young person, Mark, stopped participating with the research at an early stage after the second interview. He had moved twice between the first and second interview and by the six months stage was unable to be contacted. The contact details he had given for his girlfriend, the only person he could name as being 'another' person, also proved unsuccessful. By the end of the research, eight young people had taken part in full interviews at each stage and their transitions fully captured. Amy was not interviewed at the two month follow-up because her life had become too chaotic at this time, whereby she was using substances heavily, 'disappearing' and not in regular contact with her worker. However, communication was re-established and interviews took place at the six month stage onwards. Brian and Emma took part in the final stages in a short phone interview and so although their transitions have not been fully recorded their general progress was established. There was a substantial effort made throughout this study to retain the sample as discussed in chapter five. In addition to the young people, Paul's foster parents and Dan's girlfriend were also interviewed in the final stages of fieldwork. Their accounts are not presented in detail or separately but rather referred to when they add to those of the relevant young people.

VIEWS OF THE SERVICE

In order to provide context of the views given of ending contact, it was essential to know firstly what the service meant to each person interviewed. It was clear, both in the beginning and at the end of the research, that the relationships formed between the worker and each young person were deeply valued. Six had received Core Support prior to coming to the Transitional Support Team and felt that they had built up a stronger relationship with their Core Worker because they had a higher level of need when they first came to *Includem* and required more contact, help and time.

Mark: When I had X (core support worker) there though it was more the hard part of my life where I was unsettled and that. Y (The Transitional Support Worker) kind of came when everything was kind of dying down and I was starting to get a grip of my life.

Brian: he was even honest with me, he wouldn't lie to me. If he thinks that I am slacking, if he thinks that I am being a bit stupid or that, he will tell me...the respect that we have for each other, but like I said right from the start, obviously, I mean it wasn't, it wasn't a long period of time that we were working together but I mean...a lot going on within that year. So even though it wasn't a long time there was a lot going on.

Paul: Well you don't obviously see as much as *Includem* because of, it is just X (Transitional Support), so I see her two times a week, but when I was with Y(Core Support) it was about 5 days.

All six spoke about how they had felt nervous about meeting their 'new' worker but also saw this change as making headway. Their views of the handover process gave some insight into the importance of handling endings effectively.

Paul: We had a leaving contact and that where we went out for dinner and 'oh we will never see each other again' and then we saw each other a couple of weeks later.

Interviewer: How long was it then from the core team to seeing Y?

Paul: About a couple of months or something.

Interviewer: Would you have liked that to be put in place right away? Or were you happy to be away for a few months?

Paul: I was happy with the team that I was in, but social work wouldn't fund it so I had to move here.

(Later in the interview)

Interviewer: So you have been working with Y for the past year a couple of times a week, would you say you have as good a relationship that you had with X or is it different?

Paul: It is the same...We are working about leaving *Includem* obviously...what I can do in the future...Well it is a good thing because it means that I have improved. But, it could be a bad thing for me.

Emma: I don't know. I like, X (Core Worker)...she was always always always been there, and then she left me and I was pure sad. She moved teams and stuff, but every time she moved teams she had to take me with her because she knew that I wouldn't work with anyone else. But then she said to me that she has to exit because I don't need her anymore and I was dead sad.

Interviewer: And did you understand why she had to exit you?

Emma: Aye.

Interviewer: Did you think that you needed the help still?

Emma: No. She says that to me as well, she says that it is a good thing, but obviously it is a bad thing as well. 'Cause she will miss me, but it is a good thing. It is like I have basically took all of the help that I can get from *Includem* and used it.

Both Kevin and Dan had not automatically been moved onto Transitional Support and instead when they left the core service, there was a gap of many months, during this time they got in trouble again with the police and this is when transitional support was put in place.

Dan: eventually I got off *Includem* and then after my mum died I went off the rails a bit and then *Includem* got in touch and put me on transitional support.

Kevin: Y (worker) showed up at my door and says 'I am your worker now', transitional support because I had offended again.

Interviewer: How did you feel about that?

Kevin: I was gutted in a way, because I went out and did something stupid again, and in a different way I was like 'please' because I was getting the help then to better my life.

These rare examples emphasise the importance of retaining a personalised approach to service delivery. Neither young man blamed *Includem* for their relapse and despite this break, they still wanted support from *Includem* and so a bond with the service had been established. In all the other cases, the handover was said to be good with introductions made between the workers greatly appreciated. At the time of the initial interviews the process was being reviewed and a more gradual handover was suggested based on the findings. At the time of writing, *Includem* now have a transition period of around a month, with introductions made between workers face to face. It is hoped that this will mean this is a more comfortable experience and will improve the number of young people availing of ongoing support offered.

Use of the Helpline

Includem offer a 24/7 free helpline and understanding how this was used was important because it was originally the main way in which the young people were told to get back in touch with the service after contact had ended, if they needed help again. All twelve used the helpline frequently and for ten this was simply to reconfirm

or cancel appointments. However, a finding that I had not expected was that both Kim and Amy said that they had used the helpline in the past to have someone to speak to. Kim had even called the helpline at night when she had lived on her own.

Kim: I didn't like it, I just didn't like it. I have been used to always living with someone and then all of a sudden I was on my own. It was too big. I don't like the dark, so I would keep the TV on at night as the light would be on, and then I would call the helpline at night time and when they would talk to me it would help me to feel safe and then I would get to sleep... I felt safer when I was on the phone to someone.

The reality that the helpline was used in this way exposed how vulnerable Kim and Amy had felt at times, and because of its accessibility, the helpline had provided some form of comfort. Overall, the frequency of use of the helpline was taken as an indication that, if needed, it was a good way for the young people to get back in touch. However, as was found during the research, despite Hamish, Elaine, Ron and Kevin all needing support and being familiar with the helpline, there were still mental barriers to actually using this. Ultimately, this way of regaining contact has now been reviewed and changed, with this study playing a role in developing practice.

The Relationship with the Worker

This study reaffirms past research as outlined in chapter two and four establishing the importance of the relationship between the worker and participant (McNeill et al. 2005). All twelve felt that they had an excellent relationship with their workers. *Includem* have set out to create a way of working so that all young people feel connected to a number of workers to prevent over-reliance on any individual and also to minimise the adverse impact of a particular worker being unavailable. However, it was interesting that the majority still identified one specific person as their key worker, showing that a special attachment is likely to occur with one person. The main reasons given for what were deemed good relationships were that they felt they could be honest, could talk to them, felt listened to, not judged and not let down. *Includem* use the word 'stickability' to describe the idea of persevering with the

young person and walking alongside them in their journey, and this appeared to be how the young people also viewed the dynamic.

Brian: I have worked with him for almost three years, getting that bond together and realising that you didn't have to talk all posh and that with them and instead blab out your problems. Like definitely, people have to realise that the help is there.

Interviewer: What things do you think have made the difference from that work?

Amy: It is just; it is actually making you speak about it. Like get it all out.

All felt that this was the best service they had been in contact with and they felt closer to and listened to in a way that they did not always feel by their social worker. These young people really valued feeling listened to and their testimonies reflected wariness reported in other research about social work services, where it was felt that this sort of listening was absent and inhibited the potential for good work to take place (Nugent, 2015).

Interviewer: Can you tell me a wee bit about your experience in comparison?

Hamish: They were quite distant in comparison to *Includem*. *Includem* are quite head on and helps you to deal with stuff. But social work have always been quite distant. They have always been there to just check up, and then they do check-ups, and then they would help you if you were extremely needing it, like evidently just needing it to the point that you are going to die if you don't get it.... With social workers it is quite awkward, they have that power thing over you. With *Includem* they just come in and have a laugh with you and it is not all serious, eh?

All twelve felt that through *Includem* they had improved their confidence, and Hamish, Scott and Amy specifically felt that this helped or contributed towards them realising their goals, building self-worth and having the courage to try to get what they wanted to achieve. This newly found self-esteem prompted a reassessment and questioning of what had gone before and the conceptualisation of the 'possible self' looking to the future (Pasternoster and Bushway, 2009). Essentially, it could be argued that workers at *Includem* had played a significant role in supporting the young people at a turning point in their lives. In all three cases, the worker had acted as what I have termed a 'meso-broker', that is someone who has helped them to see and

move beyond their micro-environment and access opportunities leading to progression.

Hamish: they helped me to become more positive, sure of who I am. Definitely, they have definitely made me more motivated...I feel that talking about my future goals made me motivated, and they made me confident again. I didn't want to talk to people or meet people there for about a year...I think it was because I felt so little of myself. I am only starting to come out of my shell the now.

Scott: Yeah, I had already started to think differently but they did play a vital role as well, there is no doubt about it.

It was interesting to note that the creation of opportunities to meet others or workers trying hard to make goals more tangible was especially welcomed, so for example, getting into volunteer work or having a chance to get away for a day and connecting with new people. All of this suggests that getting access beyond the micro-environment or their locality is a good way of helping the young people grow in aspirations and recognise and feel less intimidated by the world beyond their immediate surroundings.

Elaine: It is the outings that we have had and the meeting new people. I would never go out and meet new people, I would always be too scared that they judged and everything. But the majority of people that I have met are lovely.

Scott revealed in the final interview that he had been diagnosed with Asperger's, something he had only told his sister and I. He felt that without the service and the support provided he would be very different to how he is now. As he commented:

Interviewer: If we took it back to two years ago there would be a major difference?

Scott: I probably wouldn't be speaking to you now.

Half of the participants openly said that they thought of their worker as being like a 'friend' or family member, this is similar to other research with young people (Trotter, 2004).

Dan: He is basically one of my pals, but one of my pals that can help me to get a job and go on courses.

Elaine: I would have viewed X more as a friend than an *Includem* worker.

Hamish: I have got to know X to the point where they feel like part of the family to me.

Brian: I see him mere as like a big brother sort of, than as a worker. With some workers there is like 'how is you? How have you been?' 'Ok 'bye.' But when X comes out he really does care about stuff, he sits there and is like 'right, get the kettle on.' It is great. Honestly, I think it was probably the best support I have had throughout my life.

Amy, whose substance misuse had lead her to lead a particularly chaotic life, whereby she was not contactable and would 'disappear' at times. She felt that throughout her worker was like a 'mother', worrying and checking that that she was ok.

Amy: She was more like a mother, more than a mother to me and was right on my case constant. She was very on my case. Every time she phones me, I am like, she just makes my day as soon as she phones me...she gets heavy worried, she does. She is heavy worried about me if she doesn't hear from me. If she doesn't hear from me it breaks her.

Interviewer: How does it make you feel that you have someone in your life who cares so much?

Amy: It means a lot.

For Amy, the worker had been the only person at times who showed her that she cared and still believed she could turn her life around. The relationship between the worker and Amy appeared to have taken on a deeper meaning because the worker acted as a crucial counterpoint in Amy's life, promoting positive relational reflexivity when all else and all others had become negative and given up. Amy felt that the relationship relied on both working together, possibly taking on a more pedagogical style of interaction (Storo, 2013; Smith, 2012).

Amy: But both of us have worked together and we have a good relationship.

Practical Support

Eight specifically mentioned the support they received from their worker to learn about budgeting, paying bills, getting their benefits set up and even learning how to cook.

Ron: *Includem* would remind us, did you pay all your bills? Do you need any help, and then Elaine will be like 'Ah I forgot'

Kim: *Includem* made a difference as they helped me, they got me sorted, shopping and got my money up and running. Like they got my child benefits and that.

Brian: My budgeting as well, that was a big big big problem, because when I was staying with my mum and that it was basically all the money that I got, I could go out at the weekend. But now we have our own house, we have gas, electric, food, all this kind of stuff first. So, when it has come to pay day, like a few occasions Y (the worker) has taken me shopping and once like, but set a budget on how much we were going to spend on shopping. All that kind of stuff, ended up working out perfect, on one occasion he has went 'right, you go out, get your shopping and that done, and I will come out the following day and see how you have done.' Basically once we have done that he has come out and said that I ken what I am doing. If I have any problems with it I can say. So, it has been a big help and then obviously to do with the fact that I want to go back to college.

Interviewer: So what for you are the big things that you are doing with *Includem* at this stage?

Emma: Independent living.

Interviewer: Can you tell me a wee bit about that?

Emma: Well, for like, I don't know, for a good while we have been cooking, like making food. She has been teaching me how to cook, and I was making bread this morning.

This kind of help was not available to them in any other way and highlights the gap they have in their lives being addressed here by *Includem*. Over the course of the study, Hamish, Brian, Elaine, Ron and Amy were all supported by *Includem* to get their housing sorted.

Ron: Yeah well there were four of us living in a one bedroom flat and I was the only one working and so yeah we needed the help, and to be honest, they couldn't have given us any better help. They actually took us off our feet. They really really helped us.

Interviewer: So what happened?

Elaine: They managed to help us to get into our own accommodation.

Ron: It was *Includem* that got us our own flat.

Brian: well basically in my last tenancy I was through in a bad area, bad for drugs, bad for, basically it is crime and that, it is just unreal. But then, when Y (worker) has basically went there is a flat in Place B in a quiet street.

Interviewer: So he was sourcing all this for you?

Brian: Yeah, yeah...Y has went 'right, just stay there for a couple of days and let me sort something out.' He has spoke to my social worker and there is a house in Place B, do you want it? No need to ask me, let's get the papers signed.

Amy: We (sister and Amy) went on the homeless register and the council register...they put in all the thingy...we were like 'decent' and then we went to view a house in March...I was like 'oh my days, we have just viewed it.' But in the afternoon we called and said that we had viewed it and then we were like 'we are never going to get it.' But then there were only a couple of referrals in for it so we went with that.

For all five, this was the first time in their lives where they had a stable address and felt that they now had a 'home', a brand new and extremely important experience for them. As already discussed in Chapter three, 'home' can be a significant basis for emotional and physical stability. The interviews with Elaine and Kim, reflected more in the next chapter, shows that for those who are or been homeless, without a stable home, daily life becomes worrying about where to sleep and planning for any real future is not possible. Having a 'home' then is a vital necessity for anyone, both in terms of emotional wellbeing but also in terms of being able to look ahead.

Hamish, Ron and Elaine had also been given temporary financial support to buy food to bridge the gap between when their benefit payments would be received. The sanctions now faced as a result of either theirs or the offices oversights were felt to be punitive and daily survival sometimes felt impossible. All three felt there were targets to be reached for the number of sanctions being given out and their distrust of the process and genuine disappointment in how they were viewed was clear. In all of these cases the young people had no one else to turn to and were without the 'safety net' of parents.

Ron: He took us to Farmfoods and actually got us enough food to do us until we had money, we got paid...Bills weren't so much because

you can phone them up and most of the time they are understanding, but it was the food that we really struggled with.

Wider Impact

Four said that their worker had supported them to have a better relationship with their family, either directly by facilitating or helping them to have a day out together, or indirectly through advice. Talking to the worker was often able to give a sense of perspective and to understand better how they could deal with problems.

Brian: Well basically relationships was a big factor for me... it was mainly to do with family. It was, it was a big thing to figure out that *Includem* can go right 'so what has been going on?' 'What have been the problems that have put you in foster care and how have you changed?' I mean, sitting there through em, just sitting down and talking to him even for half an hour of just going 'right this was the problems.' And he has went 'right, this is how we can sort it, or at least try to sort it.'

Over the course of the study Amy's sister had contacted her after a year of no contact to get help with her offending and substance misuse. Amy then got *Includem* involved, resulting in them regaining their relationship and by the end of fieldwork even getting their own tenancy together. Amy felt that without *Includem* this bond would not have been reunited or sustained.

Interviewer: So tell me a wee bit about where you are living now?

Amy: Aye, it is shared accommodation with my sister like...

Interviewer: So your sister is back...

Amy: Aye, she was in some place and she phoned me right and was pure crying on the phone, it was her first time ever getting charged. Like we all take a turn, but it pure broke my heart when she was like 'Emma, I have been charged and I am in the police station', and that pure broke me. I was like 'Are you ok? Oh my days.' She asked me could she stay and I said that she could. I told her I was in homeless and to stay with me the now. She told me to phone her tomorrow. I told her to send me her social workers number and she did that and then I was like 'Eh', I tried phoning her and she dingyed it. I thought I wasn't going to give up. I didn't even go high or that, but I was like to *Includem* 'I am not being funny but would you like to help me to get my sister back here.' And then she phoned me, and I told her about *Includem* and she was needing this. I asked if they could put her in the same homeless project near me and boom, they phoned up to make sure that it was ok for two siblings to be in the same hostel.

Interviewer: Why would there be a problem with that? Is there normally a problem with that?

Amy: Aye, because most siblings don't get along, ken. So it was pure brow...we went down and got her and went to homeless accommodation for her to get booked in and that. My support worker in homeless, she was like 'is that your sister?' She was like 'I will need to do a check to see if two 'siblings are allowed.' I was like 'it has already been done, we have done that'... Aye, now she is off her blockers, that has been about a month or two now. She is working with *Includem* and she had just came off the kit, I think it was that she got *Includem*.

Paul's foster parents were explicit that without the support of *Includem* the placement would have broken down. There was a genuine consensus that the service had helped Paul become calmer by providing a confidante outside of the environment who could help him to deal with his anger.

Interviewer: How do you feel that it has helped Paul and you both?

Foster Parent 1: Well if it wasn't for the service Paul wouldn't still have been with us.

Interviewer: Do you really feel that?

Foster Parent 2: Oh, aye absolutely.

Foster Parent 1: 100%

Elaine, Ron and Brian said that their worker had helped them with advice to have a more balanced relationship with their partners and was instrumental in them realising the value of giving each other space. The reality of the restrictions and confines that these young people live within was highlighted, as it was pointed out that 'having somewhere to go' and having money to be able to do something was not always possible. Giving each other space meant simply being away from each other, sometimes even being in separate rooms within their small living quarters. All of the couples wanted more out of life for each other and as a partnership, and their accounts show the strain that financial struggles place on relationships.

Ron: We have time apart and we have time together, we will sit down and watch a film, proper relationship sit down stuff. But, X (the worker) helped with the time apart like where we can just go and do our own thing.

Brian: I mean our bills are split up into two weeks each, where it is like one week we do have spare money and we do treat ourselves, but I would like it if we could have the situation where we can take time

off work and have a holiday and go and visit family or something like that.

VIEWS OF LEAVING INCLUDEM

Close but Distanced

As already outlined, for all of the young people the relationship between them and their worker was valued and saying ‘goodbye’ had been challenging for all ten who had left the service, but also accepted and viewed as part of their progression.

Therefore, although they had described them as being similar to friends and family members in their closeness, parting also seemed to have created a great distance that may be worth exploring in more detail in future research. Brian described his goodbye with his main worker in the first interview as ‘emotional’ and a ‘killer.’ In the final interview he reflected back on this and said, ‘I was even wanting to sit and cry when we were finishing, because with being used to seeing each other maybe twice or three times a week to not seeing him at all.’ Six months after his case had closed and there had been no contact, Brian acknowledged that even though it was ‘weird’, he still counted his old worker as someone he remained close to and felt that if he needed them he could call them. Brian also, like so many of the other young people, struggled to name many people he could rely on and so the significance of the relationship may take on this special deep meaning for those who have little. Despite feeling that this connection remained, Brian also like the rest of the group, viewed moving on from the service as a step towards independence.

Ron: They were trying to get me up onto my two feet, but I think that the fact that no one can make you do that, you have to do it yourself. But I think that the stuff that they have helped me with has made me realise that grow a backbone and stand on your own two feet and deal with it.

Interviewer: Are you happy?

Ron: Definitely.

Kevin was the only individual to describe keeping distant from everyone in his life and being prepared to say goodbye. As shown in the subsequent Chapters, his life had involved many people moving away from him, he described how he had grown up in a busy house with lots of brothers but they then either moved away or ended up in

prison. In the first interview he revealed some of the pain and unhappiness that he had felt about this change and contrasted his own life with what he felt was a better life being had by his brother who was then in prison.

Kevin: Well all my family has been really close. We were always dead close. Like my big brother went to prison, all of us kind of went our separate ways and we didn't talk as much as we used to.

Interviewer: Did you find that hard that you had two brothers move away?
Kevin: No, not really, but in a way aye, and in a way no. I would look but they aren't there, but then in different times you would be looking, and I think that is what made me offend, that my big brother was in prison. The letters he sent me, he sounded happy where he was, but then when I saw him he didn't look happy. It would make me think 'he is happy in there, so I'll go and do what I need to do and I will end up in there.'

His wariness of getting too close to anyone may then be based on an assessment of what has gone before in his life. His protection from the pain is to simply not allow himself to become close to anyone, this raises some challenging questions about the state of his well-being and also the reality that for him, that social networks are 'built' on creating distance.

Kevin: I don't get attached to people too much.

Interviewer: Why is that?

Kevin: I don't know, it is just, if you get attached to people then it is harder to say 'bye.' Once you get attached to them then it is, I kind of keep myself to myself, I would rather do that.

Throughout the study he only referred to one friend, the following interaction highlights that Kevin viewed himself as a loner and also even viewed his friend as being a loner too.

Interviewer: Was it good to have X in your life?

Kevin: Aye.

Interviewer: Do you think it would be really hard if you didn't?

Kevin: No, not really. Because I am too used to be being a lone wolf, like I would rather go and do stuff myself. Like when I am in a big crowd of people, they all want to go and do something, say we are going to fight with someone, they will all want to do it when they are in a big group, but if it was me, I would want to go and fight them myself. Just make sure that it is me and him, no one else about. They all want to go out in big groups.

Interviewer: Have you always been like that?

Kevin: Aye.

Interviewer: Why is that? Is it just your personality.

Kevin: Aye, maybe, I don't know. I have always had that wee urge to do it myself and not tell anyone.

Interviewer: But you enjoy being with Mark though and having that time with someone else.

Kevin: Mark is the same, he is just like me. He wants to go and do things hisself as well, and, it's like I was going to do something, I don't know what it was, and then Mark said he was going to do something as well, both of us would go our separate ways but then we would meet up in the middle again. And like after I had done what he needed to do, and he had done what he needed to do, we both ended up together again. Neither of us would even need to phone each other, we would meet up again.

Although Kevin struggled to name anyone who he could rely on, he still did not regard his worker as someone he was close to and this was very different to most of the other young people. This distance, as will be further discussed is possibly the main reason for his downfall and it could be said that he even rejected support and interdependence.

Interviewer: How much support do you think you get at this stage? Who do you get support from?

Kevin: I don't know, I support myself.

Interviewer: Do you get support from anybody?

Kevin: The worker or my ma or that. But I don't want it, it is there,

Interviewer: You don't want it though?

Kevin: No...

Interviewer: Who do you support most?

Kevin: Myself (laughs).

Interviewer: Do you offer support to anyone?

Kevin: If someone needs it then I would be there, but other than that then no.

Being Ready?

The connection between being happy to leave and feeling 'ready' was clear. There were differences that emerged about the way in which contact ended, whereby in some cases better dialogue between the worker and the younger person about whether or not they felt prepared would have been advised. The value of the longitudinal approach is that initial views, progress and 'looking back' are captured. The findings show that there were those who felt and proved to be ready, that is Scott, Mark and

Brian. Those who felt ready at the first interview, Ron, Elaine, Hamish and Kevin, but had returned to the service, and yet looking back still felt they had been prepared but the problems and challenges encountered had become too much. Paul had had mixed feelings about leaving the service and although he had not regained contact again with *Includem*, he was the only person to strongly feel that a more tapered approach would have been better. Amy felt 'ready' by the final interview and had actually spoken to the worker about ending contact, what she referred to as 'calling time.' Emma admitted to feeling scared at the first interview about leaving and never formally exited from the service and instead simply stopped engaging. Both Dan and Kim did not want to leave the service and still had not left by the end of the fieldwork. It was interesting to note that most of the young people subscribed to independence being about getting on with things by oneself rather than interdependence. This analysis initially raised questions about the level to which the service had supported or promoted connections to services or other support prior to ending contact. This way of thinking is also likely to be indicative of a wider cultural expectation on young people today to be responsible for themselves as was discussed in Chapter three.

View of Ending Contact and Progress

The following analysis is based on an overview of each case over the course of the study. This has been divided into a number of categories so as to clarify the complexity of understanding when someone is 'ready' to end contact. Firstly, Kim and Dan who never left the service are referred to as 'non-runners.' Kevin, Elaine, Hamish and Ron returned to the service and the question is posed whether this was a 'false start' or had they 'fallen at the first hurdle?' As will be shown, it would be more correct to say that they had all fallen after many hurdles and their lives are similar to a highly risky steeplechase. They returned to *Includem* only after they had been encouraged to do so. Paul felt that his case had ended too quickly but 'carried on regardless', and in doing so reinforces the difficulty individuals have in asking for help again. Emma, who had not felt comfortable about her case ending and did not like 'new' situations simply stopped engaging and is defined as being a 'no show.' Amy was the only young person to, as she defined it, 'call time' on her worker, and by the end of the research had decided that there was nothing more her worker could

do, having done so much already. Lastly, Brian, Mark and Scott in their readiness are defined as 'Ready, Steady, Go.' The reason for this is that I think that alongside Amy, there appears to have been a robust communication between them and their worker establishing that they were 'steady' before contact was broken. Through this analysis, as will be shown, it is clear that most of these young people feel that they must get on with things on their own and actually it was those who did not feel this, that had acknowledged or had support unconsciously who did best. This point, the need for support of others, is one of the most important in the whole thesis and continues to manifest itself throughout.

Non-runners

Kim and Dan did not want to end contact because they did not feel ready. Kim did not know what she would do without *Includem* and Dan was adamant that he needed the service. Dan had actually ended his contact with *Includem* at an earlier stage a year before the research, but had to come back to the service when he became involved again with gangs after his mother passed away. He recalled:

I was ready, I had given up all the gangs stuff, because I realised there was no point in it, but then eventually I wasn't going anywhere, I was just pure bored all the time and just sitting drinking. I would meet my pals and get a drink in us and then if someone looked at you wrong then end up fighting.

In terms of what the service offered to both in the final stages, other than company, it appeared to be little. Dan said of his time with his worker, 'I get out. I get out and about to just sit there and talk to another human being.' He had no plans to leave and even commented that he would be happy to tell 'the bosses' at *Includem* how much he still needed the service. He only mentioned driving lessons as something potentially being put in place, and his interaction with the worker now appeared to be similar to a befriending service. Although Dan was more or less completely isolated without *Includem*, and it is important to emphasise the importance of this considering the context, it could also be argued that the directionless contact may have become part of the reason why Dan continued to be and feel so stuck. Another argument though that

could be made is that options beyond the service were limited and *Includem* were simply offering something when there really was nothing else. In Dan's case, he had engaged with a range of short initiatives and other organisations mainly focused on personal development, but pathways into something permanent or leading to something tangible had not been either available or yet to be accessed.

The main limitation of the current research is that what was 'out there' on the ground for these young people has not really been able to be established but is based only on what they have reported. However, by all accounts, as will be further developed in the next chapter, the lack of work opportunities was a specific barrier highlighted by almost all interviewees at each stage. *Includem* can only connect young people to what is available. Also, it would also seem that the professionalization of what ought to be organic networks and a more honest conversation with young people in this situation who have become reliant on the service merely for company would be beneficial to explore.

False start or fell at the first hurdle?

Kevin, Elaine, Hamish and Ron returned to the service during the fieldwork with support re-activated because of the contact made through the research. This finding has since prompted a review of the reliance on the helpline as a means of regaining contact, as reflected on later in this chapter. Kevin did not think about calling the service again after leaving, he viewed saying goodbye as it being final. However, Elaine and Ron admitted that they had wanted to call the service but had been too proud to do so, regarding it as a step backwards. Their acceptance of the need to get on with things by themselves shows that a commitment to responsabilisation when it is not possible can be damaging (Garland, 1996). The emphasis on resilience, that is the ability to bounce back, as being a 'good' attribute actually has 'hidden costs' (Harrison, 2012: 97), such as an adverse impact on health. In the case of Elaine, Ron and Kevin, their resilience is probably best described as an ability to endure. Ron and Elaine felt that they were not entitled to ask again for help. Although they confirmed in the first interview that they understood they could always call the helpline and regain contact, in the latter interviews they said that they had become unsure about

'the rule' as to whether the helpline was accessible if you were no longer receiving help. Elaine and Ron felt that with help from *Includem* they had now regained control of their lives.

Ron: everything just hit us all at once and we had to go and rung back up and yeah... We had a change in our claim... didn't get paid for six weeks... I mean we were able to budget and move things about, for six weeks, but when they said that it would be at least two more weeks before we got paid we didn't have enough to actually survive that two weeks.

Interviewer: Did you find it hard to admit to him that you were struggling?

Elaine: Yes.

Interviewer: Did you go to any food banks?

Elaine: Yes, we ran out. We had to use all three of ours in that six weeks... all of our bills were piled up on to of us, cause my claim got stopped, and then our housing benefit got stopped, and then our council tax got stopped and then everything got piled up. I wasn't able to pay my phone bill and we weren't even able to pay for the internet to be able to look for jobs. What else couldn't we pay? A lot of things... We were at each other's throats... But then when you phoned and you told me that I should phone em, after we had finished speaking I phoned *Includem* right away. X (worker) came a few days after we had phoned..took us to farmfoods, got us funding for clothes, X got me to phone and we got the claim backdated...

Interviewer: How would you say things are for you all at the moment?

Elaine: Everything for me and Ron is back on track.

Hamish, in turn had his support activated by this support and although at first he felt he didn't need it, he was grateful of this.

Hamish: I was just surprised because I just thought it was Elaine and Ron who were phoning for themselves but then I think that X got the wrong idea that we were all needing the help. But we were needing the help but just didn't need to get as much as Elaine and Ron did.

Kevin reoffended by the end of the research and his life had become challenging with no one to turn to for help. Coming back to *Includem* appeared to be the right move in terms of him regaining control. Elaine, Ron and Hamish had some quite serious financial issues and having support was arguably actually necessary, their endurance had finally been broken. All four in their first interviews viewed leaving *Includem* as a step towards progression and this brought into sharp focus the backwards steps they had made in returning. The following quotes taken from the first interviews highlight the hope vested in leaving *Includem*.

Kevin: I have a good relationship with X and that, but I don't know, it is just, the fact that it's, this time I know it is going to be for good. This time I know that I have done right.

Ron: They are moving back and then we going to walk up the road and see how we manage ourselves as well.

Kevin felt that he had been 'ready' and as will be explored in subsequent chapters in more detail, it would be accurate to say that he had not fell at the first hurdle but after many. For Ron, Elaine and Hamish, things had begun to 'unravel' after six months of ending contact with *Includem*. Ron described the past year as having 'ups and downs', Hamish as 'a roller coaster' with 'twists and bends', and Elaine, in feeling out of control, as being like a theme park. Overall, the smoothness of all four lives at the point at which their cases had been closed had not lasted, but for the latter three, they felt by the end of the research that things were now back on track, whereas for Kevin this was far from the case.

It was interesting to note the young people's responses when asked about the potential of an awards ceremony or graduation from *Includem*, and thus whether or not the ritual accompanying their end of contact would be advised (Maruna, 2011). All were against it. For those who had returned to *Includem* they also felt that this would have made asking for help again even more challenging and unlikely.

Interviewer: One idea was that everyone who finishes should have a graduation ceremony, what do you think about that?

Ron: I think it would be embarrassing to then have to call up...it would be like completing university and then finding out that you had actually failed one of your exams and having to go back. Getting your diploma taken away.

This observation brings to light the idea that rituals mark a certainty and actually the 'stability' achieved at the point of leaving *Includem* is quite fragile. Possibly, for most of these young people the idea of stability and subsequently rituals are increasingly less likely. Drawing on the work of Turner (1964) and the final stage of an initiation ceremony, the 'aggregation' stage, it could be argued that for these young people rituals may have even become a luxury. Indeed, without success, indicators of success are impossible, or if manufactured, hollow.

Carry on Regardless

Paul had mixed feelings about leaving *Includem* at the first interview. He said, 'Well it is a good thing because it means that I have improved. But, it could be a bad thing for me.' The following few months after leaving *Includem*, Paul and his foster parents noted that he was angered easily, became argumentative and overall his behaviour was once again difficult. He remarked 'I was ready to leave, but it wasn't the right time to leave. I was ready, but my body and that wasn't. I didn't know what to do.' At the first interview it seemed clear that the case was being closed with the foster parents consulted, as the main worker even received a 'goodbye' present from them. However, looking back, in the final interview the foster carers felt that the contact had ended too quickly and more consultation would have improved the process. All three felt a more tapered approach could have prevented the problems encountered. Despite prior assurances and them struggling, no-one re-contacted *Includem*. Paul said that at this stage he had got used to *Includem* no longer being in his life and losing his worker, who had become 'the person' he 'spoke to', had created a gap that took time to replace. Paul reflected that he had now become closer to his foster father and was able to speak to him about problems the way he had previously with the worker.

This example shows that a more considered assessment of the impact of the worker leaving someone who has been with the service for a substantial time is needed and ideally the potential 'gap' should be identified and addressed. This also raises questions about the professionalisation of support to the level that was felt by Paul, as he seemed to have stopped developing his own organic support. However, it would also be fair to say that this was actually the only young person who reported this issue, and the worker's role as a mediator in the beginning between Paul and foster parents arguably had created this inevitable barrier that then had to be overcome. Overall, it would seem as though this could have been dealt with better before *Includem* had left Paul's life. His case shows the complexity of ending contact and in terms of the impact on organic networks, this would require even deeper exploration and a longer follow up to be truly answered.

No Show

In the first interview Emma described leaving the service as being ‘dead scary’ and worried about her worker not being in her life. In the second interview she said it would be ‘strange’ but she would manage. After this point she was never interviewed again face to face. The worker said that Emma abruptly stopped meeting up with her worker when the idea of her leaving was broached. She avoided saying goodbye and instead it could be argued that she took control and managed the situation by sidestepping it. Emma, as will be further discussed was pragmatic in her approach to many things. Her way of dealing with the ‘exit’ was to go first.

‘Calling Time’

Amy was very grateful of everything *Includem* had done for her and shared openly that without her worker she wouldn’t be where she now was.

I have had them for three years, like I was meant to be with them for only 12 weeks, like that was the contract. But I was saying to X that ‘if you were working with me for 12 weeks I wouldn’t have been where I am today.’ I wouldn’t have. I would still have been a wee rebel jumping about the streets.

Interestingly, Amy was the only young person who ‘called time’ on her worker near the end of the research. She felt that the worker had done all that they could and she was ‘ready’ to move on. Amy explained what ‘ready’ meant to her.

There was a month when I was saying to my sister like I am ready to say to anyone from *Includem* that I am ready, I am in the position that I am ready to leave. If I was in a bad position I wouldn’t leave, but I am in a good position. I am in a good steady position. I am ready for them to leave.

Interview: What does ready mean to you?

Interviewer: I am ready to stand by myself without the support. I can do it myself. I need to start proving that I can do it myself, not with constant support.

Her narrative, like most of the other young people rested on the idea of being ‘ready’ as about feeling strong and stable enough to go it alone. It was only Scott, Hamish,

Brian and Mark who mentioned that they relied on others and this is undoubtedly one of the main reasons for their success. Amy did not seem to see any dangers in doing it on her own and rather ‘treading water’ was regarded as an essential step. As she was just about to embark on this stage in her life, it is not known if she has been successful or not, but without the support of others her attempts are likely to be futile.

Ready, Steady, Go

Brian, Mark and Scott felt ready to leave in the first interview and reflecting back, also still believed that the time had been right when they left. They felt at that there was not much more that their worker could do and the reduced contact over a month reinforced this realisation. All three had future plans in place, specifically, Scott was going to college and Brian and Mark were becoming fathers.

Scott: I think that I can come off *Includem* and be fine on my own...it is limited contact.

Interviewer: So when X (the worker) said that he thought you were ready to go on your own, were you worried?

Brian: In a way I was worried, definitely. But X turned around and goes there will be support there for me if I need it. But, because of the fact that now I just want to basically prove to people that I can do stuff on my own and that, and basically I know, it is not a babysitter type thing. I would rather sit there and I am 21. I have got to be able to do stuff on my own without people going ‘this is how you budget.’ And this is how you do this.

Although, as will be discussed in more detail in subsequent chapters, there were indications that Brian and Mark were not entirely happy with their situation. However, becoming a father gave them focus and acted as a stabilising force committing them to desistance from offending and the future. It was interesting to note that it was only Mark and Scott who commented that ending their contact now also meant that help could be given to someone else who really needed it, and could even be regarded as a form of generativity (McNeill and Maruna, 2008).

Mark: Aye, like wasting money, the time and hours and money and that. I don’t want to be sitting at 25 and seeing my worker.

Scott: Everything has been going great. I haven't seen Y in about a year. I haven't needed any help and so they can help others who need it.

Mark was not interviewed after those first two months and so whether or not he 'proved' to be ready is not known, but both Scott and Brian showed that being 'ready' was about having tangible future plans in place and a reliable social network. Scott was very clear of his dependence on others and had consciously realised that independence was about interdependence. Brian on the other hand did not subscribe to this mode of thinking, but had accidentally achieved interdependence with his partner and it was this relationship above all else that kept him stable. One of the main arguments in this thesis, first evidenced here and developed in subsequent chapters, is that interdependence, whether achieved consciously or unconsciously is what has helped those who are most successful to move on in their lives, the ideal being that it is realised and realisable. The 'myth' of independence being about being able to simply get on with things on your own is shown to be both dangerous, misleading and a potential reason why none of the young people felt that they could again ask for help, and have for the most part, as will be shown, stalled or faltered in life.

OUTCOMES AS A RESULT OF THE RESEARCH

The feedback from Paul and the reactivation of support for Hamish, Ron, Elaine and Kevin through the research played a role in the review of the reliance on the helpline as a way of asking again for help. At the time of writing, *Includem* is putting in place a more tapered approach to young people ending contact. They have also introduced a series of 'check in' phone calls. These mimic the longitudinal approach used in the research to contact those who have left and find out how they are getting on and whether or not they would like any help again. It is acknowledged that for many young people, picking up the phone was something that they did not feel comfortable to do and was also perceived as a failure. This shows that ending contact was taken seriously by the young people and considered final and therefore 'checking up' was probably best undertaken by the service. It should also be added that young people

who don't want to be contacted can very easily make themselves unavailable, whereas, those who want help but are too afraid are essentially unreachable.

CONCLUSION

This research objective investigated in this chapter was how do young people disengage successfully, or not, from reliance upon *Includem*'s support? As discussed, this has been changed to more suitably discuss how the young people ended contact and also what they felt made the ending 'appropriate'. Dan and Kim did not leave the service and both raise questions about the suitability of continuing to offer support when it appears to have become a befriending service and lacking in direction. On the other hand, the worker, having met both individuals on a regular basis meant that the isolation they otherwise faced was at least temporarily alleviated. In reality though this is where the problem lies, as *Includem* had become a service serving a limited function for both. It could continue indefinitely in this way, but by doing so, not actually solving any problems, but merely reaffirming the general lack of advancement and dearth of opportunities available. Looking then to those who have ended contact successfully, the main reasons for this was that they had future plans in place, that is they were going to college or taking up clear responsibilities and either consciously or unconsciously had fostered support from others. They had 'got a life' and were progressing through and with others and had achieved independence through interdependence. Scott, Mark, and Brian had consulted with their worker about being 'ready to leave' prior to ending contact. Their cases were closed gradually and in doing so established and reaffirmed that *Includem* were not needed anymore and they had other stable support in their lives. Elaine, Hamish, Ron and Kevin returned to receive support from the service for different reasons. However, all four show that without connections that are able to provide help, the loss of *Includem* can be serious. This reinforces the point that closing a case should be at the point when other networks have been established, so that leaving the young person does not mean that they are being left behind, alone.

Most of the young people, except for those who have been most successful, 'buy in' to the notion of independence being about going it alone. What is apparent is that this

notion of independence is not sustainable, fair or accurate and that interdependence, the acceptance that we all rely on others is the foundation of success. Therefore, it is suggested that organisations such as *Includem* could help by challenging the notion of independence being about going it alone and create opportunities so that interdependence beyond the service is realised as necessary and also that is realisable. Although *Includem* can't be expected to work with young people forever and the concept of being 'ready' is individualised, the messages from these interviews is that saying 'goodbye' has to lead onto something else. 'Disengagement' is actually not an accurate term for what is happening here when it is successful. It is more about bridging to other support and fostering strong and genuine networks. For the young people who returned to *Includem* or struggled, it was found that *Includem* had actually been their main safety net. When they then left, quite literally it was as though the carpet had been pulled from under the young person's feet so they inevitably slipped. But, *Includem* can't create these connections alone. As an organisation, their interdependence on others and society must be acknowledged and a greater responsibility taken on by wider society to provide tangible opportunities for disadvantaged young people so that pathways can become clearer. It should not be the case that this becomes the role of a service alone. The question then of how to activate support or create active communities is worth exploring.

CHAPTER 7: FINDINGS PART II: TRANSITIONS TO ADULTHOOD – SINK OR SAIL?

'So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past.'

F.Scott Fitzgerald, 'The Great Gatsby'

'One thing which even the most seasoned and discerning masters of the art of choice do not and cannot choose, is the society to be born into - and so we are all in travel, whether we like it or not. We have not been asked about our feelings anyway. Thrown into a vast open sea with no navigation charts and all the marker buoys sunk and barely visible, we have only two choices left: we may rejoice in the breath-taking vistas of new discoveries - or we may tremble out of fear of drowning...the lot of the sailor depends in no small measure on the ship's quality and the navigation skills of the sailors. Not all ships are seaworthy, however. And so the larger the expanse of free sailing, the more the sailor's fate tends to be polarized and the deeper the chasm between the poles. A pleasurable adventure for the well-equipped yacht may prove a dangerous trap for a tattered dinghy. In the last account, the difference between the two is that between life and death.'

Zygmunt Bauman, Globalization: The Human Consequences

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the young people are introduced in detail based on field notes written up after the first interview. As a way of disentangling and providing clarity, the overall outcomes and 'destinations' achieved by the end of the fieldwork have been grouped together. I felt that it was important to provide a humanising account for each person as deleting their story would have meant that they had been silenced. This research has provided a chance to turn up the volume of the voices of those who have taken part, so they can act as representatives and advocates for disadvantaged youth in contemporary Scottish society. As Bauman (2002: 44) states 'metaphors help the imagination.' Using further inspiration from Bauman (2000), I have developed the metaphor 'sink' or 'swim' to help define levels of success in the transition to adulthood and desistance. However, rather than it being 'sink' or 'swim', bearing in mind the more accurate view of independence as interdependence, this has been

changed to become 'sink' or 'sail.' The idea being that water is life and navigating it alone is not sustainable and requires support. Furthermore, even sailing is not a stable situation. In a fitting analysis that highlights the prevailing precariousness, Foucault and Miskowiec (1986: 27) state 'the boat is a floating piece of space, a place without a place, that exists by itself, that is closed in on itself and at the same time is given over to the infinity of the sea.' If it is accepted that agency is 'bounded' (Evans, 2001), and the habitus embodies this and is shaped by the past (as discussed in in Chapter three, Bourdieu, 1986), charting a route requires skill and enduring effort, development, change or morphogenesis (Weaver and McNeill, 2015; Mouzelis, 1995). Within this metaphor, and without wanting to overdo the symbolism, I have also created two other classifications. Firstly, those who are not sinking but are surviving yet stuck, I have called 'marooned on an island.' Although they are 'stuck' and there is a form of stability in this lack of mobility, their existence is precarious and survival on a daily basis is a struggle. Furthermore, all of these individuals became increasingly more isolated throughout the fieldwork. This is the largest group of all and this finding is compatible with the previous literature denoting a new 'precariat' who are stifled in their progression (Standing, 2011). This study provides a deeper look into what life is like for those on the 'outer edges', illuminating that they live not just in a precarious, but perilous state. Secondly, those who are not yet sailing but are making their first tentative steps away from the island, I term 'treading water', a risky condition, as they are alone in their endeavour and especially vulnerable. Although this is 'progress' as they are moving beyond the island in the hope of a better life, without support they are destined to sink.

One of the concerns I had about using these categorisations is that they may appear derisory and also that they take away from the individual experience that is undoubtedly unique, but these are simplified groupings that have been created to provide clarity and have been carefully considered. In presenting the individuals within these groups, the metaphor emphasises their overall position and the challenges faced. These categorisations are also useful because they reveal how none of these states of being are secure, and even within one year some young people moved from sinking to sailing, and from being marooned on an island to sinking. Sailing is a good metaphor for the very fact that becoming a man or woman

‘overboard’ remains a likely prospect. Moreover, the obstacles faced and the stark relevance of the meaning of survival for this population is especially poignant.

The ‘outcomes’ of the young people are presented in this chapter and each group is discussed to understand what has helped or hindered their progress. The idea of ‘recognition’ has also been used in the analysis as a way of exploring the level to which citizenship has been achieved. Recognition is understood here ‘as the giving and receiving of acknowledgement, encouragement and affirmation to promote social identity and respect’ (Barry, 2016: 2). It is about the individual’s investment, and in some cases love in others, and the returned investment and love in them. Barry (2016) defines the young people interviewed in the Scottish desistance study as being on the cusp of recognition, but for this group, as will be shown, those on the cusp were rare. It was far more likely for social recognition to seem unattainable. Even more worryingly, for those sinking or close to sinking, there wasn’t even recognition or a sense of belonging achieved within their families.

This research supports the idea that building social capital and achieving recognition beyond the micro-climate is about having access to ‘weak social ties’ or bridging capital particularly in terms of employment (Putnam, 2000). However, accessing weak ties or bridging capital is about contact or embeddedness with those who are known or made known to the individual (Putnam, 2000; Granovetter, 1973; 1974). I argue that getting oneself ‘out there’ is almost impossible or lacks a credible foundation if the person has no sense of self-worth, bonding capital or belonging in their lives with family or friends (Putnam, 2000). In short, having the confidence to generate weak ties is built on being recognised within strong relationships. At present, the conversation about transitions to adulthood and desistance has been negligent about how the bonds of love and acceptance are formed, reformed or maintained. These stories show that for these young people love or acceptance was or is not always there. This research therefore may have important implications not only in understanding the particular vulnerability of young people who do not feel cared for, but also raises questions about the level of support required of services and also what is realistic. The accounts given highlight the damage created as a result of accepting the idea that independence is about having to stand on your own. Without support sinking is inevitable.

LOCAL CONTEXT

This research spans two areas, Glasgow and Fife. The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) provides a relative ranking of the data zones in Scotland from 1 (most deprived) to 6505 (least deprived) based on a weighted combination of data in the domains of Current Income, Housing, Health, Education, Skills and Training, Employment and Geographic Access and Crime (SIMD 2006 onwards).⁴ Using their interactive mapping system the following results were obtained for the young people in terms of the levels of deprivation they lived in.

Ranking (1 lowest)	No. Young People	Deprivation levels
1-100	2	0-5%
101-200	1	0-5%
201-500	3	5-10%
501-1000	5	10-20%
1001-2000	1	20-100%

As can be seen, the majority were living in some of the most deprived areas in Scotland. The lowest ranking in the study scored '74', which is specifically the area of Castlemilk where Kevin lived. I had debated about revealing this area, as I worried it may compromise Kevin's identity. However, ultimately I think that creating pseudonyms for the areas may mean that actually avoiding confronting the issues found here can be more easily done. Understanding the specific history of these areas also adds another dimension to the study (MacDonald et al. 2011). Areas such as Castlemilk and Glenrothes were purpose built following the Second World War to accommodate a growing population in a period of hope. Taking Castlemilk as an example, which is very similar to Glenrothes, in the 1970s the area became deeply impoverished and continued this economic decline (Duffy, 2012). Regeneration programmes in the 1980s attempted to address some of the issues, and although the

⁴Information taken directly from the website on Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics, available at: <http://www.sns.gov.uk/Guide/IndicatorGuide.aspx?MetaIndicatorCode=2260#Meta> and accessed on 28/7/15

area continues to improve, it remains one of the most deprived in Scotland. Research into the locality reveals a depressing list of issues, such as extensive fuel poverty, low incomes, overcrowding, poor structural design, inadequate heating systems, dampness, and a high proportion of households who spend long periods at home (Corden et al. 1998). Educational disadvantage, unemployment and inadequate income and isolation was said to have led to loss of confidence, feelings of stigmatisation and deterioration of mental health. Preceding more recent research by Hanley (2012) reporting on the adverse impact of ‘the estate’, McLeod (1995: 255) summarises this effect, stating that ‘social structures reach into the minds and even the hearts of individuals to shape their attitudes, motivations and worldviews.’ Areas such as Castlemilk and Glenrothes were born out of hope, expectations and a ‘new’ vision, and like the Teesside studies, understanding this history brings to light their sharp decline. For the purposes of this research, it also highlights the destruction of previously established working class routes to adulthood (McDonald et al. 2011). It would not be too dramatic to state that these areas have become relics to a profitable industrious past and are now characterised by purposeless and ‘collapsed opportunity’ (ibid: 149).

From the outset, I had hoped that researching one urban and one rural area would mean that the specific issues relating to rural areas, often overlooked, would then become more apparent. However, actually it was found that all of the young people had limited opportunities. It could be argued that deep poverty flattens these traditional differences or that a more specific comparative approach would be needed to draw this out. The young people dealt with the lack of opportunities in different ways and some better than others. Only one person, Scott, felt safe and spoke about living in ‘a community’ as opposed to referring to it as an area. Feeling attached or a part of an ‘engaged’ community makes it more likely that the individual will feel part of wider society (Morrow, 1999; Putnam, 1993). Furthermore, taking up the role of citizen is a two way process, it is about the individual gaining recognition from society but also the individual recognising their place, potential and responsibilities too. Drawing on the work of Chatman (1991; 1996), I argue that those who were most marginalised didn’t think that society had anything to offer them. They were on the outside but also regarded those on the ‘inside’ as having nothing to do with them either.

SINKING

*I was much too far out all my life
And not waving but drowning.*

*Stevie Smith
Not Waving but Drowning*

Kevin

Kevin looked like, was dressed as and turned out to be a boxer. He was going to training after the interview and said that he wanted to ‘get fit and lose the belly’. His large presence strangely conveyed gentleness. He frequently looked down at his hands as he spoke, maybe nursing an injury, but was quick to smile, a young mischievous smile. He was immediately at ease as his worker introduced me and settled into his story. He described how he grew up in a big family, with his mum, five brothers and three sisters. He did not mention his father. Up until the age of nine they were all together in the one house that he remembered fondly as being ‘like the Waltons.’ However, during this time his brothers had become involved in gangs, committing and being arrested for violent assaults and the family were asked to move by the local authority. Kevin’s oldest brother went to prison for stealing cars and his other brothers moved away to live in a different area. The family were split up and Kevin felt alone. He visited his brother in prison and despite recognising the disconnect between what his brother had written in his letters, about everything being ‘good’ and what he saw, Kevin, as discussed in the previous chapter, still viewed his brother as a role model and glorify criminality. He said:

My ma says that I have always looked up to the wrong people. See the wee man, like Jimmy Boyle and that I have always looked up to them and fancied doing what they do. I was reading a book about, I don’t like reading, but I was reading a bit of this book about the ice cream wars. And I had always, I had this famous picture in my heed, like, it was this, like a room like this and it was full of gangsters and I always had that in my heed. I always had that picture with me in that picture.

Kevin's mother found it difficult to cope and Kevin was moved in with his Uncle who had a drinking problem. He joined the local gang and from the age of twelve was getting into trouble with the police for assaults and stealing cars. He began receiving support from *Includem* at this time. Kevin felt that being an 'adult' was about being a man and he subscribed to the pressures of hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2002). At sixteen or 'even before' he said he could survive on his own.

I could go into a forest with a knife and still can come back alive months later, it is just one of the things I am lucky that way...I have done training courses and everything doing it. How to survive in the wild and how to live off the land and everything else.

His extreme form of depending on himself was undoubtedly one of his weaknesses. A recurring story and event that he had told no one else but spoke about in each of the interviews had created for him a lot of concern and frustration. At fifteen, Kevin had been told by a young woman with whom he had had unprotected sex with that he was the father of her child. The baby, now a toddler pervaded his thoughts. He did not know if he was the father but said that this could be the 'turning point' he waited for, and as will be discussed in the next chapter, Kevin didn't feel he had anything else in life. He discussed the implications of being a father out loud in the interviews and it was clear that this possibility had become a source of pain. He wanted to be a father but also felt that without a job he couldn't provide. It was almost as though his conviction in being able to look after himself had not been tested up until this point, and he now realised that he could look after himself, but no one else. This potential turning point remained unfulfilled and for Kevin was a significant barrier that even mentally he could not overcome.

Over the next twelve months, as is further discussed in the next chapter, Kevin became increasingly isolated and was the only person to re-offend and one of the two of the whole group who could be defined as 'sinking'. One of the main reasons for this is that he could not name anyone who offered him support outside of *Includem* and as already discussed even described himself as a 'lone wolf.' He had no sense of belonging, acceptance or love in his life and what should have been strong ties were fragile to the point of not existing. He appeared to have no concept of what receiving or giving support meant as was revealed in the earlier interviews, where he felt he gave his mum support because she no longer worried about him offending. I asked

him if his family were proud of him and in the initial interviews he said that they were. He had just won a few boxing fights around this time and felt he had proved himself as a man. When he visited his grandmother he noticed that she now had a picture of him up on her wall. He described how this made him feel:

When I first seen the picture, I thought that I didn't realise my gran was proud of me, but then I thought that maybe she was just kiddin' on, just the once. But then, I said to my ma 'Eh, my gran has a picture of me up on the wall.' And she said 'I know, she has had that up there for ages now.'

By the final interview Kevin's reoffending meant that the only 'support' he had previously given to his mum had been taken away. He had stopped boxing, had put on weight and generally seemed very down. He told me of his grandmother and the picture, 'It is not up there anymore. Aye, the guy down the stairs flooded and she had to take it down.' It was almost as though he had been aware of the use of the metaphor of water being used here. After leaving *Includem*, his life had become a downward spiral of hopelessness as he tried and failed to get into work or to establish himself as a respectable person (Giordano et al. 2002). He eventually re-offended and this is discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

The first line of the final interview recorded opens with Kevin saying:

Things have not been good. I am looking at going to the jail again.

The interview was punctuated with recalled hopes from earlier interviews that remained unrealised and he was giving up on.

Interviewer: Do you still go boxing?

Kevin: No, I have not been doing it. I was meant to have a fight this week but I have not been going to training. (Looks sad)

Interviewer: Are you sure?

Kevin: It doesn't bother me.

(Later in the interview)

Interviewer: What about the driving lessons did you get them started?

Kevin: (Shakes head)

Interviewer: What stopped you from doing that?

Kevin: I didn't book anything or that, and then two days later I got the jail.

B: Ah Kevin.

Kevin: Aye, cause I have been in and out of the police cells, they keep wanting to jail me and give me charges.

Interviewer: What about employment and education?

Kevin: I meant to be starting a job, but as soon as this guy finds out that I am looking at a 15 year sentence then he is going to be like...

Interviewer: So you are not in a good place?

Kevin: No, everything has been alright, it is just, I can't be bothered doing anything anymore.

Kevin revealed that on the night of the offence he had had enough of everything and wanted to take it out on someone, and came back to the frustration at not knowing if was a father or not.

Interviewer: Were you full of anger?

Kevin: Aye and everything else on top of that was just doing my nut in.

Interviewer: What do you mean, everything else, what was going on?

Kevin: Well being stopped and asked if that was my wean and that. And everything that was going on with the house was doing my nut in and I built it right up and I was looking for a fight.

Interviewer: What do you mean about the house?

Kevin: I mean about getting furniture and that.

Interviewer: So you wanted to take it out on someone?

Kevin: Aye and that is exactly what I did...It is the only way that I can calm down, it is if I am fighting or bevvied up, and when I am bevvied up I end up fighting anyway, so there is no point in getting bevvied up.

The final re-interviews were held directly after Scotland's referendum on independence. Despite Kevin being politically aware he did not vote because he thought it was rigged, what Farrall (2014: 256) would term 'disengaged citizenship'.

Kevin: I was gonna vote aye...cause the way I see it, why, why vote no right? If you vote aye, you are getting nuclear war heads taken out of Helensburgh and that could wipe Scotland off the face of the earth. They have spent £26 million on mare' new nuclear war heads when they give us £16 million to do up the streets and buy houses and that. So if they are giving us £16 million that is not even enough to buy a machine that we would need for a hospital.

Interviewer: So why did you not vote then?

Kevin: I knew for a fact that we weren't going to get it. There have been videos of people voting writing aye and then it goes, and they are putting yes votes in the no votes, so it has been rigged from the start.

He relied only on himself and said that felt that the world was against him. He did not only feel as though he had no recognition from society; he felt opposed by it.

Interviewer: so you mentioned there about the police that you think that they target you, do you feel that?

Kevin: aye...they think 'he is a wee fanny, jail him.

Interviewer: Does that annoy you that they don't see the changes that you have made?

Kevin: Ah ha.

Interviewer: Do you think you have changed?

Kevin: Ah ha. I don't fight as much anymore and that is it I think. I grew up...I am not out and acting like a wee fanny.

He wasn't claiming his benefits and had no recognition of himself, his place within society and what he could be entitled to (as well as responsible for) and felt mistrust or was not able to fit with what was expected within society.

Kevin: I have stopped vans in the street and everything and I have stopped them and asked them do you need anyone? They always say no.

Interviewer: You should consider going into offices with CVs.

Kevin: I would rather go in and tell them what I can do and how I do it.

Interviewers: But nowadays they expect a CV.

Kevin: That is what I would rather do and tell them what I can do, what I can bring to your company, this is what I can do.

He lacked recognition from his family and overall felt alone.

Kevin: My ma says that I have to stop acting like a fanny.

Kevin: It is me against the world and the world against me...I still feel like a lone wolf, like I do things by myself.

Arguably, having a role, identity and place within a family is one of the first steps to achieving a conception of our own potential and subsequently one of the most basic forms of citizenship. If this idea is accepted, it highlights the importance of achieving a sense of belonging (Van Breda et al. 2012). I further suggest that this acceptance builds self-worth and could be usefully viewed as the foundation for generating and spending social capital. As discussed in the previous chapter, Kevin was one of young people who openly said that he purposely created distance between himself and others. His idea of independence was about being able to stand entirely on his own

and this distance meant that he was and felt entirely alone. When he fell there was no one there. Without help from others, sinking is inevitable and it also means that when help is asked for, having created distance the individual is too far away for anyone to hear. Kevin and his relationship with 'society' was one of mutual dismissal.

Kim

I first met Kim at an Independent Unit. Her eyes downcast and head turned towards the floor, she sat as though cornered on the sofa and asked me if her worker could stay. She refused to be recorded but insisted on taking part. Her telling of events was not coherent and the worker filled in the gaps afterwards and made the fragments of information make sense. In their reconstruction the emerging story was heart-breaking and her stock answer of 'I don't know' developed a deeper meaning. How could she be sure of anything when almost everyone in her life had let her down and treated her badly? She did not know her mother when she was growing up and lived with her father on her own who sexually abused her from a very young age. At the age of ten she told a teacher but there was insufficient evidence and she continued to live with him. He married someone else and had other children. Kim loved her younger brothers and sister and her life was less lonely, but the abuse continued. She told a college tutor at the age of sixteen and this time the police got access to the house and evidence. Kim was moved into a flat on her own; frightened and completely alone she asked social workers for help. It was at this time that she came in contact with *Includem's* transitional support service.

When I asked her who her main support was in her life, she replied 'no one really.' She had recently made contact with her mum after all those years and wanted to be close to her. I almost cried when she told me that she would love to have a 'proper' family Christmas dinner. When I asked her what she would do without *Includem's* support she said quietly, affirming the past consistent answers already given, 'I don't know.' Kim didn't answer using these words in a dismissive way, she genuinely didn't know.

Over the next twelve months her life continued to unravel. Within six months she was ‘kicked out’ of the Independent Unit for breaking a window, something she denied. Her case against her father was not proven and her family turned their back on her. She stopped going to college and became homeless, her stuff ‘all over the place’, spending a night here and night there between her aunt, mum and friends. She never left *Includem* but questioned the reason for continuing, as she said ‘I don’t really know what we do. Like, I don’t really tell X (her worker) anything now anymore.’ Her relationship with her mother, who drank a lot, remained fraught and her life had become a daily worry about where she could sleep.

The final interview was at Kim’s mothers. There was a giant one metre high cake in the corner of the living room, each layer made up of some of the things needed for a newborn baby. It was covered in clear wrapping with a giant red bow and sat almost like a trophy, a proud declaration of pregnancy and a symbol of hope. Kim sat on the sofa rubbing her bump comfortingly. She was seven months pregnant and ‘happy but no’ happy’ about it. She was still homeless, moving from one sofa to another. The father of the baby was her former best friend’s boyfriend and she had no contact with either. Kim’s application for housing had been stopped because she said ‘They’, meaning the social workers, ‘want to see what I am like with the baby.’ She was convinced that ‘they’ were trying to take her baby away and in the beginning said ‘If they do I will try to take it back.’ After this initial clarity and resolve Kim retreated and her answers then became a familiar series of “I don’t know”, uncertainty about wanting to be a mum, the work with *Includem*, the near and distant future. Again, she did not answer in a dismissive way but rather an honest confirmation of how she felt. She said that she didn’t feel like an adult because being an adult was when you were ‘sorted.’ Her mother later said ‘I am trying to make her see that she has to stan’ on her own two feet. Like I did when I had her.’ As I knew Kim’s mum had actually not been there for her as she grew up it was hard to bite my tongue. Her expectations of Kim were based on a myth she had created about her own background. By the end of the interview, I felt Kim’s hopelessness and the cake in the background stood in sharp contrast to the reality of the situation. Kim was preparing to have her child taken away from her, homeless, alone and directionless, it felt as though she was being wronged again.

After the interview her mother told me that she was worried about her as she wasn't interested in getting anything for the baby and hadn't washed for days. It was hard not to feel frustrated. I couldn't understand how her mother allowed her to remain homeless. My natural instinct in most situations is to try and solve the problem but I honestly didn't know where to begin, there wasn't a clear or correct answer. I didn't know either.

Discussion

What is startlingly clear for both Kevin and Kim is that they are without any support in their lives and no one seems to actually really care about them. They have no one to rely on and equally no one relies on them. They are devoid of interdependence and social networks (Granovetter, 1974; Putnam, 2000). I would argue that they are far from being on the cusp of recognition and more aptly defined as being overlooked entirely (Barry, 2016). Kevin described how when he went to get his 'C-card' to get free contraceptives, the person that worked there, upon hearing that he came from Castlemilk, said 'You may as well be dead already.' He said he had been 'mortified' but also accepted what could be defined as a 'state of nothingness' (Bourdieu, 1964: 472). Kim was acutely aware that she was failing in life and her lack of hope amplified as she genuinely did not know what to do. Kevin defined independence and being 'a real man' as being able to survive. He was however simply surviving, living day by day and by the final interview aware that he could just about provide for himself but no one else. His story highlights the damage created when the myth of independence as being about being able to stand on your own is accepted.

In boxing, journeymen are opponents who do not have the ability or skill to win but earn their living by enduring punches. Kevin and Kim appear to have both taken up this role in life, and their stoic acceptance of the need to withstand pain is undoubtedly the result of their understanding of their situation and powerlessness to change it. They exercise limited agency and drawing on the concept of 'super dupes' (Farrall and Bowling, 1999), they could even be described as uber 'super dupes', that is victims not only of their macro structural constraints but also devoid of personal ties and micro support. Their hopelessness is not unjustified. This research reveals

how the young people felt about their transition into adulthood. Kim's assessment of this being a point when you are 'sorted' stood in sharp contrast to her life that was chaotic, as she had no stability or consistency in terms of meeting basic needs, such as housing or relationships that she could rely on. Her life was also directionless. Dealing with and tolerating today and life made thinking about the future impossible, a luxury. Adulthood as a state of stability for both Kevin and Kim was simply not attainable. They were both in a perilous state of liminality, lost and quietly sinking.

MAROONED ON THE ISLAND

This group who were found to be 'stuck' and felt that they were unable to progress were the largest interviewed and this fits with the overall assessment of young people today in the literature. A deeper analysis was able to show that hope could be an instigator towards action to change the situation, but also when this change was unable to happen, hope also became a source of pain. As will become apparent, for those who remained hopeful but stuck, their aspirations had become a form of 'cruel optimism' (Berlant, 2011). Both Emma and Mark show that scaling back on desires or aspirations and being satisfied with the bare minimum is undoubtedly a form of hopelessness, but was also a pragmatic way of coping. Essentially, there were really two sub-groups within this group, those who longed for and were unable to achieve but who retained varying degrees of painful hope, and secondly, the pragmatists who concentrated only on what they had and had given up on ever having anything better. They were no longer hopeful but also no longer pained either.

Beyond Hope - Surviving

Dan

Dan was introduced by his worker, shook my hand and greeted me with a broad grin hidden underneath a baseball cap. He was not nervous and told me that he was 'used to doing these sorts of things.' His story came easily and the quickness with which he revealed very personal things was both reassuring and disconcerting. I realised that Dan must have told his story about his past many times, almost as though it existed

outside of him. He was the youngest in the family of his mum, dad and three brothers. His story could be summarised as one of chaos, movement, abandonment, confusion and loss. A large part of his early life he said he chose to forget as he was taken into care and separated from his brothers.

Dan: No, when I was younger I got taken away from my mum and dad so I was at panels then.

Interviewer: What age were you then?

Dan: I don't know the age, because that part of my life I have chosen not to remember.

When they were all able to live together again, his brothers were involved in crime and the family had to move from area to area as a result of threats, sometimes only staying in one place for a month at a time. Dan did not get on with his father and his mother became ill. He joined a gang at the age of twelve and got involved in low-level criminality. At fourteen, he met a girl who fell pregnant and they moved in together and raised the baby. She was older than Dan and when she went to college and paid the bills he stayed at home and raised the baby. Dan told me in a flurry of words that the baby died only two years later. In his view, this time in his life, before the baby died, was when he had been most stable.

Dan: I had a baby but it died.

Interviewer: Was it with this girl?

Dan: No it was with a different bird.

Interviewer: I'm sorry; you have had a hard time.

Dan: Believe it or not when he was born when I was 15, no 14 sorry, and he was two years old when he died, and now basically I want to try and do it all, and hopefully have a family.

(Later in the interview)

Interviewer: Did you feel that, that having the baby changed things for you?

Dan: Aye, because as soon as it was clear that I did have a wean, I had to stop being an idiot and fanning about, stop all this and then I came off the drink, came off the drugs, and basically matured up and started being a da'.

Interviewer: And so you really feel that that was a big thing in your life that made everything different?

Dan: It made me calm down more, before because I have anger issues, I used to be a dead aggressive person.

After this, he was drawn back into gangs and came in contact with the police after a

particularly violent assault that resulted in him going to court. It was at this point that he began working with *Includem*'s Core Service.

Dan: Joined a gang when I was 14...just basically made pals with them, and then, it was just boredom.

Interviewer: Is there other options for groups of people to hang out in your area?

D: No.

Interviewer: So you either stay indoors or do this?

Dan: Aye...They showed us the CCTV with me and all the boys I was with, we had weapons and poles and that in our hands. They took us down to the police cells and then it was about 10 or 12 who got let out. Told we had to appear at a children's panel, and then we had to go for court for evidence...so we went to court for evidence, and then referred again, and then the court said that they couldn't see anything, then back to panel, and they said that it is voluntary you can go to *Includem*, and ever since then I have been on it.

By the end of the research, as already discussed, he had never left the service and was adamant that he still needed help. In the initial stages of the fieldwork he had many girlfriends, but in the last six months he moved in with Kelly and they immediately started trying for a baby. Kelly had a miscarriage and in the final interview they were trying again for another baby. It was hard not to think that Dan's desire to be a father was an attempt to recreate what he viewed as an ideal time before when he had a role, a purpose and routine.

I was looking after the wean when she was out working. Eh, but I obviously got money off my da and that and he would help us out. I would take the wean out to McDonalds or something, we would go out for a while and then come back, and then she would watch the wean and then I would go to ASDAs and get the baby wipes and stuff.

(Later in the second interview)

Interviewer: You did say though that having the baby was a big turning point in your life. Do you feel that when you have responsibilities like that that things are different for you?

Dan: Aye, because if I haven't got anything to be responsible I just laze about, and be lazy. If I have something to be responsible for, I will go out and get it all done, and then sit on my arse and do nothing.

Dan felt by the final interview that he was trying to be an adult but having no money and no job prevented him from providing for the family that he wanted to have with Kelly. He felt that being an adult was about 'Being able to have responsibilities for

yourself and basically everything around you. Be able to just go out and get a job and not need anyone's help.' He revealed that he didn't feel loved by his father and since his mother had died he had purposely created a distance between him and everyone else, including his girlfriend. He felt that being nurtured by someone else would dishonour his mother's memory.

Interview 1:

When I was growing up I was closer to my mum than my da, and when my mum died last year I drifted away from Da to my brother who has us a lot. My da' has always done his own thing.

Interview 2:

I am not happy and I have never been happy in my life. I might be happy about what I have done but I will never be properly happy because of my mum... I was pure close to my mum and I was there when she died

(Later in the interview)

Interviewer: Do you feel cared for?

Dan: (Deep inhale) That is quite a hard one. I always felt cared for when my ma was alive, but now I don't let anyone care for me...I don't want anyone else caring for me, and it eventually just takes over the care that I used to get off my ma. I don't want anyone caring for me.

Interviewer: Really? Do you feel that even this relationship with you and this girl that she cares for you in a different way?

Dan: She might care for me, but as far as I am concerned I don't let people. I have told my da and brothers this too...

Interviewer: So you don't feel that you are cared for?

Dan: No, because I don't want anyone to.

Interviewer: So you keep that distance...I think that is quite sad that you feel that way.

Dan: It is just the way it is, it is just the same with my brother as well.

Interviewer: Do you think that you will ever change that opinion?

Dan: No, I won't change it at all...my brother is the same as me, he has already told his Fiancé that she might care for him, but at the end of the day he doesn't want that type of care from her.

Interviewer: And she is ok with this?

Dan: Aye, because she understands that everyone of us was a mammy's boy that was it.

Interview 4:

Interviewer: Do you feel different about being cared for or nurtured now you have a girlfriend?

Dan: No, I still want to take care of myself, no one else will take care of me. Even though she tries to take care of me, I don't actually accept it because I am too used to being me.

Interviewer: What about feeling nurtured?

Dan: I am never going to feel nurtured, not since my ma died.

Interviewer: So you still feel that?

Dan: Aye.

Interviewer: That breaks my heart.

Dan: It is just cause I was close to my mum.

Interviewer: But you can be close to others.

Dan: I can be close to others but not the same as my ma, and me and Declan both feel that.

Like Kevin and unconsciously Kim, his idea of independence being about having to be alone had meant that his social networks were limited. The only 'real' support Dan felt and valued was from his brother and interestingly this was the only relationship he viewed as being an equal 'give and take.' Despite this, he still prioritised the idea of being on his own. He felt that once he had a job, his life would be 'sorted', and his repeated failed attempts to get one were a source of extreme frustration. In the final interview he said 'I hate sitting and doing nothing, sitting on my arse, I hate it. I want to go out and work.' He had put in applications for many jobs but as yet nothing had come of it. He had been on many government work schemes and felt disappointed but now resigned to the reality that they did not actually lead to work. He had not voted in the referendum, and like Kevin, assumed it was rigged showing a distrust of society.

Interviewer: Did you vote?

D: No I didn't both because I knew it would be rigged. I might vote in the future. I don't know.

Both Dan and his 'new' girlfriend viewed meeting the *Includem* worker as a chance for Dan to 'get away' and a much-needed break from each other, but it did not seem as though the contacts had any direction. He spent most days playing the Xbox and despite moving twice continued to be bullied and intimidated by 'old' gang members. He felt unsafe to the point of potentially being paranoid and rarely left the flat.

Interviewer: So last time that I spoke to you, you said you couldn't leave the house, how are things now?

Dan: It's touch and go really up here, cause it started to be an alright area when we moved in, but now we are getting stones into the window and into the door and stuff, so then we reported it to the anti-social behaviour team and it has quietened down now, I hope it just stays that way. I just want a quiet life. Getting on with life.

As will be discussed in more depth in the next chapter, although Dan had not re-offended he had become increasingly more isolated and less happy and his desistance had not been into a more socially integrated or satisfying life.

Fading Hope

Paul

Paul was only sixteen years old and very shy. He was quiet, pale, nervous, small and looked very young, almost brittle. His fingers were constantly in motion hidden behind his hands and he was clearly uncomfortable with the experience. I asked him if he was sure that he wanted to take part and he said he was sure. His initial replies were one-word answers as he looked up wearily from beneath his eyebrows, as though it was some sort of test. After we had both made a few humorous exchanges his smile appeared and by the end of the interview he was speaking in bursts. Although more relaxed, his fingers continued to twitch indicating that this entire process remained difficult.

He spoke candidly about his mother and father both being addicted to heroin, an addiction they still battled. He heartbreakingly pointed out that he had seen them in town recently and they were 'fat', so he knew they were no longer taking drugs and this made him happy.

Paul: I am starting to get in contact with my family and that as well.

Interviewer : And are you getting a better relationship with your mum?

Paul: Ah ha.

Interviewer: Are there any other people in your family that you are building contact with?

Paul: Before I used to get contact with my mum and da and my granny. It stopped for a while, and I had just got contact with my granny. My social worker said that I could thingy, that I could like see my ma every so often because my ma, she is my grans home help, she goes in and does stuff and that, so it is hard for me not to see her, if you know what I mean. So when I was going there I was seeing her, just passing into her and that, and I told my social worker, I didn't hide it or anything, I just said to him, and then after that, they just said that is alright then.

Interviewer: You can see her. You don't have to talk about this, but what were the reasons why you weren't?

Paul: Well my ma and da were on drugs, but they went into rehab.

Interviewer: Both of them.

Paul: Aye, my dad was in (Place C) and then he went to (Service X), but em, he went back on drugs after that, and then, eh, they have started just on their own. You can tell when they have been taken drugs because they go pure skinny. But my da when he has not been on them he turns into a big fat thing, honestly. (Both laugh). I say it to him, and he is like 'Look at my belly' and that. I seen them the other day when I was going to work and so they are obviously doing well and that, and eh, so that is them, that is them just done it themselves, they have not needed any help.

His early life 'was hard', a statement glossed over as though it was not something worth noting. At the age of eight, he and his younger brother were separated and taken into different care placements. Paul had not seen his brother much despite speaking repeatedly to social workers to get it sorted out.

Interview 1:

Interviewer: would you like to have more contact with your brother?

Paul: Aye.

Interviewer: have you spoke to anyone about that?

Paul: I spoke to my social worker.

Interviewer: And are they doing anything about that for you?

Paul: Aye, they said that they will look into it, but I don't know, cause see, the social worker that I now have is a guy and he is good. The other girl I had was a social worker for both of us, I need to ask him is he now the social worker for both of us.

Interview 2:

Interviewer: Do you get to see your brother much now?

Paul: No, I am trying to arrange that with the social worker.

Interviewer: So nothing has changed since last time I saw you?

Paul: No.

Interviewer: Would you like that to be sped up?

Paul: Aye, but I have asked and that is as fast it can go.

Interview 4:

Interviewer: About visiting your brother, are you still waiting on that?

Paul: Yeah.

Interviewer: Ah Paul, seriously?

Paul nods.

Interviewer: That's a disgrace.

Paul: I found out as well that he wasn't adopted afterall, after all of that.

Interviewer: So not only, you didn't see him but they told you this information and

Paul: Yep (looks down at hands).

Interview with foster parents:

Foster father: The only reason that Paul got to see his wee brother in the first place (over a year ago) is because we put him in the car and said 'right let's go and see him.'...well nothing was going to happen...The reason that they wouldn't let him see him is because they didn't want Paul building up that emotional attachment to him and then having that broken because he was going into being adopted.

Interviewer: But they are brothers.

Foster mother: Of course. And he is not even adopted

He struggled with education and was moved between different schools because of his behaviour.

Interviewer: What school do you go to?

Paul: I go to (names school), it is a learner support school for people with behavioural problems and all that stuff.

Interviewer: Do you think going there has been good for you?

Paul: It is a better school for us.

He was diagnosed as having Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and felt that this diagnosis and the subsequent treatment (medication) was a big turning point in his life.

Interviewer: So looking back would you say there have been any key moments in your life, over the past few years which have lead you to change. We have talked a wee bit about managing your anger...

Paul: Getting diagnosed with ADHD that was the main thing.

Interviewer: The main thing.

Paul: Ah ha. My ma knew from when I was younger that I had it, but social work just, they left it, they didn't take anything or do anything until I came here.

Interviewer: So you think that the medication has really made a difference.

Paul: Ah ha...I think I think more clearly.

Interviewer: What was it like before?

Paul: I don't remember before, it seems weird, I only remember certain bits, I can't tell you, like (my foster parents) will tell me a full big story about one night and I won't remember any of it.

His foster parents had worried about him because he used to stay out late at night and had become argumentative and even violent, especially after he had spoken with his

younger brother on the phone, their only contact after many months. The placement had been on the verge of breaking down and through his social workers he came in contact with *Includem* to receive intensive support. By the first interview Paul had been with *Includem* for more than five years and with transitional support for a year. His case was about to be closed and as already discussed he had had mixed feelings about this.

Twelve months on, he had not regained contact with *Includem* and his family situation remained complex. A visit between him and his brother had not taken place despite Paul's requests and this caused him a lot of sadness, anger and feeling of powerlessness. He spoke proudly of the fact that his parents had been clean for a year and he was planning on moving back in with them. He accepted that there was a risk of relapse, but this was quelled as he said 'I believe them this time' and that it was 'going to be different'.

Paul: I just happened over the summer, so, I don't know, it was hard, but then I was on the phone with them and that, and they said at 16 you can go and see them when you want. So I just went and seen them. And then just, took it from there. I asked them then if I could have overnights and now I have overnights and stuff like that.

Interviewer: And so the relationship with your mum and dad is going well. It has always been good...

Paul: It has always been there, but it hasn't always been that good because they had been taking drugs and that, but they don't do that anymore. But now they have stopped it and binned everything.

Interviewer: Are you trying then to be hopeful but also realistic, do you feel like you are walking a bit of a tightrope with this?

Paul: Aye, but I can...(long pause)

Interviewer: Do you feel it is different this time?

Paul: I believe them this time, because of everything that they have got. It was exactly what X (foster parent) said about me about things fitting in. Things are fitting in for them. They go see this worker on that day and the chemist on that day, and they do this, they do everything. Everything is all just there. They have a diary and they had one for last year, and there was, like in a month there was one day wrote in it, but you look in it now and it is full, you can't even write in it. Every day there is something, times and all of that...I think it is what they need. They need that. This is going to be different.

On another positive note he had completed his college course, but unfortunately, this is where the progress slows. The apprenticeship that Paul had spoken about to become

a mechanic in the beginning of the research as 'definite' had not happened. He had asked around at the local garages but there was no work available. The opportunities hoped for had become less tangible and as he was starting yet another Government course his future goals were fading. The dream of becoming a mechanic that before had been 'a certainty', he now said, 'I just have to take each day as it comes and see how it goes.'

His social networks had shrunk and his spare time revolved around taking the dog out for a walk or riding his bicycle, solitary pursuits. He did not think that he was an adult and had a negative view of 'them', describing them as 'old and grumpy.' I asked him 'Do you think you will ever be an adult?' He replied 'I think I will just be me.' Paul reflected both Scott and Hamish in this reply, as all three refuted this label and it was not a goal that they aspired to. This could be another form of pragmatism, simply discarding this as a goal because it seems unattainable. Paul had not voted in the referendum and did not engage in politics at all. It was as though he had decided that 'society' was something that had nothing to do with him. Like Kevin, he did not recognise his own right or claim to have a place. He did not feel recognised and in turn did not give himself any recognition.

Interviewer: Did you vote?

Paul: No, I didn't see the point.

Paul's narrative shows how someone who has strived all their lives to overcome obstacles also requires opportunities and continued support for efforts to pay off, and without this, hope dwindles (Healy, 2014). Gaining recognition is a problem in the absence of the redistribution of opportunities, as an affirmative alternative self cannot be established (Moloney et al. 2009).

Brian

Brian walked into the office with a swagger and exuded a confident air. He wore fashionable clothes, was clean-shaven and looked polished and determined. As he shook my hand and broke into a warm genuine smile he was instantly likeable and

appeared to be entirely comfortable. His encouragement for me to 'bash on' was all it took to begin. His story was one of separation, loneliness, feeling 'different', being accepted, being successful and then rejected and lost, making a name at becoming an offender and then trying to reject it, trying to find and take a new path. Brian's story was much more extreme than the others, with the highs being very high and the lows very low.

He is the oldest of two younger brothers that he grew up with and a sister he only met twice who was adopted when very young. His father died when he was 'just a bairn'. He was taken into care when he was nine years old, separated from his two younger brothers who were able to stay together in the same foster family. He now knows that his mother has learning difficulties and poor mental health, something he wished someone had told him at the time instead of blaming himself. His first few placements with foster families were not successful because he felt like an 'outsider' and was angry, confused and frustrated. At the age of eleven things greatly improved when he moved in with a 'new' foster family who treated him like 'one of them'. During the next five years he excelled in every way and had gained recognition within the family and even outside as he represented Scotland in sport. He grew in confidence and felt that he was and could be someone, showing the importance of bonding capital in creating a foundation of self-worth (Putnam, 2000). Brian looked up to his foster father who had been in the army and he was encouraged to join at sixteen. However, within the first few months he was bullied and did not want to continue. On a holiday away from the base he told his foster parents how he felt, but they did not support him in his desire to remain at 'home'. He refused to return to the army and they told him to move out. He was shocked. The acceptance he felt he had achieved was gone and he even questioned what this had been built upon; the bonding capital and foundation was lost.

Instead of moving into homeless accommodation, a prospect that frightened Brian, he took up a room with an older lady arranged through social work services. She wanted to spend all her time with him, but her wish for company made Brian feel even more alone. He tried to be out of the house as much as possible, hanging out at the local park and meeting up with friends. He then met a girl called Lucy and fell in love but their relationship was complicated. Lucy suffered from depression, was a chronic --

harmer and had recently had a baby with someone else. She came from a chaotic family, whereby there was limited stability created as a result of substance misuse and criminal activity. Brian summarised how they were 'well known' in the area.

Brian: I think because of my previous relationship, all the hassle, getting arrested and all this kind of stuff, plus my offending as well, and the fact that when I was going out with her and defending her and her family which I shouldn't have done in the first place.

However, despite all this, Brian felt wanted, needed, loved and once again had achieved recognition. As well as becoming a father to this woman's child, even when they had split up and she was self-harming to a dangerous level, the family called upon him to help.

She was there to support and help me through things, she ended up getting her daughter taken off her, just literally before I met her, so in a way I did understand whereabouts she was coming from and that situation. Once, em, it all broke down I moved in with her mum and that and it went from a good relationship to a bad relationship really... She was a bad self-harmer back then, like, real bad...because of the fact that I would hate for to see someone sitting there and cutting themselves, do you know what I mean? So I decided right, I will go up, do you know what I mean, knowing that I was on bail conditions, I have went up, basically sorted things out and then she turns around and goes 'move back in.' And it is putting me in a situation that 'what do I do?'

Interviewer: And you still care about her?

Brian: Yeah, and because of the fact as well that even though her daughter is in care, she is still getting contact. And then contact lead to me getting it as well, so I was basically me and her going to see her daughter and then because over a period of 6 months, I started getting a real close bond, and it was like 'well, I am not going to leave you.' And then, when the courts turned around and say 'if you can get your own house, and get stable and stuff like that, we will consider her coming back.' And then because we were so motivated to get something like that done, once we went into our own tenancy it was just a nightmare.

He became drawn into Lucy's family and moved in with them and their lifestyle of drugs, fighting and getting in trouble with the police, what Brian now refers to as 'the wrong paths'. It was at this time that he learned 'how to handle himself' and felt 'safe' because he knew 'his capabilities'.

He first received community service for carrying a knife. Lucy's baby was brought into care and she received support from *Includem*. The worker also got to know Brian who attended the visits with the baby and asked him if he would like help too. Brian was grateful of the offer and began to engage with Transitional Support with Lucy. Over the next year though their relationship deteriorated. Brian described 'picking up' charges of assault and serious assault supporting Lucy's family in fights, almost as though he drifted into it or it 'just happened' (Jamieson et al. 1999; Matza, 1964). He was also charged with domestic violence against Lucy, and claimed that they were both equally to blame for this because they were 'in the house all the time' and had become violent towards each other. In these respects he seemed to employ 'techniques of neutralisation' and did not see himself as a perpetrator, nor accept blame, but rather viewed himself as a victim (Sykes and Matza, 1957). Whilst in prison he received a letter with a picture of the baby to tell him their relationship had ended, he said that it 'destroyed' him.

After being out of prison a short time he met Eve. He was involved in a fight and serious assault that led to a six months prison sentence. He described 'breaking down in prison many times' and was surprised and relieved that the *Includem* worker visited him and continued to offer support. He realised that upon leaving prison and later beginning a relationship with Eve that he now had too much to lose and he viewed this as a turning point. The importance of context then in defining a turning point is explored in more detail in the next chapter. By the first interview he had worked with Transitional Support for almost two years and had not offended for eighteen months. His case was about to be closed and although sad, he was keen to move on. He and Eve moved into their own tenancy in a quiet area with the support of *Includem* and Eve became pregnant. Although this was not planned, Brian felt that it provided even greater motivation for him to sustain the changes he had made in his life. It was not a turning point but a reaffirming life event. He was keen to become a gym instructor and 'not stay on the dole' for the rest of his life. He wanted his family to be proud of him. Brian had already completed a college course with help from *Includem* and was looking into future options.

Six months after the initial interview they lost the baby and tried hard to deal with this together. By the end of the fieldwork Eve and Brian were about to have another baby

and Eve's miscarriage was not mentioned again. Although he was excited about becoming a father he really wanted to get a job. He echoed the frustrations of the other young people about the lack of opportunities but also remained hopeful. He had voted for independence and felt let down that this had not happened. It had been his first time voting. Brian recognised that he had a place in society and possibly this is a necessary first step to gaining recognition from society.

Brian had a dual identity and said that sometimes he felt like an adult and other times he didn't. He described telling his foster parents about being a father. He said 'It was a bit weird telling them, they have got to that point where they have realised that I am grown up. I am not as a young as I was back then.' He also viewed adulthood as being the end of fun, and like Paul, had negative views of adults, possibly highlighting the impact of the many times they had been let down by those who were older. Adulthood was not viewed as an appealing pathway, and when discussed, it was clear that it was an afterthought rather than something desired.

Brian's concerns were much more immediate than the idea of adulthood. He was now able to see one of his brothers who could afford to visit but was very upset that he had still not seen his younger brother. They had resorted to keeping in contact by playing the Xbox online. He felt that the social workers were actively trying to keep them apart because of his past offending. It could be said that he was trying to work towards making the blueprint he had created of his future 'possible' self a reality (Paternoster and Bushway, 2009).

Interview 1:

Brian: I have done my HNC and all of that, and sports and fitness, so my plan is hopefully once I have got my community service and that finished is to get in and do my HND and hopefully become a fully qualified fitness instructor.

Interview 2:

Brian: I think, in my opinion it is about achieving the goals that I have set to become a gym instructor...it has come to that point. Like people in the past have said set yourself goals, and then I have come to a point where I have gave up. But I am not one of the people who give up, I hate it, I hate it, and I think that the fact that the goals that I have set myself. In my opinion until I get to they goals I will do everything in my power to get to they goals...Like even sitting down with m girlfriend and explaining that this is what I want to do in life, and I have her support and my family's support, it is making me feel

stronger in myself to achieve that goal, it is realising that everything is possible in life.

Interview 4:

Brian: I think that maybe because of the fact that in the past when I have set myself goals I have gave up, I have, just to do with the drink and drugs and all offending. But I think that now since I have grown a backbone and stood up for myself and realised that I can't deal with this and also Eve is now pregnant, this is making me think even further ahead to set myself goals and provide for them. I can't stay on the dole for the rest of my life. I would rather get the qualifications that I need, get a job and then happy days.

From the outset the concern developed that as time passed and unfulfilled hopes crystallised this blueprint would fade. His feeling, whether rightly or wrongly, that social work services were stopping him from seeing his family made him acutely aware of the impact of his past on his present and future. It was clear that his agency was bounded, not only by the structural limitations faced but also in not being able to move forward. He did not feel that those around him saw that he had changed. He was as Barry (2016) describes, misrecognised and also powerless to change this. His relationship with Eve was undoubtedly a stabilising force but as he tried to better their lives it was unclear if this would happen. Becoming a father without the means to provide had become a source of frustration (Moloney, 2009). Brian's case shows that it is not enough for the young people to imagine a better self but also they need to have the opportunities to make it happen and also have a chance to 'act out' and affirm this 'new' or 'made new' identity.

Cruel Optimism

Elaine

Elaine and Hamish are brother and sister and the stories of their backgrounds are presented here together because they are the same. Elaine's face was serious but kind. Her considered voice reflected a thoughtful mind and it was quickly revealed that her shyness hid a quiet strength built through endurance. Elaine and Hamish had a difficult childhood filled with loss and hardship. Their mother died when they were very young and their alcoholic father died slowly within the next few years in hospital, making them orphans. Hamish doesn't remember either parent. They moved in with their grandparents but then their grandmother became ill, and they and their

brother were split up between three aunts. Elaine and Hamish lived an hour apart and as a result they did not see each other very often. They described this as the ‘hardest’ time of all as they really missed each other.

Elaine was abused by her aunt and at sixteen ran away. She felt that it was at the age of sixteen she became an adult because she had to look after herself. For Elaine, being an adult was about being responsible. Over that next year she slept on the streets or on friend’s sofas. She lived day by day, constantly worrying, scared, hungry and alone. Eventually, her best friend’s mother offered to let her stay with them, an offer Elaine will be forever grateful for. She then met her now boyfriend Ron and felt this was a turning point because it was the first time she didn’t just rely on herself. They moved to England but Elaine was not happy as they lived with Ron’s friends who bullied her and accused her of stealing. They decided to move back to Scotland and into the one bedroom flat shared by Hamish and his older brother Simon. Simon was getting support from *Includem* and when the worker saw the situation, he offered all four help. They were glad of the offer. By the first interview, Elaine and Hamish had been receiving support for almost two years and their cases were about to be closed.

By the end of the year Elaine could be described as being ‘marooned on an island’ and the outcome of her story is more developed in Ron’s overview. At the final interview, Elaine had sadly been diagnosed with a deteriorating health condition affecting her movement and the potential impact that this could have in preventing her from having children weighed heavily on her mind. Immobility had taken on a deeper, embodied meaning and she and Ron were frustrated that their lives were on hold, paused and stalled. Their hopes had become a form of cruel optimism (Berlant, 2011).

Ron

Ron was heavy set and spoke in a slow manner. When I first met him his eyelids were heavy and he said that he had played the Xbox until the early hours and was very tired. He smiled, introduced himself and began to tell his story of chaos, anger and instability. He was the only young person who spent his entire childhood with both his mother and father but this statement hid the reality of his upbringing. His father

abused his mother on a daily basis, physical, emotional and mental abuse and he relived the feeling of helplessness as he had watched his mother get beaten up and this became a constant source of anger. At sixteen he and his brother intervened during one of the physical attacks and beat up their father so badly he had to go to hospital. The relationship had not been repaired since. His mother and two brothers fled to Wales. Ron and his brother moved to Scotland where he met Elaine.

Ron then moved back to Wales to live with his mother and invited Elaine to join him and she agreed. After a few months, they then got their own room in shared accommodation in England with Ron's friends. Ron was employed for a large firm working in a warehouse and worked long days, resulting in Elaine being in the flat on her own most of the time. Elaine did not get on well with Ron's friends and missed her family in Scotland. Ron agreed to move back. They moved in with Elaine's two brothers, Hamish and Simon, who were renting a one bedroom flat. Ron got a job working in a warehouse again and although they were financially fine, the flat was crowded and the situation less than ideal and they began to get support from *Includem*. By the first interview, Ron had been receiving support for almost two years and his case was about to be closed. He felt that he was ready to leave and saw it as a step forward.

At the six months re-interview, Hamish, Elaine and Ron were all struggling. There had been problems with their benefits after a period of work over Christmas and all three were going to food banks to survive. They also almost lost their tenancy and this brought into sharp focus how much they had invested emotionally in having a secure 'home', the first any of them had ever experienced (Henderson et al, 2007). Elaine and Ron had also been arguing a lot and when I spoke with Elaine on the phone it was clear that she was really struggling. I encouraged them to contact *Includem* to get support again and they did. They told me that without this 'push' they would not have done it.

By the final interview, Ron was still looking for work and incredibly frustrated that there was nothing out there. He, Hamish and Elaine had not worked since the Christmas before when they had been employed by a large company in a warehouse. All three felt that they had been exploited and had worked long hours doing hard

work and the promise of future work had not materialised. When they were no longer in work, they were without any money for three weeks. However, in Ron's desperation to feel a sense of purpose he was considering taking up the same job again at Christmas. He felt that without a job he and Elaine could not progress. Their relationship was not about interdependence because in Ron's view it was his responsibility entirely to provide for them both. His exasperation in not being able to get a job deepened over time. He said 'I mean I have a HND in computing in creative arts, yet, I can't find a job in that industry because the experience, having just that experience is not enough. I have even applied to work for nothing to get experience to put on my CV so that I can actually get a job, but they are still saying no.' Employers no longer even told him if he had been unsuccessful in his application. The courtesy of even informing the person about rejection was not given.

Ron and Elaine's lack of progress was compounded by the fact that they had got engaged but couldn't actually afford to get married. In the first interviews they spoke about getting married and even had ideas about wanting to go abroad and what the celebration would be like, but in the final interviews this seemed a distant dream. They openly discussed how having a social life like an 'ordinary' couple was not possible.

Ron: I would like it if we could have the situation where we can take time off work and have a holiday and go and visit family or something like that...to be able to go out for dinner and just do something like that.

Elaine: I would like to have money to be able to go out for a meal.

Ron equated being an adult with being able to provide for a family and have a job. Both felt that without a job they could not have children although they both wanted to. Ron felt pressure as Elaine longed for children. He said:

That is all she goes on about is that she wants a kid...I told Elaine when we first met that we weren't having kids until I am in a stable job and can support it. I don't want to rely on the job centre to provide for us and the child because if that messes up I don't want to put the child at risk. It is fair enough if I am at risk but not my child.

Their interviews further disprove the myth that young people are workless and come from workless backgrounds (MacDonald, 2015; MacDonald et al. 2014). Their story also shows that apparent turning points that come to dead ends can become a source of cruel optimism (Berlant, 2011). Hamish, Elaine and Rob were the only young people who spoke about the austerity cuts and felt that the benefits sanctions faced had become more severe. They also said that they felt that their local office had targets to hit in terms of giving people sanctions. Their level of distrust towards the authorities made them view them as not helping, but actively thwarting their progress. They did not see the current Government as assisting them at all.

Elaine: They have targets to hit. They have quotas for each to give people sanctions.

Ron: So they are just finding any reason to sanction people. To save money.

Unlike respondents in previous research, these young people were very aware of their marginal position in society (MacDonald et al. 2005). All three had voted for the first time for independence in the referendum. They had hoped that this would lead to change and were extremely disappointed that this had not happened. All three felt that they had been let down by society in general and their plan to deal with this was to simply try to support one another, focus on their immediate circumstances and make the most of what they had. For Ron and Elaine, meeting each other was their turning point, but they both realised and felt that they were not progressing and not able to take the next steps towards commitment because they could not afford to. Elaine and Ron felt that marriage was important and their desire to do this and to have children being unable to happen had become a source of pain. The emphasis they placed on marriage highlights the importance of rituals (Maruna, 2011), but also that they weren't attainable and rather a luxury. For Elaine and Ron not being able to get married meant that they were unable to show their full recognition of each other.

The Pragmatists – Marooned with a restricted 'good' view

Emma

Emma's hair colour was vibrant, her makeup perfectly applied and clothes edgy, spiky and black. Her voice, sweet and nervous was at odds with her image. She spoke

in bursts and wanted to be heard, sometimes projecting her voice a little too loudly, but also afraid as she chewed on her lips and often looked away. Her first interview had to be re-scheduled four times because she didn't show up and admitted that her key worker had been on holidays and she was too nervous to meet me without them there. Her story does not come easy and it was hard not to read between the lines. Overall, although she was more relaxed by the end of the interview, like Paul this was not something she enjoyed.

Emma lived with her mother and sister Sarah until she was twelve. Her mother then had a new boyfriend and Emma and Sarah felt neglected and hung out with older people in the area, drinking and smoking in parks or wherever they could instead of going to school. Emma described her mother as not being an affectionate person. As the interview progressed, it was clear that Emma craved this love and it was unclear if she felt she had it at all.

Interviewer: And where do you feel you get that love and care from? Who do you think gives you that in your life?

Emma: Everyone who is close to me.

Interviewer: So your sister, what about your boyfriend? (Had said just before that these are the people who is closest to her).

Emma: Yeah.

Interviewer: Do you get that from your mum?

Emma: I do, but most of the time she is more interested in what her boyfriend has to say, but over the years I have got used to that.

Later in the interview:

Interviewer: Who gives you respect?

Emma: I think everyone gives me respect, but sometimes my mum speaks to me like I am a dog. If she asks me to do something she asks me three or 4 times, it makes me feel like I am incompetent and I can't do things for myself. I don't ask my mum to do something for me, and ask her more than once. Like just to make her feel degraded. But, I always say to her 'stop doing that. Don't do that.' But I think that she is so used to doing it now.

Sarah became pregnant and stopped hanging out with the group. Emma missed her and drank even more. She was taken into care when she was thirteen because her mum couldn't deal with her 'bad behaviour' anymore. She described running about 'screaming and shouting' to get attention, literally crying out for recognition.

Although she felt a bit out of place in the residential unit she met people who had the ‘same kind of situation’ and they ‘all understood each other.’ This time in Emma’s life seemed to be when she achieved a sense of belonging and by meeting other young people in a similar situation she was able to understand her own position better. Sarah visited her and brought her cigarettes. She realised how much they missed each other and reflected that they both came to rely on each other. She had gained recognition from her sister and her sister in turn from her. Emma began working with *Includem*’s core services whilst in care. After leaving care, she moved in with Sarah who had just had a baby and became a second mum. This brought her so much love, happiness and she said that it ‘hit’ her that she had to ‘grow up.’ Despite enjoying this experience Emma did not want to have a child of her own yet and felt that your younger years were about doing all you could. The sisters argued a lot and Emma moved back in with her mother and boyfriend. Sarah was pregnant again and Emma worried that she was becoming isolated as she lived far away from the family.

By the first interview Emma had been working with *Includem* for three years. She had been supported to do a beauty course locally, a small ‘wee’ place where she didn’t feel intimidated. She also had a boyfriend and as she had not mentioned any other relationships it seemed that getting really close to Emma took time. Her main *Includem* worker had helped her develop skills in independent living, such as cooking and budgeting and she was grateful for this. I asked the worker more about the beauty course and she said that she had driven Emma there a few times before she eventually had the courage to go in. Another worker who had ‘filled in’ added that she had even had a panic attack before deciding that she would not attend one week. Both workers agreed that there had been progress but Emma remained fragile and unpredictable. After many missed interviews and only seeing her face-to-face twice, I couldn’t help but think about the many unopened doors in life Emma would pass by because of her lack of confidence or adverse reaction to new situations. In the second interview her case was about to be closed and she had mixed feelings about this. A year on, Emma never had her ‘exit’ meeting and had simply stopped engaging with the service when the idea of closing the case was brought up. The worker felt that it was just too hard for Emma to say ‘Goodbye’ and this was her own way of managing endings.

Emma said that being an adult was about ‘Growing up, being more mature, feeling more responsible, being more safe, and...getting closer to family.’ Interestingly, she stressed the importance of being safe. She spoke about how before she used to go out drinking all the time. She reflected, ‘I could be with people that I didn’t even know and that is dead unsafe, and especially if I am just by myself with people I don’t know.’ Her analysis of adulthood stressed the idea of building self-respect and getting respect back in return. She said ‘It is so good being treated like an adult and not a child, it is so good. Like, see when people treat me like a child I think it is offensive, I actually feel offended. Like, there is nae need to treat me like a child.’ A big change that she noted in her life and of which she was proud, was that she felt her mother now treated her with respect. This shows that it matters who returns or gives respect. This further reinforces the lack of recognition that Emma had felt within her family up until this point and that this was actually the only recognition she really sought. Emma did not vote in the referendum and instead she seemed to focus only on her immediate situation and did not see herself as part of something bigger.

I was able to speak with Emma briefly after the first interviews by telephone. A year on, she was now living with her boyfriend in a flat they had recently decorated. Her sister had had the second baby and Emma’s life revolved around being there for them. She was no longer going to college and seemed very happy with the ‘wee home’ she had created. Listening to her as she described her life, the ‘grand plans’ of making the most of everything were no longer at the forefront but there was no doubt that Emma was happy. Her story raises questions about the appropriateness of scaling back hopes and dreams as a way of minimising disappointment. It is impossible to know what the impact of Emma’s decision has been in rejecting the ‘what could be’ to become resigned to simply ‘what is’, she is a pragmatist, getting on with things as best she can.

Mark

Mark was tall, stocky and held himself with confidence. In the first interview he told me that he had just moved into a new flat and was in the middle of decorating it for himself and his girlfriend Selena who was pregnant. As a result of the move his

benefits had not come in yet and he relied on Selena to pay the bills. He explained that he had ADHD and although sitting and ‘talking loads’ was hard he wanted to take part. I hadn’t even begun to go through the consent form and he started to tell me how great his life was. The story of his past, one of constant movement, doing without and trying to get by, living day by day clearly felt behind him and he re-told it as though it was someone else’s.

He grew up having limited contact with his father and was ‘brought up’ with his younger sister and older brother by his mother who had been addicted to drugs. He described those years as ‘stressful’ and felt he had ‘lost out.’ His older brother got involved in offending from a young age and was in and out of prison; he was someone Mark knew little about. He tried his best to make sure that his little sister was ‘ok’. When he was twelve, because of the chaos in his family home he was moved in with his uncle. His little sister remained at home with his mother who was supported to deal with her substance misuse. Mark did not discuss his uncle or the wider family, but reflected that it was through his cousin that he joined the local gang and at the time it was ‘good’ to have people to talk to who understood his life and he no longer felt so alone. He had gained some sense of belonging and recognition. Mark started drinking heavily and taking drugs and got involved in increasingly more violent and dangerous offending. He was regularly in contact with the police for assaults and latterly for stealing cars and recalled weekends on end being held at the police station. He had seen horrible things, ‘stabblings in broad daylight’ and even ‘friends’ attacking each other.

It was during this turbulent time that he came in contact with *Includem*’s core service. His mother stopped taking drugs and got a job and Mark moved back in with her and his sister. He felt distanced from his younger sister, not only because of the time apart but because she was a reminder of the life that he should have had. Mark tried to improve his behaviour but his mother caught him smoking cannabis and kicked him out, forcing him to go to a residential unit. He felt embarrassed but also viewed this as a ‘turning point’ in his life as it was here that he met Selena. When Mark spoke about Selena he beamed with pride and listed off her qualifications and many talents. He appeared to be very much in love. It was shortly after meeting her that he left the gangs, not only because of her, but he was now bored of ‘hanging around every day,

day and night' and there was 'no enjoyment' in it anymore. He had someone now in his life that cared about him and he in turn cared about her. She recognised him as an individual and not as an offender. He was no longer alone. Mark also emphasised the importance of his own mother turning her life around. He said 'If my ma had never made a better person of herself, I don't think I would have done the same.' By the first interview he had been with *Includem* and Selena for more than five years and receiving support from the transitional team for more than a year. His case was about to be closed and he was happy to move on.

Mark was the only young person that I was not able to keep contact with after the second interview. He moved home with Selena twice and even left behind the house they had decorated. I asked him why they had moved so many times and was surprised when he replied, 'I thought it would be best to get far away from family and be more isolated with my girlfriend and baby, I would maybe do that bit better.' This was the only time he admitted to self-isolation and also at times feeling frustrated. His main mission was to provide a safe and secure environment for his family, something he was acutely aware that he had not had. He said he was happy to be the main carer when the baby was born so Selena could pursue a career as a beauty therapist. Interestingly though, he had also signed himself up to take part in a football camp in England and was hoping to be spotted by a talent scout, arguably evidence of an underlying wish to be something other than a stay at home father.

He said that he had a good relationship with his mother, sister and brother but still had no contact with his father and was too embarrassed to try in case he was rejected. When I asked him to describe the last year, he replied 'Weird and life changing... I dunno, it has had its ups and downs... from when I went to the hostel, went to my dad's, mum's and then dad's and then to Tara's mums, then went from my furnished flat to my own private let, all in 6 to 8 months.' It was only when I listened back and transcribed the interview that I noticed this detail. He had never spoken about living with his father at all. Like Dan, maybe Mark chose to forget. He and his girlfriend Selena appeared to have created their own bubble in the same way as Emma and her boyfriend. Overall Mark seemed isolated but happy. Like Emma, he could be described as a pragmatist, limiting his hopes to match the structural constraints. He was marooned but determined to make the best of the restricted view available to him.

Discussion

As illustrated by the case studies, for the young people who are stuck, their stability remains fragile. A big hindrance to being able to progress has mainly been because of the lack of work or opportunities accessible and the young people dealt with this in different ways, from acceptance and pragmatism, to continued hope to the point of it becoming painful. Emma and Mark both especially scaled back their hopes. Dan was simply surviving and almost sinking, struggling each day rather than actually thinking about the future. He had become increasingly frustrated with life over the year and focused his attention on trying to become a father, viewing his time before in this role as the best in his life. Paul and Brian's hopes of getting into work faded, however, Brian in becoming a father rejuvenated his desire to do well. Rob and Elaine's continued hope in the future had become a form of cruel optimism. They longed to be married and have children and agreed that neither could happen until they could afford to do so. Their life seemed to be on pause and going nowhere.

All of these stories support the idea set out by Barry (2016) about the importance of recognition as an important aspect of becoming an adult. However, in some of these cases the lack of recognition is not just from wider society but also those who ought to be close to them and indeed where recognition is arguably expected. For Emma, Dan and Mark, the basic recognition from a parent had not been there in the past. Emma was extremely happy that she now had respect from her mother but Dan and Mark continued to be overlooked and felt that their fathers did not care about them. Dan was the only one in this group who felt that he kept himself purposely distant from others and rejected being cared for. He echoed Kevin's idea of independence being about having to stand entirely alone, and despite having a girlfriend did not accept the idea of interdependence. Only Elaine, Hamish, Rob and Brian had voted in the referendum and all four had been disappointed by the outcome. They viewed this 'missed' opportunity with sadness and all four were very aware of their marginalised position. Their anticipation of an alternative politics had been dashed and this cemented their commitment to focusing on their immediate circumstances, what they felt they could maybe change rather than having any expectations beyond this.

Overall, they did not see their place within wider society. It was not apathy that they felt about politics but rather hopelessness.

Brian, Mark, Emma, Elaine and Rob were all in relationships that helped them to realise and accept the idea of independence being about interdependence. Brian and Mark were about to be fathers and regarded this as either as a turning or reaffirming point in their lives denoting that they had ‘grown up’, prompting the establishment of a positive identity. Being a father was a way of showing that they were men, however, this identity was also overshadowed by the inability to truly provide. Rob and Brian actually viewed interdependence as ideally them being providers. Although Mark said he was willing to be the main carer and his girlfriend would work, at the same time he had also applied to a football camp and this created a contradiction within his narrative that he did not reflect upon. Overall, other than Dan, being in a stable relationship had instigated a re-evaluation by all about what independence actually meant, and for the most part lead to them understanding the value of interdependence.

TREADING WATER

Amy

Amy’s oversized tracksuit swamped her tiny frame and her tousled hair threatened to overcome her petite face. Her appearance reflected her story that was about a young woman’s endurance of many terrible experiences that had almost been successful in overcoming her. She was incredibly likeable, quick witted and very funny. When she walked through the office corridors to the interview room it was as if a celebrity had entered the building and she was completely unaware of her effect. She grew up in a very disadvantaged area along with her mother, father, sister and two brothers. Her father was and is an alcoholic and after many years of abuse her mother fled. Amy lived with her father and two brothers in what she described as a ‘heavy hard’ existence of abuse, alcoholism and doing without. Her brothers were involved in criminal activity and the police regularly visited their home and she felt that their reputation superseded anything she herself could create. She became friends with young people who hung about on the estate and began drinking alcohol, taking drugs

and looking after herself as best she could. One night her father beat her so badly she ran away and slept on a friend's sofa and this became a longer-term arrangement. At the age of fourteen Amy accepted the chance of living with her friend and in payment she babysat her younger children every day and felt part of the family, something she had never had before. She no longer went to school and instead became a second mum. She enjoyed feeling loved and being a caregiver. It was at this time that Amy came in contact with *Includem*'s core service and other services supporting her to get back into and remain in school.

Amy's life continued to be chaotic with little semblance of stability or reliable support. The charges she received under the influence of alcohol and diazepam escalated from breach of the peace to serious assault and attempted murder. *Includem* persevered and continued to work with her intensely. Her mother stopped seeing her and Amy was very much alone. Her worker helped her to understand her behaviour and become aware of other options and explore what she wanted for the future. Amy's sister Laura had a daughter, Michelle. Laura was addicted to heroin and their mother took custody of Michelle. Amy feels that Michelle was a big turning point in her life and described her as a 'star'. She reflected on her life before and recognised that she had been on a downward spiral, propelled by a feeling that she had nothing to lose. Now she stated, 'I can't lose my golden star. I would walk over hot coal for her, she is my pride and joy.' Amy wanted to have a different life and to be a role model for Michelle.

By the first interview Amy had been working with *Includem* for more than five years and almost two years with transitional support. She was living in homeless accommodation, admitted to still taking drugs and had limited family contact as she awaited going to court for her final charge. Her boyfriend had been out of prison for a few months and was keen to stop offending. The next interview, two months later did not happen because of the chaos in Amy's life and her worker admitted to 'losing sleep' as a result.

Over the next six months Amy turned her life around completely. A year on from the first interview, she was now in her own tenancy with her sister and no longer taking drugs. She had found it hard to do this but said that when she had been tempted she

would think of Michelle and it would help her to be strong. She was paying her bills, being 'responsible' and felt that she was being an adult. A major change for Amy was that she now felt respected by her mum and loved in a way that she had not before. She was proud of the help that she had given her sister and felt that without this her sister may have died. Amy had a clear sense of her place now within her family and despite only achieving recognition recently, she was already dissatisfied and wanted more from life, and was putting plans in action to go to college to change her situation. She sought recognition from wider society and was extremely disappointed about the result of the referendum. She could not understand why people in Scotland had voted so that they did not have control of their own affairs. Through the support of others, Amy believed in herself and was striking out on her own. She was treading water, as the connections she was making beyond her situation were still unsure and without their support she would not be able to make it. Her case highlights the importance of interdependence for potential to be truly realised.

Discussion

Amy shows that making steps to change your situation and 'better yourself' is through the help of others. Like Emma, Amy had worked hard to prove herself and now had the respect she had desired from her mother and this reaffirmed her positive identity. The inspiration to change had been when Michelle had been born and she felt that she finally had someone and something to lose. Her story re-emphasises Kevin's situation that without hope, but also reasons for hope, life can seem meaningless and risks taken no longer are seen as risks. Amy raises questions about the idea of turning points and the opportunity that they create in a re-reflection of who these young people want to be but also then what they can actually become. Amy wanted to be a good auntie and role model and this was achievable. Her goals were realistic and now they had been achieved she was setting her sights even higher. Her next steps would really rely on the support from others and as yet it was unclear if this would happen. Treading water is a necessary step to no longer being stuck, but stability towards achieving success and towards 'sailing' is reliant on others.

SAILING

Hamish

Hamish was bubbly, fun and his story flowed despite the anguish revealed. He wore fashionable clothes and said that his favourite thing in the world was monochrome. Ironically, this fitted well with his personality, as he seemed to see the light in everything, breaking up the dark. There is much said about the interviews being a way of clarifying the past for the interviewee (Bourdieu, 1999), but for Hamish in particular, there was a feeling that he had already made sense of an awful lot and simply recalled this logic to the listener. He and Elaine had been orphans from a young age. Hamish had lived away from his brother and sister with his aunt until he was sixteen when he was asked to leave, because she no longer received money to take care of him. He was placed in a B and B by social work services, a time he does not care to recall. He met older people and began to drink and take drugs almost every day. Elaine was very worried about him during this time and when they could afford to, they called each other and spoke on the phone. Hamish described those years as 'crazy'. He also felt comfortable with the friends he made, and like Emma when she was in care, he felt that they all understood one another and came from similar backgrounds and he didn't have to explain himself. He said:

Everyone that I had met that was in that genre had all had a relatively bad life as well eh? So it is quite nice to meet other people who are more like me. Because most of the people I meet have a relatively good life and upbringing, and stuff like that. It is just weird sometimes like people talking like 'what are your mum and dad like?' and you have to say 'I don't have parents'.

Hamish moved in with a friend, whom it transpired had mental health problems and although he mentioned animal cruelty he wouldn't discuss it further. He moved out to stay with another friend before eventually moving in with his brother Simon. Elaine and Ron then moved in also and *Includem* became involved. It was at this time that Hamish was finally able to get his life in order. Hamish said that Elaine was the most important person in his life and she had helped him 'come out' to his friends and family when he was fifteen years old. He said 'None of my friends were expecting it

though. They all thought that I was really butch. Apparently cause I liked the Xbox and only heavy metal at the time, and em, always hung around with the butch of butch guys and stuff like that.’ Hamish felt that being gay made him question a lot and ask himself what he wanted from life as he was aware from a young age that he didn’t fit ‘the norm.’ He also felt that growing up in a rural area made it hard and wanted to move to a city where he felt there would be more acceptance.

Hamish was open about wanting to escape from normal life at times. He did this by playing fantasy games on the Xbox where he said he purposely chose games with pretty colours that ‘take you away from everything.’ He also dressed up in costumes and took part in role-play ‘adventures’ with his friends. Hamish tried hard to focus on the positive, and even the high rise flat he lived in which he knew other people felt was the worst in the area, he instead spoke about the view to be had from being up so high up. His optimism was undoubtedly one of his strengths and he acknowledged that he worked hard to remain this way, and it was not always easy.

Hamish did not view himself as an adult and viewed adults generally in a negative way. He said:

I have met a lot of adults who have lost their spirit in general and I don’t like the idea of that. I think that as an adult you should be open to learn and be happy in general. I don’t think it is necessarily a negative thing, but I have noticed in my life that all the positive adults have all been adults who basically have nothing. They have always been like the people who just scrounge like what they can sort of thing, they are the most positive people I have met in my life. All the rich adults aren’t like that; they have always been lost in a way. I have noticed that the people who have worked all their life but not in something that they wanted to, but the poorer ones have worked and failed but then still happy for some reason.

Like Scott and Paul, he actively discouraged the label of adult and said ‘I don’t like the word adult, I am just a person.’ Hamish felt that expectations of roles could be damaging and he linked this back to when he had been younger and people kept asking him if he had a girlfriend. Being gay for Hamish meant having to step outside the group and gain perspective. It also led him to refute labels and rather feel as though he could and had many identities.

A year on from the original interview, he was doing exceptionally well and could be described as ‘sailing.’ He was going to college and had changed his course from business management to acting. He was trying to achieve his dream rather than trying to do something ‘sensible.’ He was enjoying meeting new people and confident about his future. Hamish felt that getting the maintenance allowance was one of the main reasons why he had pursued college and raises questions about the impact of the removal of this allowance. Although he had regained contact with the service and was receiving support again, he had not really felt that he needed it but rather this came about through Elaine and Ron. He shows how pragmatism can mean availing of all support when it is offered. His case also showed that two young people coming from similar hard backgrounds can have different outcomes, and this is because opportunities given and then taken can ultimately change lives.

Scott

Scott was introduced by his worker and looked small, compact and boyish. Despite wearing a tracksuit he still managed to look neatly dressed and his formal polite manner added to an overall initial impression of calmness, almost to the point of being stiff. He spoke in a quiet, measured and considered tone that denoted intelligence and strength. I was immediately struck at how collected he was. This was someone who had learned to hold things together.

His story unfolded quickly and the sadness of it all threatened to consume us both as we took heavy gulps to keep the tears at bay. I asked him a number of times if he wanted a break but he shook his head and continued. At one point his demeanour cracked, revealing the extent to which his suffering was truly felt, a glimpse into the wounds that had not healed, as his tears fell I heard him tell me he would be ‘alright’. I wondered in quiet respect how many times he had to tell himself the same thing. His life has been filled with pain and loss. I said at one point in the interview ‘I am so sorry for you that you have had so many’, and before I finished he filled in and added ‘traumatic experiences.’ This summed it up.

His father and mother had both been alcoholics. His other brothers and sisters had already moved out by the time he was six. His father died when he was only thirteen because of his drinking and Scott became withdrawn and stopped going to school, he said later that at the time he didn't see any point to life. His mother worked alongside social workers and services to get herself sober and she and Scott became very close. She sheltered him, allowed him to stay off from school and remain for most of his day in his sanctuary, his bedroom, playing computer games. At the age of sixteen Scott's mum died suddenly, he had lost his world but this also was the reason for his motivation to do well in life. He said 'I didn't have her there to protect me and realised that I had to do it myself.' He moved in with his older sister and it was at this stage that he came in contact with *Includem's* core service as he tried to re-engage with education.

At the first interview he had been with *Includem* for over five years and received support from the transitional support service for more than a year. His was happy to move on. Scott had met *Includem* and an educational provider at the stage in his life that he wanted to make a change. He loved computers and this passion meant that meeting the 'right people' in this area lead to his talent being discovered and nurtured. Over the next year he completed his HNC in college and was just about to start an apprenticeship. At the beginning of the research Scott's social life revolved around gaming and he would play eight to nine hours a day. However, a few months before the final interview his sister had been approached by a neighbour for Scott to help him work in the local community clearing wasteland and making them into allotments and areas of recreation. Scott really enjoyed the work and got an enormous sense of pride because he was helping the community. He proudly showed me photos of 'before' and 'after' their work. It was clear that it was not just the physical difference that he enjoyed seeing but felt that his work made a difference to others. Scott built self-belief both through his life in college and also in his hobbies with others. Although he felt that education had been key to him getting on in life, he was also adamant that it was through the support and stability of his sister that he was able to avail of opportunities.

Scott had become very interested in the referendum and even said that he had not expected to be so. He was extremely disappointed by the result and said 'I think that

really what I wanted and what I had hoped is to dream and have a better future.’ However, unlike the other young people who had voted and been disappointed, he refused to simply accept this decision and instead talked about keeping the momentum towards independence going. He had joined the Scottish Nationalist Party (SNP) and felt that the large number of people who had also joined reaffirmed his hope that change would happen. He shows that hope is often what can prompt action and therefore, although it can be a source of pain, it is also something that is needed for change to be initiated or attempted.

Although in the first interviews Scott said that he had a partner and they kept in touch online through gaming, it was only in the final interview that he disclosed that this was a man. He said that they saw each other in person every few months and were happy together. He did not want to talk about the relationship any further and said it was ‘his business.’ As both Hamish and Scott are both gay, it would seem that they have had to both really think about the people they want to be and to recognise that they are different to most other men that they would have met. Scott’s situation of having to question and be self-aware is even more than Hamish, as in the final interview he also revealed that he had also been diagnosed with having Asperger’s, something only his sister and I now know. He said that getting this diagnosis was reassuring as it confirmed all he felt he had known about himself for a long time. Essentially, both Hamish and Scott, in being different, have had to step outside of the group and understand who they are and they want to be. They have had to gain a perspective that may be more difficult to harness for those who are not challenged in this way. Possibly, being self-aware is the first stage to understanding where change is needed, and recognising that you are an ‘outsider’ makes becoming an insider possible.

Scott felt the same as Hamish and refused to say that he was an ‘adult.’ He remarked ‘I don’t see myself as an adult, I just see me as Scott.’ Interestingly, he also added, ‘I don’t think that being an adult is what it used to be, there is no such thing as stability.’ For him, being an adult was about stability and having experienced a lot already in life and feeling that this was out of reach, it was something that he had no desire to ever be called. It was a label, and for him meaningless.

Scott was sailing in life, both professionally and personally, and acutely aware of the direction he wanted to take. He felt strongly that his family were the only certainty in his life and his reliance and awareness of their support was one of his strengths. As well as having this stability and belonging, Scott was building his own social capital by connecting with people who were helping him to access opportunities to make the hoped for future become more tangible. Scott's story is about a turning point that is not expected (MacDonald, 2006), that is in this case the death of his mother, but also that through the support of others goals that are realised and then become realisable.

Discussion

Both Hamish and Scott are incredibly aware of their reliance on others and also the support that they offer in turn too. Their intense consciousness of the importance of interdependence was rare and I would argue one of the main reasons for their success. Both were going to college and had moved beyond their micro-environment. Through the support of meso-brokers, in both cases from their *Includem* worker and an education provider, they both realised that they could progress and make something of themselves. They had recognition from those closest to them and were beginning to also gain recognition from wider community. Scott's hope in politics showed an awareness of his recognition of his place within society and he felt that his voice could be heard alongside other voices to prompt change. Both refuted the label of 'adult' and interestingly this points towards a higher level of pragmatism. They did not seek to take up this role, as it meant nothing to them. Their value in life is gained from seeing their role alongside others rather than attaching importance to their existence alone. Most revealing is that Scott felt that this need for stability was destined to fail. It was almost as though they accepted their stance as the precariat, embracing the liquidity but also the freedom that it may also offer. They didn't have to be anything, they could simply be themselves and accepting this was enough.

CONCLUSION – LIMITLESS LIMINALITY

There are some striking commonalities in this group. Fathers were generally absent, either through bereavement or they had simply not been a part of their lives. Dan was the only person who had contact with his father and did not feel loved by him. The

lack of love within this group was heart-breaking and their childhoods have been characterised as trying to simply look after themselves and survive, with most parents or parent having battled or continuing to battle some form of addiction. All had viewed their childhood as 'hard' and in Amy's case she described it as 'heavy hard.' Some had suffered abuse and most had experienced bereavement as a result of those very close to them passing away. I was shocked at the number of times many had moved when they were younger, and for some this transience persisted, with 'home' seeming a distant concept. It also became apparent that the relationships with brothers and sisters was especially important and possibly the only form of certainty and source of love. For Brian, Paul and Kim who had restricted or no contact with their siblings this had become a particular source of anger, angst and frustration. These cases highlight the reliance on services and the deeply negative effect when they do not help.

In understanding the background of the young people, the appropriateness of the concept of liminality to describe this stage in their lives came to be questioned. Liminality defines an unclear position between two stable points. However, this group do not appear to have had a carefree and stable childhood, but instead, have had one foot in childhood and one in adulthood almost all of their lives. Moreover, as already discussed the idea of adulthood denoting stability, the destination beyond the period of liminality is also questionable. The 'precariat' as described by Standing (2011) is a population of young people who are not able to get into secure employment. Although a group on the 'outer edges' are referred to, it could be argued that this analysis under-theorises or overlooks those who are profoundly disadvantaged whose precariousness has become an everyday way of life. As a result, it is proposed that this particular population could be more accurately and helpfully viewed as having lived and living in a state of potentially limitless liminality. As discussed, some have dealt with this better than others, but ultimately moving to a 'stable' position is not something that most see as even possible. Therefore, their issues, needs and possible solutions are quite different. Standing (2011) presents the 'precariat' as being potentially dangerousness, but what was encountered for most of this group was the beginning of deep hopelessness. They presented no threat to society and it was far more likely that they would continue to simply remain unnoticed. For some, the hope of stability and continued disappointment in being able to achieve had become a

source of pain. Those who were most successful abandoned the idea of stability, refuted the label of adulthood and reconfigured the idea of success to simply be about accepting their position or who they were and making the best of it. They were the pragmatists and the ultimate pragmatists. The former made no attempt towards having recognition or their stake in society, the latter understood their limitations, accepted but still hoped.

CHAPTER 8: FINDINGS PART III: DESISTANCE – SINK OR SAIL?

*Like a gale of wind
On a storm-swept sea
Gathering its victims
Into its paw
Swiftly the undercurrent
takes its hold
and surrounds its victim
Down more and more.
'Life's Circumstances'
Excerpt from Poem by 'Stanley' in *The Jack-Roller**

*Right, like a well-done sum.
A clean slate, with your own face on.
Excerpt from poem, *You're* by Sylvia Path*

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the journey of desistance attempted and described by each of the five young people who had a history of recorded offending will be explored. The use of 'sink' or 'sail' again provides a framework to define success because it emphasises interdependence. Kevin was found to be sinking by the end of the research having reoffended and facing his most serious charge to date. The other four achieved primary or act desistance, that is they had stopped offending, but Dan, Brian and Mark felt stuck and are defined as being 'marooned on the island.' The analysis of the accounts has been informed by the wider literature outlined in Chapter four and particularly the work of Bottoms (2013), Cooley (1956), Weaver (2013, 2015) and May (2011b; 2011c).

Bottoms (2013) defines three different forms of compliance relevant to the cessation of offending by young offenders, namely, instrumental, normative and situational compliance. Instrumental compliance is when a rational calculation is made and a deterrent threat (or a compliance incentive) prevents action, normative when the individual remembers the moral reasons for not offending and overcomes the internal struggle by thinking of these. Lastly, situational compliance is where the person

simply removes himself from temptation. As well as ‘self-binding’, Bottoms (2013) also uses the terms ‘diachronic self-control’ interchangeably to describe the individual stopping offending, and this is operationalised by using one or possibly all forms of compliance outlined. This study provides a crucial insight into the impact of excessive diachronic control and self-binding, that Bottoms (2013) argues can, and is shown here, to lead to a restricted and impoverished existence. Importantly, in earlier work, Bottoms (2001) discussion of community penalties in fostering compliance argues that normative compliance is when there is a moral obligation, commitment or attachment given by the individual to fulfilling the order. This particular form of compliance is also said to have legitimacy because the individual accepts and reflects that what is being asked of them is fair and right. This additional assessment is particularly useful for discussions of what healthy desistance may look like and in creating constructive ways forward.

The work of Cooley (1956) and Weaver (2013, 2015) is used to understand the construction of identity and the reliance on relationships with others in the desistance processes. Cooley presents the idea of the ‘looking glass self’, that the image we create of ourselves, who we are and our identity as being based on three elements, namely, how we think others perceive us, how we imagine they judge us on the basis of this and the resultant self-feelings, for example of pride or shame. May (2011b; 2011c) argues that as humans we strive for positive judgement. Cooley (1956) posits that love and care are necessary for a positive self-image as those who love us view us sympathetically and the ‘looking glass self’ reflected back is then internalised and in turn we come to view ourselves positively. I will draw further on the work of Cooley (1956) to argue that love and care are essential to the creation of a whole positive identity and fully aspirational self. Those who love and care for us see us and reflect back the image they have of us in the most sympathetic light. This positive reflection doesn’t have to be generated by those who are perceived as being ‘better’ than the individual by the individual, they can even be those who are also seeking redemption or in the process of desistance. Weaver (2013, 2015) stresses the importance of relational reflexivity in the process of desistance towards the creation of a new identity. The study further reveals that those who were once co-offenders can also become sources of support and role models. However, as will be shown, when there is a lack of love and care in an individual’s life, a less sympathetic ‘looking glass self’ is

reflected back. For those who have a history of offending, their spoiled identity can often dominate their image so that the reflection bounced back to them is in the harshest of light, showing up and emphasising their imperfections.

The analysis has also been informed by the work of May (2011b) and definition of 'belonging.' May (2011b: 3) defines belonging as 'the process of creating a sense of identification with, or connection to, culture, people, places and material objects', or a 'feeling at ease with one's self and one's social, cultural, relational and material contexts.' It is this latter part of the definition that I am particularly interested in. It is different to social capital or even bonding capital because it is not about achievement or progression, but rather simply being oneself. I argue that a sense of self-worth and self-acceptance is essential to building any form of capital, it is the internalisation of the message 'I matter' (Cotterell, 2007: 246).

This chapter is structured so that the first short section will present the reasons given for onset and maintenance of offending and by doing so it will become clear that a sense of belonging is strived for throughout these young people's lives (May, 2011b). This study makes a significant contribution to revealing the loneliness experienced by young people who are attempting to desist and the implications of this. The evidence of the isolation reported here also raises questions about whether this is symptomatic of a wider isolation being experienced by young people in today's society (Princes Trust, 2015). The online poll of 2,265 16-25 year olds revealed that 35% of those unemployed were too anxious to leave the house, 46% avoided meeting new people and a third admitted to 'falling apart' emotionally on a regular basis (Princes Trust, 2015). As there are only five cases and they are all different, an examination of each within the separate groupings is provided. In analysing the process of desistance, the trigger points, turning points, influence of others, different facets of desistance (that is primary, act and tertiary desistance) and the challenges faced are considered. This research develops the different facets to also look at desistance within different spheres; that is, within oneself, in relation to others and in the world outside. The chapter concludes by proposing a different way of defining 'success', that is beyond desistance and in doing so also moves beyond criminology.

ONSET AND MAINTENANCE – ACHIEVING BELONGING

Mark, Dan, Amy and Kevin had all joined gangs before they began offending. Brian, unlike the others, began offending as a by-product of his relationship with his first serious girlfriend and her family, where they took him in when he felt and was most alone after leaving the army and was unable to return to his foster parents. All five had escalated in their offending over time from less serious activities such as ‘hanging about drinking’ on the street to more serious offences such as assault. All described coming from broken families and having a lack of love and care in their lives. Their families and schools had discarded them and the gang was an emotional buffer to these messages of rejection. These findings reflect those in Weaver’s (2013, 2015) study of six men now in their 40s and 50s who were an offending peer-group in their teens and 20s. As Weaver (2015: 70) reflects, the ‘sense of belonging, recognition and solidarity they found in the group operated as an enclave of security and protection and as a point of resistance.’ The gang then offers something and someone when really there was little else.

All five described offending as something that just happened (Matza, 1964). It was a by-product of the friendship and belonging they got from being a part of a group as well as a way of spending time, as emphasised in other research (McAlister, 2008). This was about being with friends. No one described being a leader but all had felt respected, liked and accepted. Mark, Kevin and Amy openly discussed how they had also been able to talk about their family situation to their friends and no one else. As Amy described:

One of my brothers’ pal, X, we still speak to him and that, my brothers still hang about with him. His mother put him in and out of care for the least little thing he done, it was like, we all had a different bring up, bringing up, none of us had a good neighbourhood or good family hood, we all had a family problem. So like when one person was telling everyone else about theirs, you would be like ‘that’s right’. It brought the whole of us together basically, because all the bairns used to hang around and jump about...none of us had a good bring up, so we were all mostly into trouble, that is what we thought life was about: to live it to the max and to hell with that. It was not the good thing so.

Her last point about living life ‘to the max’ echoes a case study of a woman called Sandra, presented by Farrall (2005: 381), who was said to live for the moment or had a ‘life as a party’ mentality. Farrall (2005) argues that this is about an inability to envision a future self, a situation making care of the current self unlikely (Farrall, 2005). Drawing upon these accounts, it could be said that these young people drifted into offending, and were also nudged towards other young people like them, equally not accepted anywhere and emotionally impoverished. The strain felt was not for material goods but rather for the care and companionship of others. This research is focused on desistance and therefore the latter end of this journey and not on this early point. Although this is based on only five interviews and it was beyond the scope of this study to investigate further, maybe helping parents who have substance misuse issues deal with underlying problems to truly address addiction may be where resources could be more usefully focused.

May (2011: 3) states that ‘we come to understand who we are partly on the basis of where and with whom we belong, which is why belonging is of fundamental importance to the self.’ This acceptance of oneself could even be regarded as a private form of ontological security. Giddens (1991: 3) defines ‘trust’ and particularly that between the infant and care giver as providing an ‘inoculation’ or ‘protective cocoon’, which then stands guard over the self in its dealing with everyday reality. However, all of these young people had limited care in their childhoods and are possibly then largely without this, if it exists at all. They are vulnerable and in searching for some form of attention described being drawn to other young people like them, the lost girls and boys in these deprived areas, lost together, but at least together.

Halsey and Deegan’s (2015) research on fourteen young men in the process of desistance suggests that ‘there is a sense in which all the young men in our study are seeking, at one level or another, to recover lost childhoods.’ Undoubtedly, this resonates with those interviewed here. Building on the work of Turner (1964), this group have had to become responsible from a young age, marking them different to other young people, and thus have entered from the separation into the liminal phase very early. This time of offending, as well as being fun, was also one where they

moved beyond the liminal stage to achieve a version of aggregation because they had achieved a role, purpose and identity. Weaver (2015: 85) observes that ‘belonging to a group provides a relational web within and through identities can be acquired, tested and performed.’ In each of the cases, Kevin, Dan, Mark and Brian felt that when they had been in the gang they proved that they could stand up for themselves and asserted their masculinity. Amy had also shown loyalty by getting into fights and standing up for others. The gangs had become like family when their own families had not been available to them. They provided loyalty (Warr, 2002), but also emotional support and the opportunity to share concerns, get advice, be vulnerable and achieve a sense of belonging. This emphasis on friendship is similar to past research with young women involved in offending (Batchelor, 2005), pointing towards a more nuanced understanding of group offending for both genders.

We could be really close and if I had any problems I would say it to my pals...it is not as if they are bad boys, because they aren't.
(Kevin)

Brian: I have realised that you have got to have stable friends round and about you. Obviously friends that I can trust on and rely on to go if anything like worse came to worse and anyone did start fighting with me that someone would have my back, or if I could go out and leave a big bundle of money in my living room they are not going to go ah ha, ken what I mean.

Interviewer: Have you kept up connections with people that maybe aren't stable yet?

Brian: Well I would say one of them. One of my friends, I was in jail with him, he is still bad with his crime and all this kind of stuff...He was in foster care as well. I was in with him for a year or so. I still knew the fact of what he was going through as well. He knew what I went through and I knew what he had went through. So we would get at each other a lot better than if I was speaking to someone else.

Mark: I felt like I was, because I wasn't speaking to my family members and they didn't bother with me so I kept myself to myself.

Interviewer: Do you think that is maybe one of the reasons why your friends were so important; they were providing you with company and support?

Mark: Aye, I ended up taking away to them and that...I still keep in touch with some of them and that. They have obviously, even though we don't hang out, they have said that if I never had anywhere to stay or that I could stay with them.

Interviewer: That is lovely. I suppose thinking about it, you went through a tough time and they were probably important in your life at that time.

Mark: Ah ha.

Interviewer: I think we have a problem in that we just see a gang, and maybe a lot of these young people there is more than that, it is friendship.

Mark: Sometimes though you do get gangs that you have people who turn on each other, that are so weird, how there are those who turn on you, pals who have been pals for so many years, things like that. Aye, but some of them you get obviously true pals and that, and obviously close, it could be childhood friends, cousins, people you grew up with.

There is substantial research on the impact of leisure poverty, that is of crime being a response to having nothing to do and way of achieving, of easing the strain felt as a result of the social exclusion and social injustice faced through poverty (Corr, 2014a, Corr 2014b, MacDonald and Shildrick, 2007). Such research is supported here, however, I would suggest that defining this as 'leisure poverty' minimises what is actually going on. Leisure time is a definition used for time outside of work or purposeful activity and these young people were aware that they did not have this. They weren't having leisure time but instead, drawing on the work of Goffman (1961), rather were 'killing time'. Goffman (1961: 67) describes how within a total institution there is a sense of 'dead and heavy-hanging time' and as a result there is a premium placed on what are termed 'removal activities'. These are 'voluntary unserious pursuits which are sufficiently engrossing and exciting to lift the person out of himself, making him oblivious for the time being to the actual situation' (ibid). For the gang, school and what should have been 'home' had become the places to flee from, and they did this by taking drugs, getting into fights and hanging about on the streets. Goffman further states that 'if the ordinary activities in total institutions can be said to torture time, these activities mercifully kill it' (ibid). They 'help the individual withstand the psychological stress' (ibid: 68). Amy said that this part of her life had come to be about getting 'wasted', wasting time. She spoke openly about using drugs to escape from her 'heavy hard' existence of abuse (Covington, 1985). She stated:

When you take drugs you are in a different world, you don't ken what the real world is like, like this now. Like when I am wasted I say 'you are in the real world, I am in cuckoo land.

I would argue that redefining leisure poverty to be about young people killing time highlights the depth and breadth of exclusion they face and feel. This assessment stands in sharp contrast to evidence about other young people not living in poverty, where time is used as a period of discovery and hope (Arnett, 2006). It may be controversial, but poverty experienced in this way as one of constricted space bears a striking similarity to the 'total institution' (Goffman, 1991: 17). Furthermore, in the same way as an asylum, those 'in there' are often committed to being so and have limited choice in getting out (Goffman, 1991). The similarity ends here though, as in a total institution there is a routine, or 'rational plan' (ibid: 17), and so it could even be argued controversially that those living in poverty fare off worse as they are without such direction. For young people trapped in liminality, poverty is an indeterminate sentence.

Four said that they had committed offences only when with others. Kevin was the only person who also said that he had started offending also on his own and admitted to always having 'that wee urge to do it myself and not tell anyone'. He viewed himself as a 'lone wolf' as already discussed. His narrative may indicate that he has the capacity to become a persistent offender (Moffitt, 1993), but this is impossible to predict.

In what could be described as the maintenance phase of offending, Mark was the only person to describe this as having become boring and mundane (Barry, 2006). The main reason for this was because he preferred to be with his girlfriend and felt that hanging around the same streets had become predictable. Mark also revealed that in the latter stages he had seen some of his friends turn on one another and do 'terrible things' to each other. This possibly indicates that actually he had been repulsed or let down by what the gang had become, and the narrative of 'being bored' was much easier to discuss than the distress felt at the lack of unity and abuse carried out. For the other four, this maintenance phase consolidated their reputation and continued to be an enjoyable time. Brian spoke about how offending had become a way for him to release his anger and reaffirm the reputation that he could 'handle himself.' He gained respect for being violent. His idea of masculinity was 'toxic' as it was about the domination of others, not backing down and the need for respect to be shown (Kupers, 2005). Amy reflected that her time getting 'wasted' with friends had been

fun and actually very hard to break away from. Her friends had become her family, the people who she felt belonging with. Although she recognised that they offended and were a negative influence, she had been grateful for their company. Dan, and to a greater extent Kevin, missed offending and saw their time in the gang as one of excitement, status and acceptance.

In the first interview, as discussed in Chapter seven, Kevin had taken up boxing as a way of managing his anger. The following exchange shows that even though this was probably when he had been most 'stable' he still craved the excitement or buzz that he got from committing crime.

But I still miss going out and getting into trouble...I miss the adrenaline, because you don't know if you are going to get caught, or if you are not going to get caught. I don't know, that adrenaline.

Interviewer: Do you find with the boxing you get adrenaline in a different way?

Kevin: Aye, it is a different sort of adrenaline, it is adrenaline that you can sweat out of you. But when you are going out and getting into trouble, you don't know. It is weird, it is a weird adrenaline...you don't know if you are going to be caught so you are always on edge.

B: So you miss that. What helps you then to not do it?

K: I don't know. It is just, I don't really think about it as much, I just try to think about other things. It takes my mind off it.

This reflection of Dan and Kevin's time in the gang being exciting was heightened as it stood in stark contrast to what they came to experience as a result of desistance. These findings, other than Mark's testimony, are largely different to the research on the maintenance phase carried out by Barry (2006). I propose that the reason for this is that Barry's research was mostly based on individuals who had a heroin addiction, whereby their lives revolved around this drug and had become predictable. In contrast, for the four here who still found it exciting, violence and the street culture they lived in remained unpredictable. Furthermore, the belonging they had secured through offending was still in the process of being replaced, if at all. For Kevin, Dan, Amy and Brian, offending had actually become a significant way of generating status, belonging, reinforcing friendships and so their move away from this was a very real sacrifice.

The next section explores the process of desistance for each individual and shows how personal and relational the journey was. Each case is presented and analysed in depth, followed by an in-depth discussion of the findings, to attempt to draw out any commonalities and conclusions.

SINKING

Kevin – Fragile desistance

A deeper analysis of Kevin's case would suggest that his reasons for moving away from offending were all push factors rather than pull, and the 'hooks for change', as defined by Giordano et al. (2002), could rather be more aptly described as 'shaky pegs' (Schinkel, 2015). He said that he had decided to move away from gangs because of the police and the criminal justice system, or the 'hassle factor' (Barry, 2006). His brother had been in prison, stabbed three times and abused whilst in custody and Kevin did not want to go through the same. He came to *Includem* as a diversion from prosecution and so stopping offending was really instigated as a response to the perceived need for compliance, rather than him actively wanting to change. The decision to embark on desistance was not based on the strengthening of social relationships (Weaver, 2015), or what I term strong 'triggers' (Bottoms and Shapland, 2011), but rather based on those that were 'weak.' This is further emphasised in the final interview, when Kevin revealed that he was waiting for or searching for a turning point in his life, and felt that having a girlfriend and a child would offer this incentive to change. He wanted to be in a relationship and it was impossible not to think that this was really about him searching for someone who cared about him. His analysis of turning points having to be something 'big' brings to light the reality that the emphasis on this may be problematic. The idea that a turning point is expected to grab your attention and create a 'fateful moment' (Giddens, 1991: 113), I contend, relegates the 'normal' and more common points of appreciation or reflexivity in life redundant.

Kevin had little or no support from others as already discussed, and his social networks, already small in the beginning of the research, were even more diminished by the end. He had knifed off from his friends but not from his past and felt very much alone. In the first interview, in terms of identity, he had moved from having a place in his gang and being respected by his friends to being a 'nobody.' He had then taken up boxing as a way of helping to release the anger he held inside. The source of this anger was never disclosed, but after winning a few fights he saw himself as becoming a success. His family confirmed his 'new' identity of being a successful athlete, boxer and legitimate 'hard man'. These were not just credible witnesses (Weaver, 2015), but also the audience he really craved approval from. Adopting Cooley's analytical framework, Kevin had begun during this time to view himself favourably and this was supported by the relational reflexivity from those he cared about (Weaver, 2013).

The unravelling of this period of stability happened quickly though, or as Kevin recalled, 'it went to shit within a matter of minutes.' Over the months after leaving *Includem*, he continued to fail and was frustrated that he could not get a job. He stopped going to the gym, was unable to get a girlfriend and tormented about whether or not he was a father. He had mounting financial pressures and even missed meals to save money. He began to exercise excessive diachronic self-control or self-binding by staying in all day playing computer games, something in the past he said he never would have done. He didn't spend time with any friends because they took drugs and were getting in trouble, something he wanted to avoid. He stopped meeting with his only 'real' friend because when they were together they were hassled by the police, as in the past they had tried to steal a police car. Kevin had been proud of being an 'outdoors' person and his self-confinement to the house, (a form of situational compliance), almost seemed like a bout of depression. By the end of the research he felt that his family and the police thought of him again as 'a fanny', that is someone who was stupid and not worthy of any respect.

Bradford et al. (2014) also adopt the work of Cooley to argue that the police act as mirrors, and that when they treat those they encounter with dignity and respect and allow them a voice this legitimizes the structures of authority. On the other hand, the authors argue that when this is not the case the opposite effect happens and those

treated with disrespect turn to others who can provide feelings of inclusion and self-worth, or results in a sense of anomie or drift and a loosening of normative constraints on behaviour. I would also add, that another outcome of the police acting with a lack of respect is that it simply adds to the individual's diminishing self-worth and internalisation of being no good. Kevin's fragile pro-social identity was completely shattered and replaced after he had offended. This offending self was, he felt, a gross misrepresentation of who he actually was. At the final interview he was facing a charge of attempted murder and felt that he was viewed as a monster. He said:

There was a woman there and I told her to take her and the wean into the house and she said 'no' and I opened the door and told her to get in, so she went in and that is one of the things, I wouldn't fight in front of women or weans. But, the female who was there gave a statement against me saying that I looked like a blood bath and they have dragged the wean into it and all. So they are basically brandin' me the candy man for fighting in front of weans.

The impact of those around Kevin in helping him to reconstruct and reaffirm his new identity as a boxer after stopping offending, but then also their impact in destroying and replacing this with his most tarnished identity to date is clear. For Kevin, love and care were not obvious in his life and the 'looking glass self' of a spoiled identity reflected back was in the harshest light, showing up all his imperfections (Cooley, 1956). It is also evident that Kevin actually felt powerless to this idea of him being branded like 'the candy man'. Even though he didn't agree with the image reflected back, it was hard to override it. Identity is not fixed. As stated by Giddens (1991:52), it 'is something that has to be routinely created and sustained in the reflexive activities of the individual.' It is not certain and requires constant affirmation and there is an 'ongoing project of self' (Farrall, 2005: 369). I would add in agreement with Weaver (2015) that it has to be acted out, affirmed and reaffirmed by those who are credible witnesses. As stated by Elliot (2005: 124) 'identity is not to be found inside a person (like a kernel within a nut shell) but rather it is relational and inheres in the interactions a person has with others.' In the same way, belonging requires 'mutual 'seeing and hearing' (Silverstone, 2002: 766). In this case, Kevin felt misrecognised, misjudged and unheard.

Kevin was very clear that he accepted blame for his offence and did not neutralise his behaviour. He also felt that he exercised agency saying that everything had got on top of him and he had been angry, wanted a fight that night and got it. His uncle had called him to say that they were in a fight and he was to come along and help. Kevin said that he decided that this was his chance. Whereas before his offending had ‘just happened’, the process of desistance seemed to have invoked active agency and so when he offended now it involved him making a decision rather than drifting into it. In this way, exercising agency isn’t always about making the right decisions. Kevin had what could be said to be a condemnation script (Maruna, 2001), as his prognosis of his future was dire, an assessment that appeared to be justified. He seemed to accept his life of poverty and did not complain about it. He missed the excitement of crime because his ‘normal life’ was boring and therefore had chosen to commit the crime rather than being ‘doomed to deviance’ (Maruna, 2001: 74). He was not fatalistic about changing his life but rather more ambivalent. Kevin had no real reasons for not offending and as desistance was proving to be fruitless, it had become a delegitimised process. He consistently spoke about needing to get away and wanted to help other young people but as this had not happened he had become more hopeless. No one seemed to care about Kevin and he in turn didn’t seem to care for anyone either. By the final interview, his life had truly stalled as the charge hung over him and the dominance of prison as a likely option for the future pervaded the interview.

Interviewer: What if this (charge) is dropped and you are in Scotland, where do you see yourself five years from now?

K: I don’t know, probably still in jail.

Kevin had fallen after many hurdles and felt defeated. It seemed as though ‘recovery’ and the ability to bounce back, or ‘resilience’, had been lost (Harrison, 2013). This shows that the impact of a specific fall can be seriously damaging, even to those who are strongest. In Kevin’s case, his strength, resilience or possibly inappropriate and unrealistic self-reliance may have also been one of the reasons that prevented him from seeking help at an earlier point before it became a crisis (Halsey and Deegan, 2015). Over the year of fieldwork, Kevin had for a short time achieved act desistance and to a certain extent secondary desistance for a time when he was a boxer, but overall a secure pro-social identity eluded him. He felt that moving away from gangs

had been a big achievement, but this is where his success ended. He was searching for a turning point, meaning and purpose to his life and this rested on his hope of being a father. By the end of the research Kevin had no hope and felt that he had nothing to lose and nothing to learn.

Interviewer: Is there anything you fear losing if you went to prison?

Kevin: Nothing.

Interviewer: Nothing Kevin?

Kevin: Nothing.

Interviewer: Thing is it might be dropped, what will you do then, will you learn anything from this?

Kevin: No.

Interviewer: Really?

Kevin: Well the way that I see it, I will have got away with it the once and I will get away with it again. I'll get away with it another time.

He had had conventional goals of wanting to get a job and settle down, however this did not seem attainable anymore and he was even questioning his reasons for living.

It is getting to the point where I am questioning myself. I could be sitting and doing something and I ask 'Why am I here? What purpose do I have on this earth?' I don't know.

I asked Kevin directly if he felt suicidal at this point and he said that he was not. By the end of the study and through the research he was receiving support again from *Includem*; the only support he had in life. It was clear that without wider connections and bridging capital his chances of doing 'well' were limited. Bourdieu (1990) describes the habitus as being largely unconscious, but Kevin by stating that he wanted to get away had taken account of the structural inequalities he had faced and equally how he was consciously restricted. The reproduction then of structures, or what Weaver and McNeill (2015) define as 'morphostasis', may be consciously carried out, all be it, as is shown, in this case reluctantly. Evans et al (2001: 25) as noted in Chapter one and three describes agency as 'bounded' to the past, present and sense of future possibilities. When those possibilities seem absent there is a conscious acceptance of the inability for agency to mean anything. Agency then in these instances is not only bound but has been rendered redundant. It is without meaning.

ALMOST SINKING

Dan

Dan had achieved primary desistance by stopping offending but struggled to maintain this. Like Kevin, his reasons or triggers for stopping offending were more about the need for compliance and avoidance of punishment than anything else. Dan's attempts towards act desistance or primary desistance also marked the beginning of him exercising agency.

Interviewer: Did you think that things were going on a slippery slope there?

Dan: Aye. I would probably be in the jail now, because the path I was going down was on the path to destruction, and that is when my dad called *Includem* and they came out. It would have been either getting murdered or me murdering someone else.

In the first interviews Dan was being harassed by the 'old' gang members he used to 'hang out' with. His situation was similar to Kevin's as he stressed the need to get away and felt that if he could do this then things would be better. It was interesting though that unlike Kevin, who dreamed of being in the Highlands in the countryside, when I asked Dan where he had wanted to go he named a nearby estate. The idea then of being stuck was just as much in his mind and imagination as well as being physical (Hanley, 2007). The reproduction of the structural inequalities he faced had even pervaded his imagination.

Despite moving to a different area and exercising agency to attempt to change his situation, the harassment followed Dan and continued. He found it hard not to retaliate. His fiancé revealed that she had had to control his behaviour and keep him 'out of bother' by giving him an ultimatum about them staying together. His criminal behaviour was therefore being regulated by both the potential formal consequences and one of the few informal relationships in his life. It was as though he had not really taken control and had limited hooks for change.

Interviewer: And what are the things that help you to stay away from offending?

Dan: Just Chloe that is all.

Dan's opinions on why he had stopped offending also shifted in the interviews, from giving credit to his girlfriend to then saying that it was all down to him alone. This highlights his uncertainty about the triggers or what was helping him to sustain primary desistance. Like Kevin, the narrative generally came back to Dan reasserting the need to get on with things by himself. His girlfriend felt enormous pressure as a result of being the main source of support and this raised questions about the durability of dyadic desistance. Halsey and Deegan (2015b) interviewed the women in the lives of fourteen men in prison and found that they were left to pick up the pieces and deserved support in their own right. The authors argue that moving from a spoiled to a legitimate identity ideally should move beyond the family sphere (Halsey and Deegan, 2015b), but in this study that transition wasn't even achieved at this familial level for most. The research here suggests that credible supporters in the process of desistance within the community, such as girlfriends, do require more help and attention in their own right.

When asked about turning points, Dan surprisingly focused on when he had become a father years before, and as already discussed in the previous chapter, the identity of being a father was craved for, both as a way of fulfilling adulthood and as a destination beyond desistance. Unlike the others in the study, Dan and Chloe did not consider that they could not afford to have a baby and maybe this is because this seemed less of a risk to Dan, as it was known territory to him.

Throughout the study, in a bid to stop offending and to avoid harassment Dan became increasingly more isolated and eventually paranoid about leaving the house. His fears became more entrenched, reaffirming the link between isolation and fear (Gadd and Jefferson, 2007). He no longer drank but smoked weed occasionally and played computer games, killing time. His excessive form of diachronic self-control had led to what Bottoms (2013) describes as an impoverished existence. Bottoms (2013) discusses the idea of a displacement of behaviours for desisters, so for example, drinking in pubs instead of on the street. Dan's social life however had scaled down dramatically so that he had actually stopped associating with anyone or doing anything in the social sphere. He severely limited his movements in social space

rather than altering them and lived more or less within his flat. The changes in the use of space discussed in other desistance research that are associated with finding alternative pro-social activities were not found here (Farrall et al. 2014). Dan described his life as ‘Basically every day, every time and every day, I sit and watch telly, play my X box, or sit wi’ the lassie that I am going out with, and that is about it.’ By the end of the research when I asked him to describe his year, he replied that it had been ‘rough...because I have had to stay in the house constantly and there is nothing to do at all and I just couldn’t be bothered.’ This shows that it was not considered a choice but something he felt he had to do, to keep himself safe and to stay out of trouble.

Dan, like Kevin, was very aware of the structural limitations faced and described his area as a ‘shite hole’. In the first interviews he had been doing ‘fiddly’ work for a short time with a friend doing deliveries and making money by getting cash in hand for this (MacDonald et al. 2001). However, this ended when his friend was sent to prison and it was only in the final interview that the level to which he had failed to recognise his place in society became clear. He revealed that he had only recently started to claim benefits as his girlfriend had encouraged him to do so. He felt that this was progress because he was now living on benefits as opposed to relying on his father. He had been on many short courses under Government schemes and had acquired the misleading notion that he was now qualified for everything and had ‘done it all.’ He did not seem to realise that getting into a ‘proper’ job would require more skills development and investment. Despite discussing the reality of struggling daily he also showed and spoke about his recent tattoo. He also went on sunbeds and had paid for his girlfriend to get her hair dyed professionally. As Winlow and Hall (2013: 108) reflect:

In our own research, we have often witnessed the poor spending money first on symbolic consumer items before turning their attention to the more mundane and vital acts of consumption...that consumer-oriented desire triumphs over need.

Dan's story revealed that his chances of moving on, or to use the typology, leaving the island, had been reduced. His narrative became increasingly one of frustration and his hope of a better life had become a form of 'cruel optimism' (Berlant, 2011).

Dan however saw himself as trying harder than others, he said:

I see myself as more mature than the people who are older than me, I feel like I am the one who is setting the example for people who are older than me. I am the one that wants a house and job and everything, and all the people who are older than me want to stay on the jobcentre and get their house paid for them and be wee idiots all the time.

He had achieved act desistance but had not consolidated an alternative identity and was desperate to become a father, to be 'somebody.' He wanted to gain recognition from his father but felt that this was never going to happen and this really hurt him. No one believed in him except his girlfriend. His goals were modest and he stressed in each interview that he wanted a job.

I just want to get a job and get a life. I don't want to live off the brew and get stoned and getting in trouble with the police and end up in jail. I am trying to dodge all that.

Interviewer: What would you like the future to be for you?

Dan: House, job, motor, girlfriend and family, everything that everyone else wants.

Despite having these aspirations, Dan seemed to have given up and admitted that his girlfriend looked for jobs for him rather than doing it himself.

His immediate goals became focused on being safe and being able to leave his flat without worrying. He said:

I want to have a life that I don't have to watch all the time over my shoulder. I want to be able to walk about freely. Basically, be able to walk to the shop without constantly looking over my back and all that stuff.

Dan did not feel that he had a good quality of life, and the lack of safety he felt within what ought to have been his 'local' community shows that his quest for tertiary desistance (McNeill, 2016), just like his attempts towards secondary desistance,

remained out of reach. He had generally withdrawn from society and did not recognise his place within it, and equally society was not reaching out to him to challenge this. There was what could be considered some slight progress in the final interview, as he said that in the future if anyone came to his house to harass him rather than dealing with it himself he would call the police. As with Kevin, he lacked self-worth, love and care in his life, and as is reflected by Halsey and Deegan (2015: 3) 'care for self, other and future' is vital in desistance.

Weaver (2012) states that desistance is about building social capital, but Dan's confidence to get 'out there' was becoming less and less. Rather than 'progressing', or even stable and stuck, it could be argued that the way in which he was confined physically and emotionally meant that he actually was going backwards. In the final interview I was warned by the *Includem* worker that picking him up in the car outside his flat put us both at risk, and as a result I had to park away from the street and call him to come to the car. What had been termed paranoia now seemed justified. His story highlights how blocked opportunities cause hope to ebb away, and that if hope is retained but remains in the absence of future prospects, it can become hurtful. Putnam (1993) observes that opportunities if not used become reduced, equally though, opportunities that do not exist seem to rarely just come into existence either.

MAROONED ON THE ISLAND

Mark

Mark had stopped offending for a number of reasons. His mother had been given what he thought was an ASBO for his behaviour when he was younger and he was taken into care. He was moved away from the area and for a short time could not see his friends, and this weak trigger temporarily stopped him from offending. Mark exercised agency by then moving away from gangs himself. He said:

I was bored of hanging out on the same street and parameter, hanging out day after day and night after night, just sitting about. There was no enjoyment, if there was a fight or anything like that.

His ‘knifing off’ from most of his past friends was, in his opinion, a major turning point that was reaffirmed when he then met his girlfriend Selena. He reflected ‘I would say that I was always pulling away, or I had pulled away from it when I met Selena, but that made me so that my heart was set on it, not going out and being on the streets again.’ This shows that there may be more than one turning point or this could even be described as the result of a cumulative effect of different events or changes. He felt that he had already made the decision to move away from offending and Selena consolidated this, he now had pull as well as push factors for desisting. Mark also felt accepted by Selena’s family and described how they had rules and structure that was different to his childhood. Both Mark and Brian felt that they had gained a family through their girlfriends and this meant a lot to them. Interestingly, Mark still kept in contact with one or two of those who had been in the same gang and saw them as ‘real’ friends, again showing that being in a gang can lead to substantial long lasting relationships (Weaver, 2015). He explained that in a bid to be safe and to ensure that he continued to stay away from offending, he and his partner had purposely moved away from where he used to live as a form of self-isolation. He also admitted to still smoking cannabis and was trying to reduce this. He was adamant that he would not go back to offending and felt he had grown up. He said ‘the older you get the more realisation you get. You know that you don’t want to be in jail now you have a wean, it keeps you out of it.’

Mark had achieved primary or act desistance by stopping offending. He was also achieving secondary desistance, the internalisation of a new identity beyond offending, by accepting that he was now a better person, could see a better future and was looking forward to becoming a father. His self-awareness of change was supported by the positive relational reflexivity he had in his relationships with his mother, girlfriend and even the police. He described a recent encounter with the police reinforcing this idea of them acting as ‘mirrors’ and establishing legitimacy (Bradford et al. 2014).

Mark: Like it was mad, about 4 or 5 weeks ago, this police pulled me up, and I recognised him and because I had hit him in the head with an egg and he jailed me for it, and we were sitting laughing about it. We were actually laughing about it, it was so weird.

Interviewer: What did he say to you?

Mark: Nothing. He just asked me was I keeping myself clean and I said 'Aye.' So he took my name and ran it through the system and there were no pending, no warrants, nothing. He was like 'you are totally clean.' He said that he always hated me for the things I did. I started laughing, and he said that he would never forget it, because I hit him and his hat fell off and I was with 5 friends.

Interviewer: Good aim, and you were both laughing.

Mark: After 3 years....Aye, like as if it was someone else. We were laughing about it. Literally like, we were both stanin' like pure casual, no' tense or anything.

The ease of the interaction perhaps denotes that he consents to their authority and its legitimacy, showing that their impact as a 'mirror' to confirm a pro-social identity can be powerful and have a wider meaning beyond the immediate interaction. This could even be seen as an indicator of not only secondary but also tertiary desistance (McNeill, 2016), with the police acting as communicators and representatives of the community, confirming acceptance that he has changed.

Unlike all of the other young people, Mark said that he was busy all of the time getting prepared for the baby. As already discussed, he said that he was happy to become the main carer but also wanted more out of life. He wanted a job in the future. He said 'I can walk into a job just like that, I have done so many courses, painting and decorating, mechanics, just everything, getting ready for work courses, 6 week things and I have done them all. I have done hospitality, sports and leisure, SFA level three badges through Rangers.' Like Dan he seemed to feel that these courses, despite not leading to qualifications, were enough. Both Dan and Mark's cases raise important questions about the misleading attitude created as a result of these initiatives. Like Dan, Mark was also pre-occupied with being safe and reflected that this was because he had not had this when he was growing up and wanted to have it for his child. He said:

I want to put myself in a secure house where I feel nice and relaxed and warm and stuff. The door will be locked and that. The door will be locked and no one will come to the door looking for trouble, because there is no need for them to come to the door looking for trouble, the house will be secure and the door will be locked.

Mark is a pragmatist and appeared to have scaled back his hopes adopting Mertonian ritualism in doing so. Cooley regards this scaling back as a form of withdrawal, (1956: 205) stating that ‘a subtler kind of withdrawal takes place in the imagination alone by curtailing ambition, by trimming down one’s idea of himself to a measure that need not fear further diminution.’ The danger in doing this is that true potential is never fulfilled, and Mark’s frustration is shown by the fact that despite having a narrative of acceptance of his situation, he had also almost impulsively paid to take part in a prestigious football camp, hoping to be spotted. I am unable to report what happened after the second interview, and although becoming a father offered Mark a way of achieving a positive identity and a new ‘script’ aiding desistance, the destination beyond this was something he was struggling with (Sharpe, 2015; Rumgay, 2004).

MAKING A BREAK FOR IT

Brian

Brian, like Amy, felt that he had hit rock bottom by going to prison before changing his behaviour and his relationship with Eve was brought into focus supporting this process of change. In physics, when a baseball hits a bat, the bat is used as a ‘trampoline’ compressing and allowing the baseball to lose less energy. The bat also transfers some energy to the ball resulting in it moving faster and overall, this is what is called ‘the trampoline effect.’ For Brian, the collision and impact as result of hitting rock bottom was used as motivating factor, providing impetus for change and therefore could also be described as the ‘trampoline effect’. This turning point of hitting ‘rock bottom’ crucially coincided with becoming more serious with Eve and so this provided renewed hope and motivation, reinforcing the effect. In physics, the positive impact of others is also shown, as when two people are on a trampoline both bouncing together, there is what is termed ‘dramatic energy transfer’ that takes place, so that one person will bounce higher than the other. Ultimately, it might be argued that hitting rock bottom can provide impetus for change, but for this effect to be dramatic it requires the support of others. This trampoline effect and dynamic energy

transfer through others could be summarised as the trampoline relational effect and is particularly useful in highlighting the importance of interdependence.

Like Mark, Brian felt that his partner had energised him, and echoed Dan as he also said that his partner was able to control his temper. Brian did not appear to experience the same level of dramatic energy transfer as Amy as will be discussed, but the relational trampoline effect had offered stability and some impetus for change. He said of Eve:

For some weird reason she has learned how to control me, in a way like not as in general, but in the way of offending, if I am drunk and I am coming up the road, she knows that if anyone says anything to me she knows what I would do back. But knowing that if a situation like that pops up, she is like 'Brian move.'

Like Mark, Brian also had the support from Eve's family too and the positive relational reflexivity he gained from them seeing him as a 'good boyfriend' was crucial, especially as his previous relationship had involved a number of incidents of domestic violence.

This is the first boyfriend that they have really approved, and so it is a bit like, it is making me feel better in myself. Like, I am making her happy, but also her family are happy that she is with someone.

Brian viewed himself as a different person to before. He spoke openly about consciously making decisions not to get into fights and to remember that he didn't have to prove himself. He could be described as detoxifying the masculinity he had aspired to in the past (Kupers, 2005). His old friends noted the change in him that he did not want to get involved in trouble either.

My friends are like 'you are no' yourself, you are no'' Cause they are used to me like 'Brian this is kicking off, go outside.' I would rather go outside and sort it out. Now, it is weird that my friends would still come to my door and say that things are kicking off and they need me and now it is like 'no.' It is just like 'deal with it yourself eh.'

Unlike the others in this study, Brian did not avoid situations and still went out with the same people and viewed them as true friends. He freely admitted that when he

went out there were drugs there and that if he wanted them he could get them anyway. His form of self-regulation was to face the temptation and overcome it rather than avoiding it, what Bottoms (2013: 81) terms 'synchronic self-control'. This is noted as a rare ability requiring a high level of confidence to be able to stay in the company of delinquent friends and reject the opportunity of committing crime. Brian did this by re-remembering what he had to lose. Though this normative compliance was not easy, Brian felt that this was the first time in his life that he was truly happy. He had been in prison and the deterrent effect particularly of facing a long sentence was another reason he gave for continued desistance. Brian's main motivation though for continued desistance was the relational trampoline effect of hitting rock bottom and meeting Eve. He now felt that he had someone who cared for him and someone to lose.

I cannot afford to lose all of that again... I think that definitely the changes that I have made in my life it has made me realise what I have got to lose, and I have to set myself goals and stick to them.

In the final interview Brian and Eve were about to have a child and the sense of responsibility had made him harden up his resolve to continue to stay away from offending even further, and he had even reduced the amount of cannabis he now smoked. He was still struggling to consolidate a positive identity but being a father offered him this and he also wanted to be a role model for his younger brothers. He described how the police continued to hassle him and therefore unlike the other cases the police reflected back a distorted 'looking glass self'. This continued hassle could be because he continued to hang out with those who still offended, even though he was not actually offending himself. The idea then of being 'guilty by association' takes on a deeper meaning, whereby it would seem that not 'knifing off' risks creating doubt about one's desistance, as the outside audience remains unclear. This also brings to light questions not only about whom desistance is for, but also what is expected of those who are desisting? For Brian to have respect from the police, does he have to isolate himself like Mark and Dan? Is this healthy? These are all challenging questions that cannot be answered here, but are undoubtedly worth raising. Brian, unlike the other young men, felt that he had to challenge the current view that wider society and the police had of him. He did not want to run away to a new place as was described by Dan and Kevin and carried out by Mark. Unlike

Kevin, Brian was rejecting this distorted image and actively challenging how he was being represented. He said:

I want to prove everyone wrong. I am not wanting to just run away. I would rather sit there and stay where I am, keep my head down, do what I do, but stay out of trouble and the police are going to eventually realise, he is not offending and he is not like he used to be, so just leave him alone.

He was extremely aware of the impact his past was having on his present life and was desperate to put it behind him. For him, the past had become a limitation in its own right.

I feel a lot more happier in myself that I can think ‘this is what I have achieved. This is my past’ I am not looking at the past anymore, I am looking at the future. It is like my *Includem* worker said to me ‘your past is your past for a reason.’ People can judge you for the past, but unless they see you for who you are now then you just need to ignore them.

He hoped that when his community service ended and he would have a ‘clean slate’ this would mark a new chapter in his life. He said ‘now all my court dates are gone and no outstanding fines, and probation will be finished, it is a clean slate and so college is on the slate for the summer.’ Brian was on the cusp of treading water and was already dipping his toe into the future. He was excited to be a father but also wanted to be a provider too. Although over time his hope had diminished, he always seemed determined. In his case, determination helped him to remain faithful to his goals and not give up or run away, and maybe even determination is a manifestation of some form of hope.

TREADING WATER

Amy

Amy had felt trapped, not only by her own past offending but her brother’s offending. She spoke about the family’s reputation and added the interesting observation that

they in turn had helped create their lawyer's reputation. She commented '(Our lawyer) wouldn't have they medals in his office if it wasn't for my brother. My brother made them who they are today.' Amy was also aware that her sister had got into offending through her and felt guilty about this. She said:

Like my sister thought that it would be alright and she wanted to copy me and she admitted that to her social worker that she wanted to follow in my steps and it is fun. But it is not, trust me, it is the worst life you could ever have to be born into, it is not worth it in the end. I wouldn't even advertise it on TV.

Her trigger for stopping offending, as already discussed, was her niece and wanting to be there for her, become a good role model and to show her a better way of life. She said:

I am only the auntie and her mum is not there and she looks to me as a role model, and I do put my ways to it, and actually realise and give her a better life, ken, she has had, she is only coming up for 3 and she has had a really hard life already. So it is like, I am going to pure change for her. I don't want her to be brought up the same as like, we weren't brought up bad and that, but it just changes when you get older and I don't want her to happen the same as her. I want to show her better, like what we should have done. I don't want her to turn out like us.

There was a strong sense of the need to help change the future for her niece and end the family's involvement in offending. Although not discussed in these terms, it could be said that, in her own way, Amy was giving back to her family, enacting a form of 'generativity' (McNeill and Maruna, 2008). Amy's niece provided a range of positive pull factors and was a 'strong' trigger. Cooley (1956) discusses how a better self is imagined through looking to others who we in turn aspire to be, but for Amy, the inspiration was drawn from a child and reflected back through her niece's eyes, she saw someone who was good and someone who was loved. Amy's specific aspirations were therefore possibly drawn from within her and shaped through the support of her *Includem* worker. In Amy's case, her worker played a significant and crucial role in her life as throughout all the good and bad times, when everyone else had given up on her, including her mother, her worker continued to be there for her and instil self-belief. She helped Amy question who she wanted to be and gain self-awareness to understand that she could become this person and the ways in which this

could be achieved. Her worker viewed Amy and reflected back a sympathetic image but also helped her create an image of who she could be too. She brought her to college and made the step beyond the micro- environment tangible and helped her to create a new story (King, 2013). The worker could be described as her micro support and her 'meso-broker', helping her to move on and this is significant because it shows the powerful impact professionals can make.

Amy had had a hard life as already described and had used crime as a way of achieving a sense of belonging. She now realised that in the past she had actually been deeply unhappy and had used drugs to block everything out. She wished that she had not had to go through all that she had. She said 'I think if I was somebody else, like if I was like the way I used to be, and I had a wee crystal ball and I could look into the future, I think I would just skip and go straight to the future, to here.' Unlike both Kevin and Dan she did not want to go back to the past. She was grateful for her friends for having been there but now viewed both drugs and her friends as having held her back. She described how she had become 'a loner' after 'knifing off' from her friends (Maruna and Roy, 2007). Reducing her substance misuse had been really hard for her. She admitted that sometimes she would listen to music that reminded her of those times and the belonging that she experienced then through music (May, 2011). To stay away from her friends she exercised situational diachronic self-control, avoiding the areas that she used to go to and instead staying in with her boyfriend (Bottoms, 2013). She now only smoked cannabis occasionally and felt that whereas before she had inhabited an unreal world when taking drugs, she was now 'in the normal world' and happy to be so. She was happy to live in this world now whereas before she had been escaping.

Amy also exercised a form of normative compliance. The example given by Bottom (2013) is that the individual facing temptation thinks of the teaching of the Church. For Amy, her niece had become almost like a religion, something pure that she believed in and this helped her to be strong and continue to lead a more wholesome life. When she was tempted to take drugs she would think of her niece's face and this helped her to overcome the internal struggle described by Bottoms (2013). Unlike the men in the group, Amy did not regard her boyfriend as being a source of support in her desistance. Instead, she described how since he had come out of prison he was

desisting too, but in her opinion they were doing it for themselves rather than each other. She was also acutely aware that for her to have a better life she had to meet new people.

Amy was very aware of how others had come to view her and the positive change in the 'looking glass self' now reflected back (Cooley, 1956). Unlike the other young people she had gained recognition for the changes that she had made (Barry, 2016). She described how her mother and lawyer had explicitly told her that they saw and approved of the changes that she had made to live a pro-social life. Her lawyer had said to her 'I thought you were going to be the next MacDonald, I was like 'I am a MacDonald' but I am not like my brother.' Amy had lost her relationship with her mother at the height of her offending, so getting this back and also being told by her mother that she was proud of her both reaffirmed and elevated her to want to achieve even more. Through these conversations with her mother she was now also aware of the love that had been there and had for a time been forgotten. She revealed that she asked her mum 'all the time':

If I was still on drugs, how would you see me? She was like 'you would have been a mess and I wouldn't put it past you if you were dead.' I am like 'what?' That came out of my own mother's mouth and that pure hurt. I couldn't believe it when she said that.

The 'slippery slope' then for Amy for those around her was not just prison but death, and their assessment of her situation was not an exaggeration. She noted 'cause every time that she has said that she is proud of me, it makes me feel over the moon. I am like 'oh my days Mummy, I am achieving all of these big goals. It is like amazing.' The lack of attention by the police and therefore the inadvertent change in their reflection of her also was noted. She said that her and her partner could now 'actually walk out with our head held high.' She added "Cop cars go past and it is like 'I am not wanted, this is decent.' It is a good feeling, cause we can go and do things and that."

Amy's story shows the importance of the context to when a turning point is created or realised. In the final interview she described how she had hit rock bottom, having lost hope and even overdosed before being able to turn her life around. For Amy, the

collision and impact as result of hitting rock bottom was used as motivating factor providing impetus for change, the ‘trampoline effect’. This turning point of hitting ‘rock bottom’ brought her niece into focus and provided renewed hope and motivation reinforcing the effect. The ‘dramatic energy transfer’ that took place crucially provided support to make change happen. Amy now had high hopes for the future and wanted more out of life than simply to stop offending, she cared about her future self and her present situation. She wanted to be a prison officer and felt that she could help others like her. She summed up her desires as the need to ‘keep on the right path’ and not just that but also to ‘have a heavy different life.’ Desistance was not viewed as an end in itself but something that was actually behind her. She was now looking ahead and only ahead.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

It is worth emphasising that all five interviewees had joined gangs or got involved in offending as a result of being rejected from their families, school or both. Their offences then could be viewed as a by-product of the belonging they craved and then achieved through these relationships. It was a way of dealing with the strain of emotional poverty and killed time, living life to the max because the future seemed unattainable. If it is accepted that a sense of belonging is a human need (Baumeister and Leary, 1995), this was an unmet need until they began offending with their peers. For Kevin and Dan especially, desistance also meant the end of this need being met (May, 2011b). Cooley (1956: 242) argues that ‘the highest self is a social self, in that it is a product of constructive imagination working with the materials which social experience supplies.’ We are and become through others.

Our personal characters are built up on thoughts and sentiments developed by imagining how our selves would appear in the minds of persons we look up to. These don’t have to be people who are alive but any one that is real and imaginable to the person...idealizing and aspiring persons live largely in the imagined pressure of masters and heroes to whom they refer their own life for comment and improvement’ (Cooley, 1956: 242).

These young people have been without ‘Heroes’ or ‘masters’ and also I would add champions. This gap is emphasised by Amy and Brian who noted that they had been without adequate role models and their *Includem* worker had become their champion. Both Amy and Brian wanted now to be an inspiration for those they cared about and felt were experiencing the same void they had when growing up. McNeill (2006) stresses that young people’s identities are malleable and open to change, an important point in an analysis of desistance. Through the work of Cooley (1956), it is questionable if without adequate role models or champions if aspirations towards a higher self can be adequately formulated. The testimonies of both Amy and Brian suggest that helping someone bend towards their potential requires a mentor, role model or champion. This is crucial when considering the role services may play but also what is available to those living in poverty.

This study highlights that the young people desisting moved from a position where offending was associated with having social, financial, cultural and symbolic capital to then being impoverished in almost every way. All five had achieved act desistance at the early stages and four had been able to sustain this. All four admitted to taking drugs recreationally and much less than they had in the past. As found in other research, no one felt that taking drugs was ‘criminal’ and this affirms the normalisation thesis discussed in chapter four (Aston, 2015; Parker et al. 2002). Healy (2012: 175) describes this period as ‘characterised by uncertainty and ambiguity’, and here it was also one of pain. For Kevin and Dan, desistance involved being fearful and ‘looking over their shoulders’, as their locality had been transformed from a place of sociability and fun, mixed in with fear (McVie, 2010), to a place only of fear of the potential risk of reprisal.

Desistance research highlights the importance of spatial dynamics (Farrall et al. 2014). These young people viewed the spaces in which they lived as increasingly threatening, which they coped with through self-isolation. It was a time of acute identity crises deepened by the acknowledgement that who they want to be may not only be uncertain, but also on the whole difficult if not impossible to achieve. Over the course of the fieldwork it became clear that ‘knifing off’ from friends had left a significant gap in their lives (Maruna and Roy, 2007). For Amy, this was partially filled through family, however, for Kevin, Dan and Mark, their present was one of

isolation. In these situations knifing off is perhaps more akin to a form of self-harm. Weaver (2015) describes how the men within her study were able to knife off from their past by moving away from where they had lived but also to retain their friends. For the young people in this study, they were without their friends, but tied, tethered and trapped by their past and intensely aware of the limitations it had on their present and future. Bourdieu (1990: 54) describes the habitus as ‘a product of history’, producing individual and collective practices and therefore more history. ‘It ensures the active experience of past experiences, which, deposited in each organism in the form of schemes of perception, thought and action, tend to guarantee the ‘correctness’ of practices and their constancy over time, more reliably than all formal and explicit norms’ (ibid). For Kevin in particular, the past was being reproduced and this was clearly evidenced through his reoffending and what Weaver and McNeill (2015) term morphostasis. Whereas Brian and Amy wanted to stay and challenge their past, proving that they were no longer the people they had once been, Dan and Kevin felt that getting away was their only chance of having a better life. Mark had already moved away from his area indicating that being accepted back into the community is not always regarded as a credible option.

This study raises questions about when desistance can actually be regarded a ‘success’ or of what ‘successful’ desistance implies. It seems clear that desistance is not as an end in itself, but rather that it both requires and must lead to acceptance and reintegration of the individual in their community and wider society (McNeill, 2016). The young people were attempting to change their lives in varying degrees but for the most part their past held them back. Whereas, as Bourdieu emphasises, the habitus is usually something unconscious, in these cases it is noted that instead the sense of powerlessness to change the past is recognised, it is conscious. Mouzelis (1995) argues that Bourdieu fails to theorise voluntary actions, but voluntary actions require room for manoeuvre and opportunities. Without this, being reflexive and aware of one’s situation but also unable to change it, is to recognise and be forced to endure a consciously bounded agency (Evans et al. 2001). I argue then that awareness and making the unconscious conscious when it does not or cannot then lead to change can be damaging. It is even difficult to know if lacking awareness would be better.

This study reveals how desistance has been actively pursued no matter what the costs, and that it is most successful when it is for pull rather than push reasons, that is in the pursuit of happiness rather than to avoid punishment. Amy and Brian adopted normative compliance as they now had someone to lose and could see the benefits, and so their compliance had legitimacy and 'buy in' from them. For the others, their main way of controlling their behavior was situational compliance. This study indicates that this type of compliance is a lot weaker and is likely to lead to short term rather than long term compliance (Bottoms, 2001). Bottoms (2013) presents a case study of a boy called Darren to illustrate situational diachronic self-control to sustain desistance. It is explained that Darren decided to no longer visit his grandmother because she lived in the same block of flats as where his previous criminal friends lived and therefore he had removed himself from temptation. Bottoms also draws on Homer's epic poem, *The Odyssey*, to argue that desistance is similar to the actions carried out by Odysseus as he bound himself to a ship so that he could hear the siren song, but could not break free and therefore would survive. Crucially though, he could hear the song and therefore would benefit from his actions.

Kennet (2001: 149 cited in Bottoms 2013: 82) states that when people exercise excessive dia-chronic self-control or self-binding then it 'is likely to lead to a restricted and impoverished existence' because 'too much self-binding reduces the chances of the agent attaining a broader orthonomy'. That is, that the self-restraining actions are being carried out without good reasons. In the Sheffield study, only one young man was recorded as doing this as he stayed in all day playing computer games because he couldn't find work and was desperate not to return to prison. However, this outlying case in terms of self-isolation is more the norm here and is potentially indicative of a wider problem faced by young people of increasing loneliness and seclusion (Princes Trust, 2015). Drawing then again on Odysseus, for both Dan and Kevin in particular in this study, they self-bind and desist to a soundtrack of silence. They have limited to no 'positive' outcomes and unlike the songs of the siren, the benefits are unattainable and the purpose and reasons to sustain their actions unclear. I would further argue that this form of self-binding is more akin to the foot binding carried out by Geisha, a form of self-mutilation. This metaphor works, as from the outset the shoe looks as though it fits and the disfigurement remains hidden in the same way as a measurement of non-offending is regarded as 'success.' The focus on

the success of desistance hides the reality of the isolation, misery and sadness caused when positive destinations beyond desistance remain beyond reach. It also brings to the fore the question that remains unanswered in this particular study, but worth exploring in the future, who is desistance in these instances for? At present, it would seem that neither Kevin nor Dan are benefitting and nor does the audience appreciate their efforts. In Kevin's case this eventually lead him to no longer being able to comply and him reoffending.

From the outset, one of the aspects of this study was about attempting to understand if turning points as they have been conceived by Laub and Sampson (2003), namely marriage, work and entering the army are accessible to young people today in the same way. In short, they are not. The benefit of adopting a longitudinal study has also been in bringing to light the importance of the context of 'turning points' realised (Carlsson, 2015). As stated by Weaver (2014: 2), desistance is the 'complex and contingent interaction of various opportunities for change, mediated through the lens of an individual's personal priorities, values, aspirations and relational concerns that (sometimes) imbue these events or experiences with significance.' In this analysis, I have argued that both Amy and Brian experienced what I have termed the 'trampoline effect' of hitting rock bottom that made Amy's niece and Brian's relationship become a turning point brought into focus. I further argued that it was through the support of others that the dynamic energy transfer experienced propelled them to want to and be able to succeed. What has become to be regarded as 'fateful moments' or turning points may be experienced (Giddens, 1991), but here the 'fateful moments' could be better defined as what Bushway and Pasternoster (2009: 1121) describe as the 'crystallization of discontent' and also crucially a realisation that things could be different. This transpires through a culmination of events, or as the poem above suggests 'life circumstances.' These instigate or propel onwards the progress already in motion. However, without opportunities for this realisation of a better life to become realisable, these turning points can also become points of contention, as shown by Dan. Dan wants a job and wants to 'get away' but can't. The crystallization of discontent in these cases has instead been affirmed, entrenched and accepted. In agreement with Bottoms (2013) these moments seem to be only able to be understood retrospectively and possibly are redundant as a mode of change to be pursued. By analysing turning points in this way, the 'hidden dips' in the road are

revealed and it emerges that actually no one is fully control of their future. The reliance on others or opportunities could mean that turning points are actually really about turning people. That is, people who inspire or can help the journey towards change. Interestingly, Kevin openly said that he was searching for a turning point, a reason to have a better life. The emphasis then on turning points as they are generally conceptualised may be misleading and mean that the more normal likely events to instigate change remain unnoticed.

It is clear that the influence of others in achieving a sense of belonging and fostering a 'new' positive identity is crucial to aid desistance (Weaver, 2015). Halsey and Deegan (2015: 7) stress the importance of generativity, what they define as 'care for self, other and future' and argue that being cared for and giving care ignites hope. The explicit reference in desistance literature to the importance of care and 'good' informal relationships is fairly new. This research provides further evidence of how important this is, but also worryingly, for those interviewed how rare this was. Cooley (1956) argues that sympathy and love are similar and there is a need for both in people's lives. In essence, having people who love us helps us to view ourselves favorably and create an aspiring 'future self' based on the encouragement of those who are credible supporters (Pasternoster and Bushway, 2009). Despite being able to exercise primary or act desistance for four of the young people, the steps towards achieving secondary desistance or identity desistance of a pro-social identity largely eluded them all. Importantly, these young people had only had a relatively short 'career' in offending and yet the stigma of their past seemed to have stuck. This may point to the idea that primary as opposed to secondary deviance as developed by Lemert (1951) is most important in today's society. Or, moreover, that the 'The Tolerance Quotient' (Van Vechten, 1940), that is the 'ratio between the behaviour in objective terms and the community's willingness to tolerate it' (cited in Lemert 1951: 57), is becoming less in more recent times. Kevin missed the status that crime had given him and had been unable to recreate a pro-social identity of any similar standing, a barrier to desistance reflected in other research (Healy, 2012). Dan had not re-offended and thus had been successful in maintaining act or primary desistance, but without a job had not achieved identity or secondary desistance and was living day-to-day, more or less existing.

Lemert (1951: 51) states that 'In order for deviation to provoke a community reaction, it must have a minimum degree of visibility, that is, it must be apparent to others and be identified as deviation.' In the same way, in order for desistance to be achieved it too has to have visibility and credible witnesses. There were a number of ways in which an alternative pro-social identity was strived for. Fatherhood offered both Brian and Mark a way out, an alternative script (Sharpe, 2015; Rungay, 2004), and indeed was also been sought after by both Kevin and Dan. Brian and Mark were not entirely comfortable with being a carer rather than a provider as this undermined their masculinity. In past research with women offenders, the role of 'mother' has been identified as a crucial script to retain or build upon aiding desistance (Rungay, 2004). Interestingly, in this study, Amy was the only person who did not want yet to be a parent, and alongside Emma in Chapter seven, this may suggest that younger women are now waiting until they are older to become mothers and actively seeking alternative identities. Being a father provided an alternative but ultimately unsatisfactory fraught identity for both Brian and Mark. The emphasis on what could be deemed 'success' for all those interviewed rested more on them getting a job.

The importance of employment as a means of achieving pride and a sense of fulfilment post desistance has been established in other research (Weaver, 2015; King, 2013; Uggen, 2000). For all four men, the opportunity to act out masculinity outside of criminality was limited and frustrating. It is important to note though that getting a job was identified as one of the main goals in all of those interviewed, male and female, desister, resister and persister. This was about more than doing masculinity, it was about being able to look after oneself and achieve a sense of self-worth, accomplishment, doing desistance and in its most primitive definition 'independence'. All those interviewed also spoke about the desire to get off the dole reaffirming that worklessness is a myth (MacDonald et al. 2014). Amy was making progress and so it was the young male desisters who felt largely misrecognised or in some cases unrecognised by society (Barry, 2016).

At the time of writing, in Scotland there has been a concerted effort to address women's offending and quite a successful campaign to raise awareness of the reasons underpinning this population's offending, such as past abuse. This raising of awareness and of the inadequacy of the criminal justice system to deal with these

more deeply entrenched issues has even lead to plans for a new women's prison, HMP Inverclyde being stopped. Although the following claim cannot be evidenced, adopting a critical analytical standpoint, it could be argued that the context of Amy's desistance may be quite different to those of the men then as a result of this wider agenda. She is attempting to move away from offending at a time in society when the reasons for female criminality are now better understood. It appears then that the process of change needs a credible but also empathetic audience. It was noted that for the men, their desistance had not been acknowledged by their family nonetheless wider society and was often reliant on their girlfriend alone. This lack of audience to witness and testify to the change means that their attempts towards achieving secondary desistance remained fragile. Drawing and building upon Lemert's original conception of deviance, in turn, the acts of desistance in these cases have remained invisible, private and confined to within their places of residence. Thus, the community reaction, both immediate and wider, has not been possible (Lemert, 1951). Indeed, it might be argued that as the changes remain private, the reaction and memory of the reaction towards the original deviance probably endures and will continue to remain unaltered. It is clear then that the acts of desistance, in order to have relevance have to be made public and made visible or that new relationships free of the past stigma need to be built.

In terms of those that the young people could rely on as their audience to perform desistance to, all had had very little love or care in their childhoods. For three of the men it was only through their partner that their revised and cared for image could begin to be formed. The move from having the identity of an 'offender' to a pro-social identity of for example, father, aunt or worker is about what alternative roles can be accessed as well as a credible and compassionate audience to bear witness. Previous research posits that women may be more 'relational' in their attempts to move towards desistance (Barry, 2006, 2010). However, crucially the young men interviewed did not avoid their families because they did not want to reconnect with them, but because they were fearful of rejection. By the final interviews, Kevin described having no support at all in life and the three others were entirely reliant on their girlfriend for company and to act as a motivator to maintain their desistance. Their access to relational desistance (even on the micro level) therefore was extremely limited. Although there is increasing evidence of the positive impact that a

girlfriend can have on helping the desistance process (Bottoms and Shapland, 2014; Sampson and Laub, 2003), there has been little or no research on the impact that this may have on the girlfriend in question. Only one girlfriend agreed to be interviewed and revealed the pressure she felt from being the single stable focal point to promote change. This raises questions about sustainability of such support and the durability and impact of dyadic desistance.

The importance of the wider community in confirming desistance is clear and in this study shows the impact of the police as ‘mirrors’ (Bradford et al. 2014). The positive encounters discussed by Amy and Mark with the police had had a significant positive influence on each. However, Brian continued, despite desisting, to feel as though he was being reflected back the image of a criminal. He had not offended in over a year but his interactions with the police remained problematic because of his past and interestingly the service now appeared illegitimate to him (Bradford et al. 2014). I would argue that because of the distance between Brian and the police and the dominance of his past over his present, the mirror being held up to him is concave, bouncing back an inevitably distorted image. Desistance experienced in this way has become a delegitimised process. Moreover, the police in this instance have divided up what ought to be the community into those who deserve attention, those who do not but also those who deserve undeserved attention. Kevin also continued to be hassled by the police and although he had reoffended by the end of the research, the negative encounters served to entrench his own diminishing opinion of himself. Bearing in mind the difficulties faced in today’s society for those who have a criminal record to get a job, the ‘judgment imagined’ goes beyond the immediate relationships experienced (Cooley, 1956: 183), and therefore beyond the relational reflexivity described by Weaver (2015). Kevin and Brian were acutely aware of their criminal record being a ‘black mark’ to their name, or as Brian called it a ‘violent marker.’ A reflection from the looking glass that is without love or sympathy, it is in the harshest light showing up all imperfections and unforgiving. The effect of others on the creation of identity and belonging when accepted strengthens the case for the necessity of tertiary desistance. It also shows that desistance, to be truly successful, has to move beyond the micro-environment, and the ‘made good’ individual requires opportunities for the reformed self to be acted out to a wider audience.

Standing (2011) argues that the precariat and those on the outer edges are dangerous and drawn to extreme politics but instead these four young men were increasingly less hopeful about their future and posed no threat to society at all, not even in being heard. I argue that Kevin and Dan in particular were experiencing acute 'identity crisis', liminality within liminality or possibly even beyond this. They had moved from being a respected 'hard' offender to 'a nobody', in a 'state of nothingness' (Bourdieu, 1964). Both expressed wanting to settle down with a family but fatherhood even remained elusive. Brian and Amy were the only two who felt that they were really looking towards the future, and it was only Amy who seemed to be making progress and 'treading water.' The main difference between Amy and the young men is that she had worked hard to try to regain a relationship with her family and was keen for them to see her in a new light. Amy now had approval from those she cared about and wanted to fulfil her potential further. She was not only talking about the destination beyond desistance but also actively trying to pursue a pathway by going to college. The young men on the other hand had given up on ever having real respect or love from their parents, having never really had it, or it had become impossible through bereavement. I argue that this inability to have verification of a renewed self from those that they seek approval from or love is a significant stumbling block in achieving meaningful secondary desistance. Moreover, it would seem the case that if care and acceptance from those closest is unattainable, then tertiary desistance, which is the acceptance of those who are not known or less well known may seem unfeasible.

What became apparent in this study is that desistance is not an end in itself and without a positive destination hope of a better or stable life diminishes. In so doing, the idea that desistance pays has been undermined for most of the young people interviewed. Sykes (1958) describes the pain of imprisonment as the deprivation of liberty, goods and services, heterosexual relationships, autonomy and personal security. This study gives a crucial insight into the pains of desistance. Kevin, Dan, Mark, Brian and Amy all expressed varying degrees of feeling isolated and frustrated that they were unable to achieve goals such as getting into work. As shown by the previous chapter though, these aren't just pains of desistance but pains of poverty. The difference being with this group is that they were aware of their 'spoiled identity' and unable or restricted in their attempts to achieve an alternative pro-social identity.

Barry (2006) argues that the capital gained through offending is not durable, however, this study raises questions about the attainability of any form of capital if self-worth has not been built and opportunities are not accessible. Essentially, in the same way as the previous chapter, the need for a feeling of belonging is shown to be necessary, and when missing, means that self-worth and an ability to accept oneself never mind progress is unable to happen. I argue that self-worth is built through relationships and in the case of Amy, having someone believe in her, a micro-supporter and meso-broker was shown to be key to moving beyond offending and beyond desistance. In the next chapter, the implications of the findings for both those who had and those who had not offended will be discussed. As stated, these were not just pains of desistance but also pains of poverty, and finding 'ways forward' is really about addressing a much deeper issue of inequality.

CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSION

INTRODUCTION

For over a year twelve young people living in poverty in Scotland let me into their lives, their homes, their hopes, dreams and fears. They allowed me to explore their pasts and their presents and to understand what they did from day-to-day, the challenges they faced and how they felt about their futures. The qualitative longitudinal approach was able to capture a rare insight and create a time-lapse record of this period in their lives. This concluding chapter will firstly outline the main three research questions and the subsequent findings relating to these and the implications. In doing so I reaffirm the main original contributions made by this study as well as the limitations. I then move on to reiterate that the commonalities between those who had offended and those who had not, were so great, that bringing them together to propose ways forward makes sense, with any differentiations made only where necessary.

The isolation and increasing hopelessness reported by almost all of the young people highlighted that these aren't just pains of desistance but pains of poverty. In conceptualising this 'stage', both adulthood and destinations beyond desistance are shown to be unclear and highlights the idea that young people can often become stuck, struggling to live day by day, lost in what I term, limitless liminality. Thinking about it in this way, it becomes apparent then that it may be useful to emphasise not only the rights and responsibilities of the individual but also those of wider society too, thus promoting citizenship as inclusion. As well as the models of citizenship outlined in chapter three that are a useful basis of the responsibilities of citizens, it is also argued here that an explicit reference to care for one another and accept that we are interdependent could provide motivation towards more active citizenship. Equally, the meaning of what a 'citizen' is of course personal to each person, that is whether they vote or not, or the levels to which they engage in civic society, however, it is relational above all else.

In working towards a discussion of ways forward, inspiration on how to change things for the better was drawn from examples of when this has already happened within the geographic areas studied. This highlights that action comes about as a result of firstly hope being built within an area or community and a commitment made to try to work together towards a better outcome. Making change possible is with the help and support from individuals or organisations accessed also on the outside. As stated in the beginning of this thesis, this study is about opening up the beginning of a conversation about young people living in poverty. The ‘answers’ to the problems encountered are inevitably not prescriptive, clear nor easy and require the input, commitment and action of a much wider audience, involving but beyond criminology.

ENDING CONTACT WITH SERVICES AND THE NEED FOR BRIDGING SUPPORT

The first objective and research question explored was how young people ‘disengage’ successfully, or not, from reliance upon *Includem*’s support. *Includem*’s transitional support are a unique service and provide invaluable help to those who are largely without the ‘safety net’ of parents and unlike most of their younger counterparts. The word ‘disengagement’ was found to be too cold and consequently inappropriate to describe the thoughtful and emotional way in which ending contact was both broached and carried out. The idea of ‘readiness’ was unpacked. It was found that those who fared best had accepted the idea of independence being about interdependence and as a result welcomed and nurtured the support of others with their role and identity shaped accordingly. For example, they had a partner and were also looking forward to becoming a parent or ‘good father’. On the other hand, having limited social networks and believing in the need to ‘go it alone’ was revealed as neither fair nor sustainable. This study reasserts that those who struggle are unlikely to ask for help (Halsey and Deegan, 2015), and this is likely to be because doing so is perceived to be failure. The need to prove oneself appears to have been put ahead of what is actually realistic and reasonable, with expectations of being able to get support low.

In terms of the implications of these findings, the research has already led to *Includem* modifying their procedures for ending contact, with a more tapered approach now in place. Moreover, the service now also imitates the research design in re-establishing contact with all those who have stopped working with the service, so it is not up to them alone to make the call if they need help again. This has made a significant contribution in practical terms already in this service and it is hoped that it can also impact upon other services and wider policy. The idea of ‘reaching out’ to the most vulnerable has the potential to change the way in which all services end contact with service users. In answering this question, a more challenging question arose that requires further research, that is to understand and explore the role that services can play if bridging to opportunities is not available. Furthermore, it was apparent particularly with Kim, Kevin and to a lesser extent Dan, that when one service becomes the main and only support, when this is taken away the person simply cannot cope.

Ideally services should be able to link to active communities so that the relationships between the worker and young person doesn’t create a ‘stickiness’ inhibiting mobility. This research has problematised the idea of ‘community’ itself. Only Scott spoke explicitly about feeling a part of a community, and so a more thoughtful engagement with the realities of these young people’s lives and who they can rely on is required to inform future policy and practice. In the ‘ways forward’ this is discussed in more detail. The relationship between the young person and worker is vital but, as this study confirms, ending contact and bridging to other support is also of prime concern too. However, if these opportunities are not there, then services, it could be argued, are being set up to fail just like the young people they support.

ADULTHOOD – NO LONGER AN ACCESSIBLE DESTINATION

The main aim of this research was to explore how young people living in poverty experienced the transition into adulthood. The study has contributed to a greater understanding of the challenges faced in this transition. Ultimately, ‘adulthood’ was not viewed as an accessible destination and this brings into question the very idea of ‘transition’ itself with a re-conceptualisation of adulthood offered later in this chapter.

All twelve in the beginning had conventional goals of wanting to have their own place, a job and be settled. Only Scott and Hamish had achieved something close to this and this was because they had met what I term 'meso brokers' to assist and inspire them to get beyond their micro-environment, breaking through into college and taking their passion to the next level. Both were 'sailing' and without the encouragement of other people and the support to do this they would not have been able to progress. Although education appeared to be what made the difference to them, they felt that it was their social network that made it possible. Amy and Brian were also on the cusp of making this change and in doing so remained hopeful and determined. Everyone else spoke about how over the year they had become more isolated as they had no money to go out and the things that they wanted now seemed further away. Mark and Emma dealt with this disappointment by especially scaling back on their hopes, what Cooley (1956) regards as a form of social withdrawal. In curtailing their potential, I argue that the potential of society as a whole is also curtailed. On the other hand, Dan, Kevin, Kim, Amy, Ron and Paul remained hopeful but this had become a form of cruel optimism (Berlant, 2011), a source of pain. This shows that hope without hope of being realised, or the will without the ways, can be damaging.

The implications of these findings are far reaching, and as with the former question, also suggest the need to create opportunities and offer support to young people, particularly those who are vulnerable and living in poverty. In reconceptualising adulthood, in terms of citizenship, the 'way forward' is not about the young people doing this alone, but rather wider society actively helping them to realise and fulfil their potential. In building upon the work of Turner (1993), the rights bestowed on all, not just those who are obviously 'weak', could even be grounded in an acceptance and acknowledgement of human frailty and thus consciously promote the creation of moral sympathy. I have argued further in chapter four, that in recognising each other's deficiencies, there is also a chance to realise each other's strengths and understand the true value of nurturing interdependence between citizens. In so doing, it becomes clear that this cannot be left to become the role of disenfranchised communities but rather requires addressing inequality. It is undoubtedly much easier written than done, but it is not unachievable.

DESISTANCE: IDENTITY CRISES, TURNING POINTS AS TURNING PEOPLE AND THE NEED FOR CREDIBLE WITNESSES AND AN ALTERNATIVE PRO-SOCIAL ROLE

One of the objectives of this research was to understand how desistance was embarked upon and what helped or hindered this process for Dan, Kevin, Mark, Brian and Amy. For all five, offending had been a by-product of the belonging they sought and achieved by meeting with other young people who had also been ignored or rejected by their families and schools. I argue that a sense of belonging is the basis for achieving self-worth and subsequently the first step to then acquiring social capital as well as financial, cultural, and symbolic capital. Confidence is needed to get 'out there' and establish weak ties that lead to opportunities (Granovetter, 1974; 1973). Building on the work of Cooley (1956) and Giddens (1991), I assert that this confidence and feeling of self-worth, is established through strong relationships built on love and care, the reflecting back of a valued and worthy person. Based on the findings, without love and care, understanding and accepting that you matter and have something to offer to society is almost impossible.

The reasons for giving up crime were differentiated between 'strong' and 'weak' triggers, where 'strong' triggers lead to more sustained progress and weak triggers lead to short term compliance (Bottoms, 2001). For example, Mark had given up crime initially as his mother had been given what he thinks was an ASBO, resulting in them moving away from his local area, meaning that he was no longer able to meet up with old friends. This change in spatial dynamics meant that for a short time he no longer committed crime, but this only lasted a short time until he met up again with other young people in a similar position. His 'strong' trigger, the one that maintained his progress, was meeting his girlfriend and seeing this develop into a serious relationship.

More generally, the five cases show that searching for belonging was what drew the young people into offending and also for those who have been successful, gaining a sense of belonging either with pro-social friends or family is what has been able to sustain desistance. Act or primary desistance may be based on 'push' factors, that is,

compliance and control, rather than pull factors of someone believing in them or relationships that provide meaning. But push factors alone are not enough to sustain desistance. If it is accepted that crime is a by-product of deeply entrenched issues, having nothing to lose and killing time, then having purpose and gaining purpose, feeling that you matter and have a future is what ultimately helps people to desist and move beyond desistance, to lead a meaningful life.

This study suggests that turning points need to be contextualised and could even be more accurately defined as ‘turning people’. Both Amy and Brian described hitting ‘rock bottom’, Amy through overdosing and Brian through going to prison. They both felt that this coincided with or brought into focus the importance of meeting those who became a source of inspiration, for Amy her niece and for Brian his girlfriend. In physics, when a baseball hits a bat, the bat is used as a ‘trampoline’ compressing and allowing the baseball to lose less energy. The bat also transfers some energy to the ball resulting in it moving faster and this is called ‘the trampoline effect.’ I propose that this is similarly happening in the lives of both Amy and Brian, whereby the impact of a heavy knock has inspired the recognition of the need to change and given them energy to bring this about. Importantly though, for this to have a lasting effect, support is required by others in what could also be described as dynamic energy transfer, a term also used in physics when energy is transferred from one person to another. The idea here is that in order to get out of rock bottom it is not just about the person developing agency or self-awareness of the need to change, they also need help, inspiration and support to reverse what has been a downward spiral, highlighting the importance of interdependence.

For everyone but Brian, giving up crime meant moving away from ‘old’ friends and no one had replaced these connections, resulting in shrunken social networks. Drawing on the work of Bottoms (2011) and Farrall et al. (2014), the idea of displacement (for example, drinking in pubs rather than drinking on the streets and changing the spatial dynamics of life) did not happen for any of those interviewed. For everyone, other than Brian who exercised synchronic self-control (Bottoms, 2011), their desistance had become about *restricting* their spatial dynamics and scaling down to more or less live within one or two rooms. This situational compliance was an excessive form of diachronic self-control. This raises questions

about sustainability and is also shown to be an unhealthy way to abstain from offending, with all stating that they did not really enjoy their life now. Whereas Amy and Brian were keen for this to change and Mark through becoming a father had something to look forward to, Kevin and Dan on the other hand had become resigned to this being as good as life got.

As stated by Lemert (1951: 51) 'In order for deviation to provoke a community reaction, it must have a minimum degree of visibility, that is, it must be apparent to others and be identified as deviation.' In the same way, this study shows that in order for desistance to be achieved it too has to have visibility and credible witnesses. Brian and Mark had access to a pro-social identity by becoming fathers, something both Kevin and Dan craved. Amy did not want to be a mother yet and instead was planning on going to college. Therefore, it would seem that 'getting a life' and having access to a pro-social identity, publicly establishing an alternative lifestyle and being accepted as having changed is vital. The analysis also showed that relational reflexivity can be extended to wider networks such as the police who have had actual encounters with all of those interviewed, both to reaffirm and challenge desistance (Bradford et al. 2014). It is also argued that those who are not known to the individual are also important, such as policy makers and future employers who can prevent those who have offended from having the same access to employment. At the time of writing the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 is being revised so that short-term offenders at least should have the same access to employment opportunities as others. This change will undoubtedly signify an openness within society to accept those who are attempting to desist and I argue also help sustain desistance itself. Without identity desistance or access to this, primary or act desistance remains fragile. This is best shown by Kevin who was unable to secure any form of status and angry for what his life had become and eventually reoffended.

The loneliness and isolation that all of these young people have experienced as a result of desisting undermines the process and I feel that this evidence highlights the need for society to do more, so that this does not become a delegitimised process. 'Knifing off' from anti-social friends can be regarded as a form of self-harm when these social networks are not replaced. Ideally, as will be discussed, turning co-offending into co-desistance, thus capitalising on the strengths of the young people

themselves may be one way forward. This research supports the idea that identity or secondary desistance needs to be supported through connections within but also beyond the micro level (Halsey and Deegan, 2015). Crucially, most did not feel that those who cared about them recognised or saw their change and this undermined attempts towards achieving a sense of self-worth. The odds of sustained desistance improve when those who have offended are able to develop social links with people in different social hierarchies because it enables them to access wider social resources (McNeill, 2006). As these young people continued to become increasingly more isolated their ability to meet others diminished. Getting jobs, taking up new hobbies and being exposed to new experiences assists desisters in ‘moving on’ and building a new life, rather than merely existing (Weaver, 2015; 2013; Healy, 2012; Sampson and Laub, 2003). It also means that the ‘new’ identity is acted out and affirmed by a wider audience and identity desistance consolidated at a deeper and higher level. To achieve this, desisters need access to ‘bridging capital’ to move beyond the micro-level (Putnam, 2000), this can be provided by meso-brokers helping individuals to find in-routes and pathways to break through to the meso-level. For Amy, her worker was exactly this person and the links made to college, beyond the micro-level, helped her to see that a new and better life was tangible. This research raises questions about the destinations beyond desistance. It is suggested that one of the ways in which this could be supported is that criminology itself moves beyond desistance and defining the individual only in relation to their past offending. This is not to say that desistance has no place, but that it should have a sell by date.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

As outlined in more detail in chapter five, there are limitations to this study. First and foremost, the findings are based on a small sample that is not statistically generalisable. Moreover, a gender balance was not achieved and the depth of the accounts relied on what the young people were willing or able to share. A biographical or psychosocial approach was not used but may be worth adopting in future and elements have been adopted, such as the endeavour to provide context. As well as the instability of accounts generated by the participants, an awareness of my own potential impact and limitations has also been important. For example, in

analysing the accounts and tracking progress I have taken their initial interview and the hopes that they made when I first met them as the basis for future comparison. By doing so the underlying unhappiness was revealed and I think that this is part of what providing a critical realist approach entails. The main limitation I feel is that within the confines of the research and the thesis the data has had to be filtered and reduced. For example, interviews with workers has not been reported on because the focus has been on the young people and communicating their stories, but it is hoped that future publications will follow to further unpack the views of practitioners.

Overall, I view this thesis as the beginning of what I hope will be ongoing work, and believe that there is much value in attempting to re-interview all of these young people so that how they ‘progress’ can be recorded and their journey’s further analysed. Equally, the interviews with their ‘supporters’ show that there is much benefit in these being analysed, reported on and researched further in their own right.

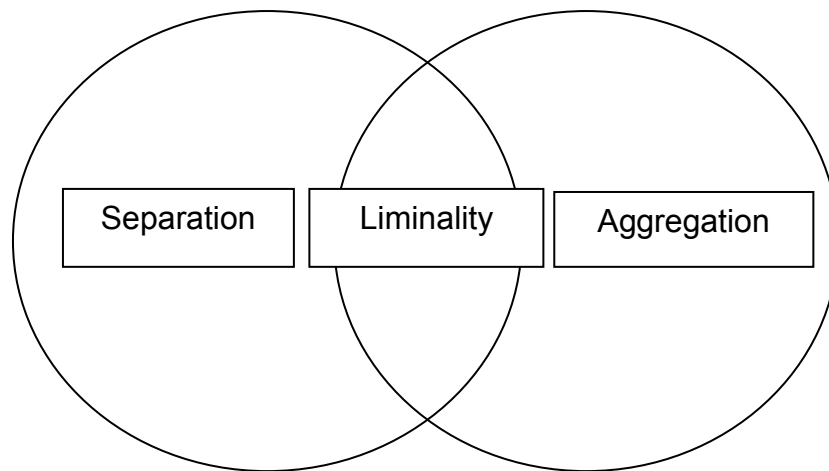
CONCEPTUALISING ADULTHOOD AND DESTINATIONS BEYOND DESISTANCE: LIMITLESS LIMINALITY

Both those who had offended and those who had not offended were dealing with increasing isolation and increasing hopelessness in their future. The former group had to endure what could be termed pains of desistance, and for all, these were really pains of poverty. In attempting then to conceptualise this stage in the young people’s lives, I draw on the work of Turner (1964) and analysis of the rites of passage within tribes, to state that there are three different stages, namely, the first stage, ‘separation’ before moving into liminality, the in-between stage, before achieving ‘aggregation’, and the final stage when the rites of passage are fulfilled. I argue, based on the accounts of all twelve that they had to look after themselves from a young age and therefore entered what has been traditionally thought of as the ‘transition to adulthood’, or liminal phase, earlier than their young counterparts in terms of responsabilisation. For those who have offended, they then entered what could be deemed an illegitimate ‘aggregation’ stage, and had for a short time before giving up crime achieved social, financial, cultural and symbolic capital. However, *by desisting*

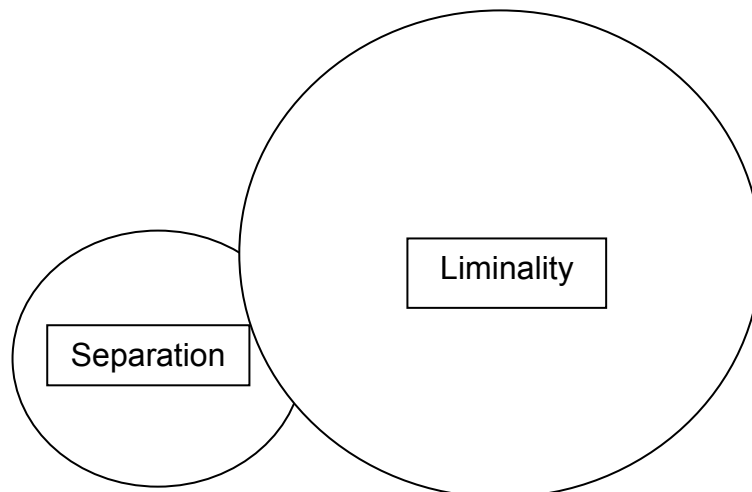
they stepped back into liminality and were aware of the loss of position and stability, what I have termed a period of ‘identity crises’.

By bringing both groups together, the destination of either adulthood or beyond desistance is emphasised as both unclear and uncertain. This population, whether they had offended or not, could be defined as denizens (Standing, 2014; 2011), that is, those who do not have full rights and are either not aware of this or powerless to change it. This study shows that the concept of ‘emerging adulthood’ (Arnett, 2001; 2006), that emphasises choice and being able to take time to explore roles and pathways is not applicable here with the young people having neither. Instead, most had become stuck, living day to day and trapped or lost in what I term ‘limitless liminality.’ For those who had offended, the difference was that although they attempted to ‘go straight’, the label of offender was hard to shake and without a credible audience to witness the changes it went unnoticed. The ‘destination’ of adulthood appears to have lost meaning for all interviewed and on the outer edges of the precariat. The testimonies of most of those interviewed reflected the feeling that they do not have a role and lack purpose. The following two diagrams outline the steps towards adulthood before and what is actually the case now for those who took part in the study.

The Three Stages of Rites of Passage/Adulthood (Turner, 1964)



Contemporary Adulthood for those living in poverty: Limitless Liminality



THE POWERLESS INDIVIDUAL

Standing (2011) states that this population, ‘the precariat’, have the potential to become dangerous as they may be drawn to extreme politics or get to the point when they can no longer tolerate their position. However, the young people in this study instead were for the most part increasingly hopeless, powerless and aware of this being the case. Moreover, by naming this population as a group, Standing (2011) presents a fictional representation of them being ‘in it’ together. Whereas, a truer reflection of limitless liminality is that it is experienced individually and the uncertainty and pain caused specific to each person. Structural inequalities also appeared to be sometimes consciously reproduced by individuals as they felt that there was no alternative. For example, all of the young people who were struggling financially did not ask for *Includem*’s help and instead felt and expected that they should attempt to simply deal with or get on with their situation on their own.

In the accounts of Kim and Kevin, I have put forward the comparison of them being similar to journeymen in boxing, as they do not have the ability or skill to win but rather their purpose appears to be to endure life’s punches. Kevin and Dan also wanted to ‘get away’ from where they lived but were unable to do so. These young people are bound and consciously restricted (Evans et al. 2001). It could even be argued that their awareness of their position and subsequent powerlessness to change it may even be more damaging than if they had remained unaware. This question cannot be answered within the scope of this study but it raises the possibility that victims of inequality may reproduce inequality too. Their rights or the opportunity to challenge such inequality are actually therefore only theoretical in nature. Leaving this cul-de-sac thinking behind in an attempt to find potential ‘ways forward’ the case for renewed hope is vital.

THE CASE FOR RENEWED HOPE

I have argued that there has been a mutual misunderstanding and almost unconscious dismissal between society and those interviewed. An analysis of the accounts shows that, other than Scott, Hamish and Amy, the young people viewed themselves as

outsiders and crucially felt that the inside had nothing to offer them. Equally, I would suggest that wider society does not regard, or at least appears to not regard those on the outside as having the potential of being insiders. The growing tolerance of inequalities within our society though is not I feel irreversible. Hall et al. (2014) call for wider public engagement and present some tangible ways forward. For example, participants in their study felt that there was a need to reframe discussions away from using the word 'poverty', which they associated with the developing world, and rather to reframe this in terms of 'need.' Participants also suggested that making the narratives and stories of those affected public would help to increase understanding and empathy. There was also an acknowledgement that this was an issue to be dealt with not only by Government but engaging across sectors and in a multi-agency way. To open up what Bauman (2002: 15) would refer to as 'dialogue' within society to arrive at solutions in partnership. Taking up the role of a citizen is a two way process. It is about the individual gaining recognition from society but also the individual recognising their place, potential and responsibilities too. The idea of citizenship advocated for here is that of inclusion (Stenner and Taylor, 2008). This highlights the need to be purposive, to have worth and an ability to have a say or play a part that is meaningful. It requires a change of mentality by both sides. Both Scott and Hamish, the two most successful people in the study, feel now that they have a place within society and that they are entitled to the opportunities they have had access to. By taking these up, they are contributing to a better society. This was not always the case though. Both felt that it was through the support of others they realised their own self-worth and through opportunities were able to make this a reality. One of the central arguments of this thesis is that independence is really interdependence and once the reliance on others is accepted and promoted this is when a civic community can flourish (Putnam, 1993). In advocating for a more equal society, I will also set out below some ways in which the capacities of these young people rather than their deficits can be supported, nurtured and promoted.

POTENTIAL WAYS FORWARD

Policy Implications

One of the possible sources of and resources for renewed hope can be found in redefining both adulthood and destinations beyond desistance as citizenship. Standing (2014) sets out what he terms a ‘precariat charter’ consisting of 29 articles. Although there is not space to discuss each of these in turn, the idea is that there are many ways to help the precariat move from being denizens to citizens. For example, the regulation of flexible labour such as zero hours contracts and internships is advocated as well as a universal basic income provided for all. At present, as was discussed, those who live in poverty are the least likely to be successful in all aspects of life and it appears that it is only when they are damaging society, when they truly fall, and are causing crime (Barry, 2013), that they are then sometimes ‘rescued’ to then undergo a process of de-labelling but often not re-integration. In reality, as already stated, those who live in poverty are on the outskirts and taking citizenship seriously would mean acknowledging that when they fall, we all fall. The emphasis on agency and on building agency so that people take control and feel that they have control is important, but agency is bound by structure, and so to have hope and be able to take action the constraints of structures have to be challenged. Society and citizenship can’t be realised fully until inequality is addressed and individuals are given access to the same rights and similar life chances. In Scotland, the high proportion of young people who came out to vote on the referendum to decide whether to stay in the UK, could be considered a strong indication that those on the ‘outside’ want to play a role, want to be heard and want to contribute. It is now up to those on the inside then to let them in.

Reconfiguring adulthood and desistance to be about promoting citizenship has the potential to break down barriers and emphasize societal potential, recognising capacities rather than focusing on deficits. This approach is already happening in the criminal justice system, as shown by the Good Lives Model of Offender Rehabilitation, an explicitly strengths based approach and by Circles of Support and Accountability. There is, I contend, as was also discussed in chapter two, an appetite for change and these lessons and ways of thinking could extend further, so that poverty, as well as past offending, is no longer viewed as being evidence of deficits.

For those who are desisting, I argue that a cognitive transformation about ‘ex-offenders’ is required within society. Reformation of the Rehabilitation of the Offenders Act 1974 is one step forward, so that where appropriate, those who have offended and fulfilled their sentence can actually move on with their lives and are no longer second class citizens in the job market. Beyond this, there is strong evidence from countries such as Finland that a change of mind-set in society is possible (Lappi-Seppala, 2006). The impact that can be made by acknowledging and investing in capacities is shown by organisations such as *Timpsons* that actively recruit from prisons so that those coming out have support, a job and direct access to the meso level. This is an example of those ‘above’ with resources making a deliberate decision to reach down to those ‘below’ to give them a step up, thereby acting as active meso-brokers. This is not about prioritising those who have offended but rather allowing them a more equal footing and thus enacting reintegration. It is about providing a form of dynamic energy transfer to counteract the impact of hitting ‘rock bottom’ and propelling people out of the downward spiral experienced.

This research captures the positive impact that ‘meso brokers’ can make to the lives of those living in poverty. In order to make access to the meso-level available to those on the margins, a more progressive form of active citizenship is required within active communities involving young people. This would mean taking a serious and considered account of the realities of these ‘communities’ and providing real support so that they can play the role that is expected of them. A bottom-up approach is suggested, so that the deeper issues are fully understood and addressed and the connections made to the meso level so that real change is more possible. These issues should not be left to those who are the least likely to ask for help. Instead, ‘reaching out’ needs to be taken at a Governmental level, to dispel myths of worklessness and take on board the responsibility to give support, to no longer individualise and cast blame, but rather to build empathy and make meaningful lasting change. To be the leaders in building a society that is not only in name alone.

Practice

As already discussed in practical terms, one of the implications of this study that has already been taken on board by *Includem* has been to recognise the need to follow-up on those they have supported. This group, arguably representative of the most vulnerable population in society, are unlikely to ask for help, quietly sinking and alone, they need to be made more aware of what they are entitled to and their rights. As described by McNeill (2014), also drawing on the nautical metaphor, services can either play a role that is the equivalent to being a hole in the boat or the wind in the sale of those they help. In the first instance, sending someone to prison for example is shown to be a way in which desistance is often inhibited by restricting access to both social capital and a pro-social identity. In terms of being the wind in the sail, workers supporting young people could help them realise and build upon their strengths and build pro-social relationships. The idea of services is extended here to also include the police, who in this study were shown to act as ‘mirrors’ (Bradford et al. 2014), and their role in supporting a positive image being reflected back to those attempting to desist could be vital and play a role in legitimising this process. Undoubtedly, the impact services can have is clear, as was demonstrated by what the young people said about their *Includem* workers. I would also add, based on the findings that there needs to be a more serious consideration about what services in and of themselves can realistically offer. Bearing in mind that they are likely to eventually move away from the individual, their influence has to be contextualised. I would argue that it is ethical that they instead assist the individual to become part of something else, to bridge towards their own support and thus be a part of their own solution in a very real way. Giving services alone the key role in which they ultimately can help or hinder progress is I feel not conducive to really giving support. In recognising the destructiveness of individualism, it is fair then that promoting social networks beyond the service that are able to be sustainable is necessary.

To tackle the isolation that was found in both groups, one of the most immediate ways in which this could be changed is that organisations like *Includem* could help young people to come together. They could then share their stories and foster connections that are not professionalised and have the potential to continue after the service has ended. Elaine even recalled in one interview how meeting other young people had been one of the best things to happen to her in raising self-confidence, self-esteem and understanding that others were also facing similar challenges. The lack of micro-level

relational desistance available to all five interviewed who had a history of offending indicated that potentially sharing the difficult journey of desistance with those who are also experiencing this might be another way forward.

It could be argued though that dividing these groups up is neither fair nor possibly conducive to providing long-term help. Avoiding division of ‘them’ and ‘us’ is best and bringing young people together so that they may at the very least feel less alone advisable. The idea of ‘mutual aid’ is fairly new in criminal and youth justice. Weaver (2015) defines it as those within the group helping one another, fostering reciprocity. It will undoubtedly have opponents who deem it a risk but it can and has been shown to be successful (Weaver, 2015; Nugent, 2015; Weaver and McCulloch, 2012; Weaver 2013; Weaver and McNeill, 2015). By believing in and supporting each other, the young people themselves might play a valuable role in establishing an identity and for those who have desisted, a new identity. In understanding the difficulties in attaining security of any kind in contemporary society relating to work or employment, one of the findings from this study, reasserting the work of Weaver (2015), is that sometimes the most reliable forms of identity accessible today are those relating to others, for example, the ‘good auntie’, ‘reliable friend’ or ‘good girlfriend.’ We are and we become through others. In also adopting the water metaphor, Cooley (1956: 247) states ‘as social beings we live with our eyes upon our reflection, but we have no assurance of the tranquility of the waters in which we see it.’ As well as supporting stable connections, I would add that leaving young people to come together alone without access to wider support may mean that prospects beyond their micro-environment remain unknown, unattainable or both. The chance then for the identity to progress beyond their microclimate would be out of reach and highlights the potential pivot role that could be played by meso-brokers.

The need for policy and practice change

This section has divided up potential ways forward in terms of policy and practice, but ideally this division should not exist, with both speaking to one another and instead fostering praxis. As was described in chapter two, through an analysis of housing in Scotland, real change doesn’t always come even with good policy and co-

operation to deal with issues from the private and public sector is essential. A civic community relies on everyone giving up something and contributing for the greater good. The individualism that has dominated the culture has allowed for young people, even those who are well educated to learn to live precariously. In an assessment of communities in Italy, Putnam (1993: 115) states of Mezzogiorno, that 'One feels too much of the 'I' and too little of the we'. For real change to happen, citizenship and 'we-ness' needs to be accepted, promoted and actively encouraged' (Weaver, 2013: 4), and as pointed out by Weaver and McNeill (2015), this requires solidarity and sharing responsibility through reciprocity.

TAKING INSPIRATION FROM WITHIN

The following two case examples taken from both Castlemilk and Glenrothes show that change is possible, but that this begins with renewed hope. In 2009 Glenrothes won the Carbuncle Award, an accolade for the 'most dismal town in Scotland.' This hitting 'rock bottom' inspired an active resistance and the setting up of a campaign called 'Take Pride in Glenrothes.' This resulted in a concerted local effort to combat litter and revive the flora of the town. In 2012 Glenrothes won gold in the large town category of the RHS Britain in Bloom competition by the environmental charity 'Keep Scotland Beautiful.' Within Castlemilk the story of the revival of the area named 'The Stables' also epitomises the strength of the population there and the impact of hope and action. By the late 1980s this former plant was boarded up, subsumed in vegetation and in 1994 set on fire (Princes's Regeneration Trust, undated). As summarised by the Princes Regeneration Trust 'Despite the socio-economic problems that are still faced by the area, Castlemilk residents have a strong sense of place, heritage and civic pride.' By 2004 a group of residents over the years formed Cassiltoun Housing Association that mounted a ten-year campaign to bring the Stables back into use. They went into partnership with Glasgow Building Preservation Trust (GBPT) to purchase the building from the Council for a nominal £1, as they were valued as market-failure buildings in 'exclusion zones' of investment. In total, over £4.2 million of funding was secured to enable the construction and restoration project to succeed. The buildings have now been handed over to the

Cassiltoun Trust that now owns and manages them on behalf of the community back into sustainable use.

These examples show that renewed hope is necessary for action to follow. However, both examples also reveal that those who are regarded as resilient can sometimes be left to cope alone. The latter example also shows the importance and impact of meso brokers to make real change possible. I would argue that the perception of the outside world of these areas can be unforgiving and lacks compassion, as was discussed by Kevin in Chapter 6 when an office worker, upon hearing where he was from said ‘you are from Castlemilk, you are nearly dead already.’ The hopelessness and lack of expectation projected upon others can be devastating and debilitating. Drawing again on the work of Cooley (1956), the need for a compassionate audience to support progress and instil a positive self-identity is invaluable. As stated by Standing (2015: 388):

The sense of a Precariat Charter is the assertion that many elements come together; no single measure is a panacea or magic bullet. It is an ethos that must be reconstructed, built on the great values of compassion and empathy. We should not risk waking up years from now, thinking you no moral right to complain because you did nothing when you had the energy and did not like the future-less realities around you. Change can only come if we act, not if we simply complain.

The reality here though is that the young people didn’t even complain, they accepted, they endured, they were sinking quietly, internalising the blame bestowed on them. It is up to us then who are aware to take up this cause and at least attempt to make the issues known.

This thesis set out to give an insight into the lives of young people living in poverty and how they end contact with services, experience the transition to adulthood and how desistance from offending was instigated and sustained. All twelve initially had hopes of being in a stable home, in work and ‘settled’, and for most, as time passed,

and these were not met, these desires were either scaled back or became a form of cruel optimism as they became increasingly isolated. This study, although small, indicates that we may be living in a society where young people have low expectations of what they are entitled to and what the future holds, and this, I argue here and have argued elsewhere needs to change (Nugent, 2015b). The mutual dismissal between society and those who live in poverty means that potential is being almost consciously curtailed, and the binaries of ‘them’ and ‘us’ have created distance so that compassion and empathy are being lost. It transpires that the solutions are really beyond criminal justice and are about creating social justice, addressing inequality and making citizenship meaningful. The destination of adulthood is no longer viewed as attainable and in some cases even undesirable. Maybe in today’s society the ‘destination’ of adulthood and of moving beyond desistance has been demystified and instead the focus on the journey is enough.

The higher philosophical questions about the meaning of life are undoubtedly personal, and if this is just about killing time then it is important to recognise that for the most part, these young people did not feel satisfied or happy in their current capacity but accepted that they had to endure and not complain. As stated by Forrest and Kearns (2001: 2141), ‘Coping with social problems is not the same thing as overcoming them’. Maybe the destination is less important and it is about the journey, in which case we might aim at least for an easier, not a rougher passage, where others provide companionship and support and reduce the likelihood of sinking. For those who did ‘best’ over the year, they accepted uncertainty and prioritised their relationships with others; their identities formulated around these connections. They did not give any weight to securing ‘adulthood’, and so one of the ways in which ontological security may be achieved is the acceptance of ontological insecurity. One of the core arguments in this thesis is that independence needs to be redefined as interdependence and that ‘we-ness’, reciprocity and solidarity should be promoted instead of individualism. There is a moral duty on criminologists to put a ‘spotlight’ on poverty (Winlow and Hall, 2013), but also to be open that we do not have the answers, we too must embrace the idea of interdependence and acknowledge that criminal justice is certainly not always the best way of dealing with those who have fallen. Equally, although there is much to be learned from using desistance to inform approaches to working with those who have offended, I have also pointed out

that trapping the individual in an identity where they are viewed only in relation to their past is not helpful. I have argued that the case for renewed hope can be one of the first steps to change and furthermore, inequality and poverty, both of which are the root of these issues is not inevitable (Atkinson, 2015). Remaining hopeful and recognising that change is possible is vital: without hope there is inaction. In many ways, the young people involved in this study could be defined as ‘lost boys and girls’, not only in terms of their background but also in terms of their inability to access adulthood or destinations beyond desistance. Unlike Peter Pan and his lost boys though, it was not they wouldn’t grow up, they couldn’t.

*Wandering between two worlds, one dead,
The other powerless to be born,
With nowhere yet to rest my head,
Like these, on earth I wait forlorn.
Their faith, my tears, the world deride?
I come to shed them at their side.*

Matthew Arnold, 'The Grande Chartreuse'

Hope has two beautiful daughters. Their names are anger and courage; anger at the way things are, and courage to see that they do not remain the way they are.
Saint Augustine

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APPENDIX I: TERMINOLOGY

Expression	Meaning
Aye	Yes
Bairn	Child, baby
Cannae	Cannot, can't
Anymare	Anymore
Lassie	Girl, young woman
Wasnae	Was not
Ken	Know, you know
Nae	No, not
The brew	On unemployment benefits
Wean	Child, baby
Wee	Small, young
Arse	Ass
Decent	Good
Heavy	Extremely
No'	Not

APPENDIX II: ETHICS FORM AND ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTS

University of Edinburgh
School of Health is Social Science
RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE



Ethics review form for level 2 and level 3 assessment

This form should be used for all research projects carried out by staff or students in the School of Health in Social Science that have been identified by self-audit as requiring detailed assessment - i.e. level 2 and level 3 within the three-tier system of ethics approval set out by the School Research Ethics Committee. The levels within the system are explained in the School Research Ethics Policy and Procedures document. Please indicate which level applies to your research.

If you are applying for IRAS review or other external review submitted in English, you do not need to complete this form but must deposit a copy of your application to IRAS or another body as directed by your subject area Research Ethics Co-ordinator.

This form provides general School-wide guidance. Proposers should supplement these with detailed provisions that may be stipulated by research collaborators (e.g. NHS) or professional bodies (e.g. BPS, SRA). The signed and completed form should be submitted, along with a copy of the research proposal, research instruments and information and consent sheets to the relevant person (Subject Area Research Ethics Co-ordinator for staff, postdoctoral fellows and postgraduate students, Dissertation supervisor for undergraduate students). Level 3 requests should also be lodged electronically with the School Research Ethics Administrator for forwarding to the Chair of the School Research Ethics Committee.

Research Ethics Committee will monitor level 2 proposals annually to satisfy themselves that the School Ethics Policy and Procedures are being complied with. They will revert to proposers in cases where there may be particular concerns or queries. For level 2 and 3 assessments, research work must not proceed until issues raised have been considered by the appropriate people. It is particularly important that level 3 applications are submitted well in advance of any required date of approval.

The form developed by the College of Humanities and Social Science is used for level 2 and 3 reviews. If the answer to any of the questions below is 'yes', please give details of how this issue is being/will be addressed to ensure that ethical standards are maintained.

1 THE RESEARCHERS	
Your name and position	Briege Nugent, PhD Research Student

Proposed title of research	A qualitative longitudinal study of <i>Includem's</i> Transitional Support Programme
Funding body	ESRC
Time scale for research	November 2012-November 2015
List those who will be involved in conducting the research, including names and positions (e.g. 'PhD student')	Briege Nugent, PhD Student Professor Richard Sparks, (Edinburgh University, SCCJR) Supervisor Professor Fergus McNeil (Glasgow University, SCCJR), Supervisor Pamela Barnes, (<i>Includem</i>) Supervisor

2 RISKS TO, AND SAFETY OF, RESEARCHERS	
Do any of those named above need appropriate training to enable them to conduct the proposed research safely and in accordance with the ethical principles set out by the College?	Yes In the event that a young person is in prison the researcher will have to undergo the specific self-defence and broader training required and delivered by the Scottish Prison Service.
Are any of the researchers likely to be sent or go to any areas where their safety may be compromised, or they may need support to deal with difficult issues?	Yes All the interviews will take place in line with <i>Includem's</i> Risk Assessment, Management and Reduction Policy which is informed and shaped by the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001 and the SSSC Codes of Practice for Social Service Workers. ⁵ Throughout the research process any risk assessments will be shared, discussed, monitored and records updated. Ideally all interviews should happen with the <i>Includem</i> worker on-site where it is not taking place in the office. All <i>Includem</i> workers are part of a 'Guardian 24' system that protects Lone Workers. ⁶ In the unlikely event that an <i>Includem</i> worker is not able to accompany the researcher, in order to minimise risks the established practice used by the Edinburgh Youth Transitions Study for lone researchers undertaking fieldwork will be adopted. This protocol mimics the Guardian 24 system.
Could researchers have any conflicts of interest?	No There is a need to highlight to all participants in order to ensure impartiality that this research is separate from <i>Includem</i> . Even though there is a large aspect of this research which is focused on <i>Includem's</i> work it will be made clear to all participants that anything they say about the service will not be reported directly back to the service in its raw form. All participants will be assured that their interviews will be treated as confidential unless there is a risk of harm identified to the participant or someone else.

⁵ This can be found at:
http://www.sssc.uk.com/component/option,com_docman/Itemid,486/gid,1020/task,doc_details/

⁶ Information taken from <http://www.guardian24.co.uk/>

<p>Could the research induce any psychological stress or discomfort?</p>	<p>Yes The young people and their families have often experienced social exclusion and the research may mean that they are talking about and reliving difficult or traumatic experiences. The research will set out to minimise any potential harmful impact and have opted to use an action research model. The process of interviewing should not simply be about recording information, but rather understanding that this is an individual's life story, and they have given up their time to allow you in to an often very private world. The researcher should be sensitive, empathetic and to handle the interview process with as much respect as possible. If for example, the participant discloses abuse, it is up to the researcher to help the participant to act appropriately in line with <i>Includem's</i> Child Protection Policy and connect the young person to appropriate support. Participants may not be comfortable about giving consent to access records or files, and it will be made clear that they are under no obligation to allow this and their consent should be given freely.</p>
<p>Does the research involve any physically invasive or potentially physically harmful procedures?</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Could this research adversely affect participants in any other way?</p>	<p>No</p>

4 DATA PROTECTION	
<p>Will any part of the research involve audio, film or video recording of individuals?</p>	<p>Yes The consent form will cover all aspects of the research, and one point is to ascertain whether or not the participant is comfortable with their interview being audio recorded. The point of recording the interviews is that the researcher can give their full attention to the individual being interviewed, however where they are not comfortable with this the researcher will not take notes during the interview but rather make a detailed contemporaneous record. Moreover, if the researcher feels that the young person's story is being hindered by the use or even presence of the recorder they will exercise discretion and this will not be used. Ideally the researcher hopes to create an open and comfortable atmosphere where the participant can feel confident to set boundaries.</p>
<p>Will the research require collection of personal information from any persons without their direct consent?</p>	<p>No</p>

<p>How will the confidentiality of data, including the identity of participants (whether specifically recruited for the research or not) be ensured?</p>	<p>Yes This proposal has been particularly informed by the ESRC Research Data Policy,⁷ and the Code of Practice used by the Glasgow Centre for the Child and Society.⁸ The recording and storing of the data will be in accordance with the principles and guidelines set out by the Data Protection Act 1998. Specifically, in relation to confidentiality each participant will be given a code, datasets will be password protected and the data anonymised as outlined in the ESRC Research Data Policy.⁹ A data management system will be put in place using Microsoft Excel so that each case will be given a personal ID number, this should mean that particularly when data is being carried on an encrypted USB stick persons will not be able to be identified.</p> <p>One aspect of the study which should also be considered in relation to confidentiality is that the young person will be asked if they are willing to be invited to join a <i>Facebook</i> page. This will be set up for this study specifically and will simply be a means of trying to keep in contact with a mobile population. This aspect of the study will be subject to the University's Acceptable Use Policy,¹⁰ in order to minimise risk of identity to users all contact will be made through private messages. It should also be noted that the forum will be monitored on a daily basis so that any inappropriate content will be removed quickly.</p> <p>Data relating to the analysis of criminal records or participant's files which are kept by the organisation will be subject to the same stringent compliance in relation to both confidentiality and making the material anonymous and participants will be assured of this.</p>
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⁸ This can be found at http://www.esrc.ac.uk/_images/Research_Data_Policy_2010_tcm8-4595.pdf

⁸ This can be found at: http://www.ed.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.71236!/fileManager/EthicsGuide-Children.pdf

⁹ This can be found at http://www.esrc.ac.uk/_images/Research_Data_Policy_2010_tcm8-4595.pdf

¹⁰ This can be found at: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/accommodation-services/current-students/facilities/it-coms/keycom/acceptable-use-policy>

Who will be entitled to have access to the raw data?	Only the researchers directly involved in this project will have access.
How and where will the data be stored, in what format, and for how long?	This is an ESRC funded project and therefore the data will be archived in a secure and anonymised form as outlined in their Research Data Policy. ¹¹ Computers used will have a firewall installed and updated, data will be backed up and in the event that the data is being transferred an encrypted password protected USB device will be used.
What steps have been taken to ensure that only entitled persons will have access to the data?	All data will be password protected and those with access will be given knowledge of this. Data stored will be made coded and made anonymous so that those who have direct access to the paper files alone would be able to connect this.
How will the data be disposed of?	The data will be stored in accordance to the ESRC Research Data Policy.
How will the results of the research be used?	The results will be used to inform <i>Includem</i> about the transitional support service, and also to help understand better the desistance process and transition to adulthood of this particular population.
What feedback of findings will be given to participants?	Participants should feel at least some sense of ownership over 'their' story and as far as possible the researcher should reaffirm the knowledge gained so that they do not skew, over-estimate or over-theorise that which has been imparted. Ideally participants should be invited to hear about the results of the project, and to also give their feedback on what is deduced by the researcher.
Is any information likely to be passed on to external companies or organisations in the course of the research?	Yes In the event that abuse or risks are disclosed <i>Includem</i> will be informed and this may mean the involvement of other organisations.

¹¹ This can be found at http://www.esrc.ac.uk/_images/Research_Data_Policy_2010_tcm8-4595.pdf

Will the project involve the transfer of personal data to countries outside the European Economic Area?	No
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5 RESEARCH DESIGN	
The research involves living human subjects specifically recruited for this research project <i>If 'no', go to section 6</i>	Yes
How many participants will be involved in the study?	It is envisaged that up to 30 young people, fifteen family members or supporters and workers and management will be interviewed.
What criteria will be used in deciding on inclusion/exclusion of participants?	All participants who are exiting the transitional support service will be approached, there will be no other criteria established for them to be part of the study.
How will the sample be recruited?	The research design will use gatekeepers, specifically key workers to access both the young people and family members or significant others. The risk of using gatekeepers is that the young person or their supporters may feel pressurised to do the interview because for example they don't want to say no to the worker. Being aware of potential disparities of power is an important aspect of the Code of Practice set out by the Glasgow for the Child and Society. All those approached will be informed that they do not have to take part and can withdraw or stop the interview process at any stage without penalty. It is important that those taking part want to take part, and willingness at the early stages is a vital consideration which should hopefully help reduce attrition rates for future follow-up.

<p>Will the study involve groups or individuals who are in custody or care, such as students at school, self help groups, residents of nursing home?</p>	<p>Yes <i>Includem</i> work with some of the most vulnerable young people in our society and therefore throughout this study they may be in care or indeed in custody. For the purposes of this research young people interviewed will be viewed as children, this is in accordance with the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 and The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Scotland is a strong advocate for Children's rights as evidenced by the Children's Charter, Framework for Standards and 'Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)' national policy. In the legislation and policy there is a special emphasis on the welfare of the child as being paramount, the importance of the child being listened to, and the need for co-ordinated support to promote well-being.¹² The rights stipulated in legislation, policy and codes of conduct will not only be adhered to in this study but actively promoted.</p>
<p>Will there be a control group?</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>What information will be provided to participants prior to their consent? (e.g. information leaflet, briefing session)</p>	<p>The research aims as far as possible to obtain informed consent from all participants, for this study this means that information about the research, rights and expectations will be reiterated and participant's will have the opportunity to ask questions about any aspect of the research in general or their participation throughout the fieldwork. The consent form will be filled in by the researcher and participant together before the interview takes place to ensure that every point is verbally conveyed, understood and the participant has had an opportunity to ask questions and fully understand what is being asked and expected of them.</p>

¹² Scottish Government (2010) National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland. (Web only) at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/12/09134441/0> accessed on 12/12/12

<p>Participants have a right to withdraw from the study at any time. Please tick to confirm that participants will be advised of their rights, including the right to continue receiving services if they withdraw from the study.</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto;">X</div>
<p>Will it be necessary for participants to take part in the study without their knowledge and consent? (e.g. covert observation of people in non-public places)</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Where consent is obtained, what steps will be taken to ensure that a written record is maintained?</p>	<p>Each participant will be met with and a written consent form signed and initialled appropriately.</p>
<p>In the case of participants whose first language is not English, what arrangements are being made to ensure informed consent?</p>	<p>In the unlikely event that this is the case the researcher will investigate the use of an interpreter.</p>
<p>Will participants receive any financial or other benefit from their participation?</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Are any of the participants likely to be particularly vulnerable, such as elderly or disabled people, adults with incapacity, your own students, members of ethnic minorities, or in a professional or client relationship with the researcher?</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Will any of the participants be under 16 years of age?</p>	<p>No</p>

Do the researchers named above need to be cleared through the Disclosure Scotland procedures?	Yes The researcher has been vetted under the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme introduced in 2010 in January 2013.
Will any of the participants be interviewed in situations which will compromise their ability to give informed consent, such as in prison, residential care, or the care of the local authority?	Yes Throughout the study there may be particular situations which may arise, for example a young person may be in prison. In the event that this happens it is still the role of the researcher to make it clear that the young person can still withdraw their consent at any time, and that their participation is entirely voluntary.

6 EXTERNAL PROFESSIONAL BODIES	
Is the research proposal subject to scrutiny by any external body concerned with ethical approval?	No
If so, which body?	
Date approval sought	
Outcome, if known or	
Date outcome expected	

7 ISSUES ARISING FROM THE PROPOSAL
<p>In my view, ethical issues have been satisfactorily addressed, OR</p> <p>In my view, the ethical issues listed below arise and the following steps are being taken to address them:</p> <p>Signature</p> <p>Date</p>

APPENDIX III: INFORMATION SHEETS CONSENT FORMS AND INTERVIEW SCHEDULES

This Appendix contains information sheets for:

- The young people interviewed
- *Includem* workers

Consent forms for:

- The young people interviewed
- *Includem* workers
- ‘Key supporters’

Interview Schedules for:

- Young People interviewed in stage one, two and three
- *Includem* workers
- ‘Key supporters’

Information on Support Services



The Transitions Study

Information for Participants

Who am I?

My name is Briega Nugent and I am a student at the University of Edinburgh.

Why am I doing the study?

This will be a chance to understand more about young people's lives.

What do I want to know?

I want to know what support you have received from Includem, and also how you progress after you have left the service.

How do I plan to do this?

I want to get to know you and understand the things that you are looking forward to, and the challenges and hopes you have.

In this research what you or anyone else says will remain confidential unless there is a risk of harm to you or anyone else; otherwise it will not be shared with anyone. Your name and identity will not be used in any reports or materials.

Why do I need your help?

Hearing about you and understanding more about your life is vital to this study, to this service, other services and policies for young people.

I know you are busy and can probably (maybe even definitely ☺) think of better things to do, but this could mean a difference to other young people in the future, if you can spare the time I really hope you will take part.

If you agree to take part please let your worker know and they can give you more details and then make contact with me.

Thank you and I look forward to meeting you!

Briega Nugent
B.R.nugent@sms.ed.ac.uk



The Transitional Support Service Study

Information for Staff

What am I doing the study?

The transitional support service is innovative and new and provides an opportunity to understand what helps young people move on in their lives, and also what about this service could be applied elsewhere.

What do I want to know?

I want to know what support young people have received from Includem and how they progress both with the service and after they have left.

How do I plan to do this?

I want to interview young people over a period of eighteen months to capture their progress and understand the challenges and support they have in making the transition to becoming more independent. I want to interview staff to capture their expert views on what makes the difference to help young people move on in their lives.

Why do I need your help?

I want to hear about how you do your work and support young people to move on in their lives. I would also appreciate your help to arrange interviews with young people and relevant family members you have also supported.

I know you are incredibly busy and I hope that this research will not interrupt your work, but I also hope that you see the value in doing this and help me get the study underway.

Thank you and I look forward to working with you!

Contact Details
B.R.nugent@sms.ed.ac.uk

TRANSITIONS STUDY: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

**Please
Tick**

1. The researcher has told me about the research and answered any questions I had about it.
 2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason.
 3. I agree to speak to the researcher and understand that everything I say is kept confidential unless I, or someone else is at risk of harm. If the researcher is worried about this I understand that she will tell me.
 4. I understand that I do not have to answer any questions if I do not wish to.
 5. I understand that my name and personal details will not be used in any way that could identify me in the reports or any publicity about the research.
 6. I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications.
 7. I agree to the researcher contacting me again to arrange another interview.
 8. I agree to be invited to join a Facebook page and understand that this will only be used as a means of contact via private messages.
 9. I agree that the researcher can get information from the following records and understand that my name and personal details will not be used in any reports or publicity that would make me identifiable. (**Initial** as appropriate)
 1. Includem Files or workbooks
 2. Criminal Record (SCRO) or Children's Reporter (SCRA)
 3. Information from other services you are working with
 10. I am willing for the researcher to get in touch with a family member or someone I am close to so that the researcher can discuss the work that I have been doing with Includem.
-

Name of Participant _____ Date of Birth _____ Signature _____

Name of Researcher _____ Date _____ Signature _____
Please Give Details of where you can be contacted at:
Address: _____

Phone Number(s): _____

Email: _____

Please Give Details of three other people who could be used as alternative contacts:

Name: _____

Relationship: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email: _____

Name: _____

Relationship: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email: _____

Name: _____

Relationship: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email: _____

Thank you so much for taking part!

The Transitional Support Service has been set up to help young people move on in their lives.

A crucial part of the research involves gathering feedback from people who are working in the project. We would really appreciate it if you co-operated so that we can hear your views by having an interview with the researcher.

All information that you provide to the researcher or which is generated will be regarded as **strictly confidential** and your responses will only be known to the researcher and made **anonymous** in any subsequent reports. If any point the researcher feels that you may be able to be identified in reports, for example if you are the manager and your responses are specific to your role, consent will be specifically elicited by the researcher before writing up. Further information regarding the research can be provided on request.

If you are willing to take part in the interview and give consent to the information being used within the constraints of confidentially described above then please sign below.

I am willing to participate in the research and to be contacted again to arrange another interview in the future.

Signature _____

Print name _____

Date _____

Researcher's Signature _____

Thanks for your time and help, it is much appreciated!

Transitional Support Service Family or 'Supporter' Consent

Includem supports young people to move on in their lives. The researcher would like to talk to you to understand better the young person's lives and hear your views. We would be very grateful if you would take the time to be a part of this study. This form lets us know that the researcher has explained what the project is about and has answered any questions you may have about it. It also lets us know whether you agree to take part in the research. Thanks for your help!

- () The researcher has told me about the research project and answered any questions I had about it.

- () I agree to my interview being recorded.

- () I agree to speak with the researcher and understand that everything I say is confidential unless it is clear that I or someone else is at risk of harm.

- () I understand that my name and personal details will not be used in any way that could identify me individually in the report or in any publicity about the research.

- () I agree that the researcher can contact me again in the future for a follow up interview (s).

Signed:

Print name:

.....

Contact Details:

Address.....

.....

Phone Number(s)

Email Address.....

Thank you!

Interview Schedule Young People– Interview 1

Interviewer note: After going through the consent form I am going to tell them a wee bit about myself. I am also going to explain that in this interview I will be focusing mainly on getting to know a bit about them and questions about Includem, but the next interview (if they are happy to take part) will be more focused on discussing their lives and goals for the future. I will also ask them to let me know if at any stage they want a break to let me know, also if I feel at any stage that this will be a good idea I will also initiate this.

Background

Can you tell me a wee bit about yourself (Prompts-your likes, dislikes, where you live, what you like to get up to?)

Can you tell me a little bit about how you came to be involved with Includem?

Tell me about your time with Includem? (Do you use the helpline?)

Do you feel that there is a difference between the transitional service and the service you received before? How did you feel about moving from one service to the other?

Was this handled well? How do you view the support you have received in the past and current levels of support?

The Impact of the Worker(s)

Do you have a main worker at Includem? How long have you worked with them?

How would you describe your relationship with them? How much contact do you have with your worker at this stage? How do you feel about this?

Offending

Have you offended in the past?

-If **yes**, -Can you tell me about it? What type of offences, how often? What do you think has led you to offend in the past?

What helped (helps) you stop offending and what things do you think make you more likely to offend?

-If **not**, what do you think has helped you to stay away from offending?

Experience of other services

What other services have you had contact with? Has Includem introduced you to any other services? How do you feel about this work?

How does this service compare so far with other services that you have worked with or are working with?

(Interview note-Explain that the next question is similar to the type of questions you will be asking at the next interview, which will be more focused on their own lives outside of the work with Includem.)

Area

How would you describe the area that you live in? (Prompt-what do you like, what do you dislike? What you change?)

Have you always lived here?

How do you feel about living here?

Would you like to live here when you are older? Why do you say this?

Strengths

What do you think are the good things in life?

What would you say your strengths are?

At the end of the interview after thanking them I am going to arrange another date to see them ideally within the next week to two weeks. I will also ask them if they have a phone, and explain that I think it would be good if they were able to take pictures of their favourite and least favourite place, or where this is not possible to draw or think about this.

Interview Schedule Young People Interview 2

(Interview note-Thank them for coming in and begin the interview by discussing the timeline of the young person's support or general timeline based on the last interview giving them an opportunity to comment. Give a brief overview of what to expect, specifying that in this interview we hope to discuss your local area, family, friends and strengths. And then move onto a discussion of their area, and where possible the photos that they may have brought in based on their most favourite or least favourite place.)

Area

What do you think these photos/objects are able to say about your area? Or what does this object tell me about you? (If they haven't brought anything then get them again to talk about their area and also ask whether or not it has changed in the past few years).

Living Arrangements

Can you tell me about your current living arrangement and how you feel about it?

Family

How do you get on with your family?

Have your family been involved in the work that you do with Includem?

Do you have a partner or any children? How does this impact on your life (positive or negative, try to tease this out. If they have children - how many and what are their ages?

Friends and Free Time

How would you describe your relationship with your friends?

Do you see your friends as being a positive or negative influence?

What do you do in your free time? (The following can be used as a prompt)

How do you spend your leisure time?	Coding (Circle as many as apply)
Pubs/bars	01
Cinema/theatre	02
Sports/fitness clubs	03
Other sporting activities such as playing football, snooker	04
Out listening/dancing to music	05
Visiting friends/relatives	06
Out watching live sports	07
Amusement arcades	08
Gambling at casino or races	09
Restaurants	10
Shopping	11
Hanging around shopping centres/streets	12
Religious activity	13
Political activity	14
Community work	15

Social Networks

At this stage in the interview I will ask them to think about who they are closest to and ask them how they think these people would describe them, and also why they think they are closest to them.

I will then ask them to tell me about who they would say is the next important group or individuals, how they think they would describe them, and why they are close to them and the next and so forth. Asking further away we get-why they are not as close.

Whose opinion matters to you?

I will then introduce the Well Being Web and discuss each of the concepts and what they mean to each young person.

Strengths and Obstacles

How much help and support do you feel you have in your life? In what ways do you get support? Is this important to you? Who do you go to for advice and support?

Who would you say is your ultimate support?

Who do you think has the most influence in your life?

Who do you offer support to? Is this important to you?

Who are the people in your life that present you problems? Why do you think they do this? How do you deal with this?

I would like to talk again about the good things you mentioned last time I saw you, (I should have these noted), can you tell me about why you chose these? Has it always been this way?

What do you think are the changes you have made or need to make to help you to move on in your life?

Future

What are your plans for the future? Have you made any steps towards this?

Do you see yourself as an adult? Has this changed over the past while?

What does being an adult mean to you?

How would you describe the last year?

Where do you see yourself five years from now? How hopeful are you that you will achieve this?

Interview Schedule Young People Stage 3

Closing of Case

- Have you stopped working with Includem since last time we met?
- How did you feel about this? (What was good about the way it was handled? Could it have been handled better?)
- Did you get in touch with the service at all after?
- Were there any points when you needed help and didn't ask for it? If so, why not?

(If you have returned to Includem can you tell me why and how this happened?)

Has this helped?

When do you think you will be ready to leave Includem?

What other supports would you like to get in place to do this?)

Update on Progress (This stage will very much depend on developing the conversation from the last interview)

- How would you describe the last year? (Prompts-high and low points?)
(Discuss the progress since last time e.g. where they live, living arrangements, concept of home, employment and education, relationships with family, relationships with boyfriend/girlfriend, friends, how they manage day to day life, e.g. bills, money, growth in self-confidence)
- Looking back would you say there have been any key moments in your life that have led to change? What have these been?
- What steps have you made towards your goals (Prompts, will be based on what is said, but also in recapping on the last interview)
- Are there any barriers preventing you from achieving your goals? If so, what are they?

- What do you think are the good things in life?
- What do you think are the things that are not so good in your life at the moment?
- What would you say your strengths are?

Well being Web and Social Network Mapping –filled in together and discussed at this point

Strengths and Obstacles

- How much help and support do you feel you have in your life? In what ways do you get support? Is this important to you? Who do you go to for advice and support?
- Who would you say is your ultimate support?
- Who do you think has the most influence in your life?
- Who do you offer support to? Is this important to you?
- Who are the people in your life that present you problems? Why do you think they do this? How do you deal with this?

Changes?

- What do you think are the changes you have made or need to make to help you to move on in your life?
- **(For those who have an offending background) Have you offended at all over the past year? If so, what happened?**
- **What things do you think influence you to offend? What things/people help you to stay away from offending?**
- **Do you see yourself differently at this stage? (In what way? What has helped you to realise this?)**
- **Do you think that you have made a conscious effort to change your life?**
- How do you think you are viewed by those who are close to you at this stage? Has this changed? How do you view yourself at this stage? What influences the way that you view yourself?

Future

- What are your plans for the future? Have you made any steps towards this?
- Do you see yourself as an adult? Has this changed over the past while?
- What does being an adult mean to you?
- Where do you see yourself five years from now? How hopeful are you that you will achieve this? If so, what helps you to be hopeful

Interviews with Staff from the Transitional Support Service

Overview

- How does transitional support work? Who is it for? What do you hope to do?

- Can you describe exactly what you do? Why do you think working in this way will bring about what you hope to achieve?

Referral and Handover

- Can you tell me about how young people come onto the transitional support service? How do you feel about the handover process?
- Do you feel that there is a difference between the support offered by transitional support and what has went before?
- Do you find any difference in the way that young people engage with this service? If so in what way? (Prompt: voluntary basis).

Young People's Needs

- What needs do young people present? What strengths? What risks?
- Do you feel that young people present different needs and strengths now than when they first came into the service? Can you describe the changes you see, and also what you think has helped this to happen?
- Are there any differences between working with young men and women? (If yes, what? How do you deal with this? Would you like more training in this area?)

Working Practice and Family Involvement

- What are the benefits of doing one to one work?
- What do you see your role as being?
- Do you involve families or wider support networks in your work? How? What challenges does this present? What benefits does it bring to your work?
- What networks do you think are important to young people especially when they are leaving or have left the service? Do you try to link up with these?
- How do you feel the service tries to help these young people become more independent? What do you think are the barriers to this?
- What do you think makes the difference to help the young people to move on in their lives?
- Do you feel that the young people you work with have grown in confidence and self-esteem? Do you think that this is important? If so, why?
- Can you tell me about the easiest case you have ever worked on and what made it easy?

- Can you tell me about your most difficult case and what made it hard?

Environment

- Can you describe for me the areas where the young people you work with come from?
- What benefits or challenges does this present for your work?

Closing a Case

- How do you decide when to close a case? Can you describe this process?
- What services in particular have you found it useful to refer young people onto?
- Do you share this type of information with other staff?
- Can you tell me about the follow up processes that are in place to monitor a young person's progress after they have left the service? (If there are none, do you think there should be?)

Service Evaluation

- How do you think this service compares to other work within the community for young people?
- What do you think works best about the service?
- Are there any changes you would like to make about the service?
- What support do you get in your work? Do you think this works well? Is there anything you would change about this?
- What lessons have you learned from this service about working effectively with young people?

Future

- What would you like to see happen for the future?
- Do you think that transitional support could become a model used for more than working with young people?

Interview with families or Supporters

Includem

How do you feel about the support Includem has given (Insert Name) in the past?
Can you tell me about the support that Includem has been able to give to you in the past? When has it been most useful? (Also Prompt-Helpline).
Would you recommend Includem to other people?
Why?
Has X returned to Includem over the past year? Can you tell me how and why this happened and if this is helping?
When do you think X will be ready to leave Includem?
What support would you like to see in place if this happened?

Relationships and Adulthood

Can you tell me about your relationship with (Insert Name)? Has this changed at all?
If so, what do you think are the reasons for this?
Have you seen a change in X over the past while? In what ways? Why do you think this has happened?
(If offending background) What do you think influenced X to offend? What do you think has helped them to move away from offending?

One of the things that we are looking at in the research is how young people feel about moving into adulthood. What challenges do you think X and other young people face today in 'getting there'? (Prompt- area, opportunities)
What support or things do you think can help X and other young people?
Do you feel hopeful and confident about the future for X? Why do you say this?
What do you think are the good things in X's life?
What do you think are X's strengths?
Is there anything else you would like to add?

Information on Support Services

Thank you for taking time to take part in this study, your input has been really valuable. If you have been affected by anything discussed in the interview, if you don't feel comfortable to speak directly to me or your Includem worker or Includem helpline, here are some other organisations that you can get in touch with.

Get Connected www.getconnected.org.uk

Get Connected is a free helpline and email, webchat and text service for young people under 25. Call on **0808 808 4994** (lines are open 1-11pm every day), free text to **80849** or email them on help@getconnected.org.uk.

Shelter scotland.shelter.org.uk

Advisers at Shelter's free housing advice helpline. Call Shelter's free housing advice helpline on **0808 800 4444**.

Supportline www.supportline.org.uk

SupportLine is a confidential telephone helpline offering emotional support on a wide range of issues including relationships, anger, self-harm and loneliness. Call SupportLine on **01708 765200**.

ChildLine www.childline.org.uk

ChildLine is a free, confidential helpline that offers practical advice and support. You can call ChildLine on **0800 1111**.

Caledonia Youth www.caledoniayouth.org

Caledonia Youth offers advice, information and support to young people on any aspect of sex, contraception and relationships. Services include open access sexual health clinics, counselling services and education and training. You can call them on 0131 229 3596 or email: information@caledoniayouth.org

Cruse Bereavement Care www.crusescotland.org.uk

Cruse Bereavement Care offers help and support to people who have been affected by death. The helpline number is: **0845 600 2227**.

LGBT Youth Scotland www.lgbtyouth.org.uk

LGBT Youth Scotland provides a range of services for young lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

Talk to Frank www.talktofrank.com

If you or your family are involved with drugs, you can always Talk to Frank on the free 24-hour helpline **0300 123 6600** for confidential help and advice. You can text them at 82111 and email Frank at frank@talktofrank.com

Breathing Space www.breathingspacescotland.co.uk

If you are worried about depression or any other mental health issue, you can call Breathing Space Free on **0800 83 85 87**.

